GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Students must pass all courses required by their curriculum (https://sps.northwestern.edu/masters/student-handbook.php#Curriculum%20Requirements). Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 (B) average to demonstrate mastery of the program content. Students must achieve a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 before they are allowed to graduate or complete a graduate certificate or certificate of advanced graduate study.

Grades for Graduate Credit

Each instructor determines his or her own guidelines and expectations for grades, including how attendance and participation are graded. In general, however, students are expected to commit the time and effort to attend all class meetings. The faculty member may lower a student's final grade due to absences, so students likely to miss classes for any reason should not register for the course, since it may not be possible to earn a passing grade.

The following grades may be awarded for graduate courses at SPS.

Grade	Grade Description	Grade Point Value	Awarded in
A	Passing Grade	4.0	All courses except 589 and 590
A-	Passing Grade	3.7	All courses except 589 and 590
B+	Passing Grade	3.3	All courses except 589 and 590
B	Passing Grade	3.0	All courses except 589 and 590
B-	Passing Grade	2.7	All courses except 589 and 590
C+	Passing Grade	2.3	All courses except 589 and 590
C	Passing Grade	2.0	All courses except 589 and 590
C-	Passing Grade	1.7	All courses except 589 and 590
F	Failing Grade	0.0	All courses except 589 and 590
X	Unofficial Withdrawal	No grade points awarded	All courses except 589 and 590
W	Official Withdrawal	No grade points awarded	All courses except 589 and 590
Y	Incomplete	No grade points awarded	All courses except 589 and 590
P	Pass	No grade points awarded	Only in 589 and 590
N	No Pass	No grade points awarded	Only in 589 and 590
K	In Progress	No grade points awarded	Only in 589 and 590

Passing Grades

All grades of C- and above are considered passing grades. Students receiving one of these grades are deemed to have satisfied the corresponding course requirement. No Ds are awarded for graduate work.

Failing Grade

Grades of F may be awarded for failing work. Courses graded with an F do not count toward one's degree. Students who fail required non-elective courses must retake them. A student who retakes any class should be aware that both the grade for the original class and the retaken class are calculated in the cumulative GPA.

Incompletes

In rare circumstances, students may be granted a grade of incomplete, which is designated with a grade of Y. A student must get advance permission from the instructor and submit a Student Affairs Petition (https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php) which needs to be approved in order to receive a grade of incomplete. Y grades will count as a 0.00 in a student's grade point average until a final grade is submitted by the instructor.

When an instructor grants an incomplete, he or she determines the amount of time the student has to finish the work within the maximum allotted one term of additional time.

For courses in which a grade Y was initially assigned, students must complete the course and the faculty must submit the grade change no later than the grading deadline of the following term, or the incomplete grade will be changed to a final grade of F (failure). Instructors may establish an earlier deadline for the completion of missing work, based on considerations specific to their course. Students with extenuating circumstances can petition for an extension through a Student Affairs Petition (https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php).

Students are not allowed to carry more than one incomplete (Y) grade at a time. Students who have two or more incomplete grades on their record will be placed on academic probation and prevented from registering for additional classes until the incomplete work for at least one course is turned in with a grade entered in CAESAR. Students planning to graduate must complete required courses and receive grades before graduating.

Pass/No Pass Courses

With the exception of 589 and 590, pass/no pass courses do not count towards degrees or certificates.

All 589 and 590 registrations are taken on a pass/no pass basis. A grade of K is given while the project is in progress and is later changed to a P when satisfactorily completed.

Calculating a Student's Cumulative Grade Point Average

At the end of each course students receive a letter grade that has a corresponding number of grade points associated with it. These are listed in the grade table above. A student's grade point average is calculated

by dividing the total grade points earned by the number of courses attempted. All courses attempted are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA, including courses for which a failing grade was received.

It is important that students are aware of their cumulative GPA, since the University uses this number to determine their academic status and continued participation in their programs. A student's quarterly and cumulative GPA is listed on his or her unofficial transcript, which can be viewed in CAESAR.

Grade Concerns

SPS follows Northwestern University practice which gives faculty members complete grading authority at their sole academic discretion. Accordingly, a course grade may be changed only to correct a clerical or computational error.

Grade changes are not allowed for any of the following:

- Reasons of financial reimbursement by an employer
- Dissatisfaction with the grade
- Submission of extra work or redoing an assignment after grades have been submitted to the Registrar's Office
- Unauthorized rescheduling or re-taking of an exam after grades have been submitted to the Registrar's Office

Students are entitled to an explanation of how their final course grade was determined and how the component parts of that grade were weighted. If a student seeks further clarification of a final course grade, they should discuss that matter directly with the faculty member.

If, after consulting with the faculty member, a student believes a clerical or computational error has not been rectified or believes the grade was determined in a prejudicial or capricious manner, they can submit a letter to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs with detailed documentation as evidence to support their claims. While SPS administrative staff do not have the power to change a grade assigned by an instructor, the Assistant Dean (or their designee) will investigate the student's claims, which may entail:

- Speaking with the student
- Speaking with the faculty member and relevant staff members
- Requesting additional materials

After a review of all evidence, the Assistant Dean (or their designee) will notify the student in writing of their decision regarding the grade dispute. If not satisfied with the outcome, the student has the right to appeal in writing within 10 business days to the Associate Dean of Academics with appropriate documentation and explanation of the grounds for appeal.

Students are reminded to adhere to the University's Student Code of Conduct (https://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/) in all their interactions with faculty members and staff.

All members of the Northwestern community – including students, faculty, and staff – must adhere to the university's policy on discrimination and harassment. If you believe you have been discriminated against or harassed, carefully review the university's policy on discrimination and harassment (https://www.northwestern.edu/sexual-harassment/university-policies/discrimination/) and contact your academic adviser for guidance. As appropriate, your adviser may refer you to Northwestern's Equal Opportunity Office (847-491-7458 or eeo@northwestern.edu).