

Grades and Credit

Grades

The grading system used at the university is shown below.

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Grade Point Value</i>	<i>Description</i>
A+	4.3	<i>Excellent to Very Good:</i> comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; marked perception and/or originality
A	4.0	
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	<i>Good:</i> moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; noticeable perception and/or originality.
B	3.0	
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	<i>Satisfactory:</i> reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; some perception and/or originality.
C	2.0	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	<i>Marginal:</i> minimum knowledge and understanding of subject matter; limited perception and/or originality.
D	1.0	
D-	0.7	
F	0.0	<i>Failing:</i> unacceptably low knowledge and understanding of subject matter; severely limited perception and/or originality.
S		"Satisfactory," equivalent to C- or above
U		"Unsatisfactory," equivalent to below C-

Symbols Used in Lieu of Grades

INC	This means that a student has substantial passing-level equity in a course but is unable to complete it because of circumstances beyond his or her control.
R (Registered)	This grade substitute is given after the first semester of a full-year course that does not require a grade until the end.
W (Withdraw)	This means that a student withdrew from the course (with college permission) after the seventh week (or beyond three-fifths of the duration of shorter courses).

S/U Grading Option

In some courses students have the option of receiving a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory (S or U) instead of a letter grade. Students may preregister for such a course under the S/U option or change the grading option during the first three weeks of the semester. Changing a grade option is accomplished by completing the "Changes to Grade Option or Credit Hours" section of an add/drop form; this requires permission of the student's faculty advisor and the course instructor or departmental representative. (Generally, a grade of "S" is equivalent to a letter grade of A+ through C-; a "U" is equivalent to a grade of D+ or less.)

Important: After the end of the third week of classes, the grading option may not be changed, nor will students be permitted to add a course in which they were previously enrolled (in the current semester) under a different grade option.

Engineering students may choose to receive an S/U grade option under the following conditions:

- The course in question must be offered with an S/U option.
- The student must have previously completed at least one full semester of study at Cornell. Freshmen may not take any courses on an S/U basis during their first semester with the exception of courses that are graded "S/U Only" such as physical education, ROTC, supplemental courses, and writing workshops.
- The proposed S/U course must count as either a liberal studies distribution or an approved elective in the Engineering curriculum.
- Students may elect to enroll S/U in only one (1) course each semester in which the choice between letter grade and S/U is an option. (Additional courses offered "S/U only" may be taken in the same

semester as the "elected S/U" course.)

Note: Courses graded S/U do not count toward eligibility for the Dean's List and may weaken a student's chances for acceptance into graduate school. Questions regarding the S/U grading option should be addressed to Engineering Advising.

Incomplete Grades

There are many legitimate reasons for delaying the completion of a course beyond the time allotted. An extended illness or serious injury, for example, might make it impossible to finish by the end of the semester. Under these circumstances, it becomes desirable to receive a temporary grade of incomplete and finish up the course work at a later time.

To receive an Incomplete, a student must

- have an extenuating reason that prevents them from completing the course in the time allotted; and
- have passing equity in the course at the time of the request. (This is generally defined as completion of at least half the course work at a passing level.)

Incomplete grades are granted at the discretion of the faculty member in charge of the course. Students who think an Incomplete is appropriate should discuss it with the instructor, making sure to arrange specific conditions under which the missing work is to be completed and set a deadline for submission. Having this "contract" in writing is desirable.

Evidence of an incomplete remains permanently on the student's transcript. When the course has been completed, a grade is entered with an asterisk, indicating that it was not completed during the regular semester. Students should weigh the cost of taking an Incomplete against the reasons for doing so. Students may

find it helpful to discuss the matter with their faculty advisor or a staff member in Engineering Advising.

Advanced Placement and Transfer Credit

Advanced Placement

Advanced placement (AP) gives credit to entering freshmen for subjects in which they are already proficient. For example, many students already know as much mathematics when they arrive at Cornell as they are expected to know after taking their first college math course. With advanced placement, such students could take a more advanced math course or lighten their course load.

To receive AP credit, students must demonstrate their competence in a particular subject area by receiving qualifying scores on any of the following approved exams:

- (1) advanced placement examinations given and scored by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB); or
- (2) General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced ("A") Level Examinations; or
- (3) International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level Examinations; or
- (4) Cornell's departmental placement examinations, given during orientation week before the beginning of fall-term classes. If a student's performance on any of these exams is satisfactory, college credit will be offered as outlined in the publication *Advanced Placement and Transfer Credit for First-Year Engineering Students 2004-2005*, available in the Engineering Advising office.

A departmental examination may be a better test of preparedness than the

other AP exams, which do not necessarily test for the range of material that Cornell expects its students to know. Students should feel free to take a departmental exam, even if they have already passed another exam in the same academic subject.

Students who are offered AP credit do not have to accept it. Whether or not they should depends, in part, on whether the course in question is a technical course that is a prerequisite for other important courses. Unless students are certain that they are prepared to move into the next, more advanced course, it is probably better to take the prerequisite.

Students who choose to accept AP credit have several options:

- They may enroll immediately in a more advanced course in the same subject area.
- They may substitute course work (particularly electives) normally taken during subsequent semesters (assuming appropriate prerequisites have been satisfied).
- They may choose to enroll in fewer courses, using the credit to fulfill basic requirements. (Please note that students must be enrolled in at least 12 credits to be considered full-time by the university and be eligible for financial aid.)

The only courses for which advanced placement credit can be received are those that fit degree requirements in the undergraduate engineering program. For more details on AP credit as it relates to the College of Engineering, please contact Engineering Advising.

Transfer Credit

During their years as Cornell undergraduates, many engineering students decide to enroll in courses at other accredited institutions, requesting that the credit be transferred and applied toward their Cornell degree. Transfer credit is generally

granted if the courses in question are equivalent in scope and rigor to equivalent courses taught at Cornell. A maximum of 18 transfer or Cornell extramural credits may be applied to engineering degree requirements after a student matriculates at Cornell. (Summer session courses taken at Cornell are not considered transfer credit.) Generally, a transfer credit award depends on the course's suitability as part of the student's degree program and is awarded in accordance with criteria established by the College Curriculum Governing Board.

To apply for transfer credit, students should take the following steps before enrolling in a course they wish to transfer. (Although students may certainly apply for transfer credit after completing a course at another institution, there is no guarantee that the course will transfer to Cornell.):

- Obtain a transfer credit form and instruction sheet, either from the Engineering Advising or Registrar's offices.
- Obtain a course description or syllabus for the course in which the student plans to enroll.
- Complete the student information section of the transfer credit form and attach the course description or syllabus.
- Students applying for transfer credit to satisfy requirements in mathematics, science, engineering major courses, or first-year writing seminars must receive approval from the department offering an equivalent course at Cornell. Addresses/phone numbers of departmental offices can be found in the campus directory or Courses of Study. Students applying for transfer credit to satisfy liberal studies requirements are not required to obtain departmental approval. Liberal studies courses will be reviewed for approval

by the Committee on Academic Standards, Petitions, and Credit (ASPAC) when the completed form is submitted.

- Make an appointment to see the faculty advisor to obtain their signature and endorsement.
- Submit the transfer credit form and course description to Engineering Advising, 167 Olin Hall. A representative of ASPAC will review the petition within a few days.
- Assuming the request for transfer credit is approved and an acceptable grade for the course is received, students should arrange for the offering institution to send an official transcript directly to the Engineering Registrar's office in 158 Olin Hall. Transfer credit will not appear on the student's transcript until this final step has been completed. (Cornell does not award transfer credit for courses in which a student has earned a grade of less than C; schools and departments may stipulate a higher minimum grade.)

Transfer Credit for Transfer Students

Transfer students entering as freshmen, sophomores, or juniors may transfer up to 36 credits for each year spent in full-time study at another institution, provided that the courses are acceptable for meeting graduation requirements. No more than 72 total transfer credits (combination of those taken both before and after matriculation) may be used to meet graduation requirements. Transfer credits from institutions on the quarter system or trimester system are not directly comparable to semester credits. In general, the number of trimester credits or quarter credits will be reduced when converted to semester credits and credit will not be given for more than ten courses

per year. Transfer credit awards for matriculating transfer students are evaluated and determined by the undergraduate major representative in the student's intended major of study in engineering.

Transfer Credit for Advanced Study in High School

College-level courses completed in high school under the auspices of cooperative college/high school programs do not generally lead to Cornell engineering credit. Students who would like credit for such courses should seek Advanced Placement credit by taking a CEEB Advanced Placement or Cornell departmental exam. Transfer credit for high school courses is awarded only when (1) the course was taught at an accredited college or university, (2) by its own faculty members, and (3) the student can present a signed statement from the high school registrar certifying that the course was not used to fulfill high school graduation requirements.