

# Study and Examination Guidelines of Webster Vienna Private University

Adopted by the Executive Board and approved by the University Council on October 7, 2016

## Introduction

This document provides a summary of the key examination guidelines applicable to all study programs and course types offered by Webster Vienna Private University (WVPU); it particularizes the regulations identified in Chapter 7.2 of the WVPU Constitution. The document contains the universal standards used by WVPU in the grading of courses, the assessment, scheduling and oversight of exams, including the respective makeup and appeals processes for students as well as a general description of the grading standards of Webster University and their Austrian equivalents. It is the sole responsibility of students to read and adhere to these and any additional guidelines pertaining to individual courses as stipulated in the respective syllabi.

Course grading at WVPU is based on the practice of formative assessments. Diverse weights are afforded to final and midterm exams as well as in-class quizzes. Therefore, WVPU does not maintain a formal re-examination policy for failed exams as is the practice in Austrian public universities, universities of applied sciences, and private universities.

## 1. Course types and formats

- 1.1. WVPU courses are offered in multiple formats across 8-week terms or 16-week semesters, whereby individual sessions may last between 1.5 and 4 hours, depending on the degree cycle, level, and discipline.
  - 1.1.1. In special cases, some courses may be held in block format whereby classes are held in longer blocks of time distributed unevenly across the term.
- 1.2. In special cases, courses may also take the form of directed or independent studies under the direction of an instructor. In the former case, 1-5 students work through the complete course material outside of the classroom as where in the latter a single student works independently on a topic not offered as a regular course.
- 1.3. WVPU does not offer any online courses directly supervised by its faculty. Those offered by Webster University in St. Louis adhere to Webster University's online examination standards.

## 2. Course assessment standards and norms

- 2.1. WVPU courses at the graduate or undergraduate level are never based purely on one final examination.
  - 2.1.1. WVPU courses combine a diverse and cumulative set of oral, written, and examinations assessments to determine final grades
  - 2.1.2. The specific distributed weight of assignments and exams vary from course to course depending on the level and discipline and oversight of the respective academic department.

- 2.2. Final grades normally are assigned according to the US system of letter grades (ABCDF for first cycle courses and ABCF for second cycle courses).
  - 2.2.1. Some courses are also graded as Pass or Fail.
  - 2.2.2. Depending upon the agreement of the instructor, students may request that any course be graded as pass/fail. To do so, students must request a pass/fail score by the end of the second week of class.
- 2.3. Students who fail to deliver a performance component required for successful completion of a course due to a legitimate and documented reason receive a grade of incomplete (I).
  - 2.3.1. In such cases, students may submit the missed performance component within a maximum of one academic year.
- 2.4. Students are entitled to know the grading scale used in any course, i.e. points assigned per letter grade.
  - 2.4.1. Grading scales should always be included in the course syllabus.
  - 2.4.2. The precise percentage to letter grade distribution is determined by the instructor within the broader context of standards defined by the academic departments administering the respective academic programs under auspices of which any course takes place.
- 2.5. Students who earn an F, WF, or ZF in a required course of their degree program must repeat the course.
  - 2.5.1. Students may repeat an elective course in which an F, WF, or ZF is earned.
- 2.6. Students are entitled to retake any course in order to change the grade used in calculating their grade point average (GPA).

### **3. Course assessment appeals**

- 3.1. Students may discuss any grade with the instructor up until the closing of the respective grading period.
- 3.2. All grade disputes shall be resolved at first instance between the student and the instructor.
- 3.3. A student who believes he/she has received a grade that is arbitrary or assigned for non-academic reasons may discuss the grade with the Department Head.
  - 3.3.1. In the case of online courses, students may discuss the grade with the appropriate department chair in St. Louis.
- 3.4. If the grade dispute is not resolved within three months, the student may appeal the grade to the Examination Committee.
- 3.5. Grade appeals cannot be considered after one academic year.

### **4. Examination assessment standards and norms**

- 4.1. Students are entitled to ask for clarification by the instructor or proctor about any questions posed on the exam.

- 4.1.1. Questions should be presented directly to the instructor or proctor without disturbing other students.
- 4.1.2. Instructors or proctors reserve the right to allow an initial period for questions for all students.
- 4.2. Students are solely responsible to adhere to university policies on academic honesty (<http://webster.ac.at/academic-honesty-policy>).
- 4.3. Students, who fail to attend final exams without a pre-excused absence, receive a failing grade (0 points) for the examination.
  - 4.3.1. Students are expected to be present for any examination at the scheduled time and place. Failure to show up later than 15 minutes after the beginning of a scheduled exam is regarded as an unexcused absence.
- 4.4. Students are entitled to see all examination documents and course assessment records.
- 4.5. Exams missed due to excused absences may be rescheduled.
- 4.6. Students have the right to appeal an examination assessment on reasonable grounds including:
  - a violation against the process of examinations,
  - a suspected case of a discrimination by an instructor, or
  - a disturbance during the examination procedure.
  - 4.6.1. Students can appeal examination results to an Examinations Committee consisting of the Campus Director, the head of the respective academic department, one additional department head, and a student representative.
- 4.7. The university requires that its instructors retain digital records of all assessment criteria for at least one year and assign grades to students no later than two weeks following the date of the examination or assignment deadline.
- 4.8. Students are entitled to review their performance on final exams and/or projects prior to the grading deadline.
  - 4.8.1. The instructor can choose to return the final exams and/or projects to students, keep them or deposit them with the Academic Services for student review.
  - 4.8.2. Should the instructor choose to keep the graded exams, these must be kept for a period of one year.
- 4.9. Students with disabilities are entitled to receive upon explicit request special accommodations in performing examinations.

## **5. Examination scheduling standards and norms**

- 5.1. Examinations for undergraduate courses are scheduled in-class within the contact hours assigned to the course.
- 5.2. Graduate mid-term and final exams sessions are scheduled in additional 2-hour blocks.

5.2.1. Graduate examination dates are published at the beginning of each semester in paper and online.

5.2.2. Graduate final examinations may also be held during the University break-periods.

5.3. Academic department heads are entitled to permit individualized scheduling of examination dates between students and instructors in order to accommodate particular circumstances.

5.4. Examinations may be postponed in the event that the instructor or proctor falls ill or is more than 15 minutes late to any scheduled examination appointment.

## 6. Grading standards of Webster University and their Austrian equivalents

6.1. WVPU grades courses according to the standards shared across the Webster University network.

6.1.1. When looking at their online transcripts, students will see one of the following grade codes:

UNDERGRADUATE letter grades		GRADUATE letter grades	
Letter grade	Austrian Equivalent	Letter grade	Austrian Equivalent
A	1 - Sehr gut - very good	A	1 - Sehr gut - very good
A-		A-	
B+	2 - Gut - good	B+	2 - Gut - good
B		B	
B-		B-	
C+	3- Befriedigend - satisfactory	C	3 - Befriedigend - satisfactory
C			
C-			
D+	4 - Genügend - adequate	F	5 - Nicht genügend - unsatisfactory
D			
F	5 - Nicht genügend - unsatisfactory		
P	Pass	P	Pass
		CR	No grade/credit
I	Incomplete	I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawn	W	Withdrawn
WF	Unofficial withdrawn, thus F	WF	Unofficial withdrawn, thus F
IP	In progress	IP	In progress
NR	Not reported for the course		
Z	Placeholder for a late submitted grade	Z	Placeholder for a late submitted grade
		ZF	Incomplete and not completed within one academic year