

Bi 253, Principles of Biology

Policy on Incompletes

Revised Spring 2007

Well first let me say that my policy is based on the university guidelines; it is not arbitrary.

If you have an issue beyond your control that prevents you from completing a substantial part of the course work, then you can request a grade of "I".

An 'incomplete' is negotiated with the instructor. I will ask you to supply hard evidence of your issue. That is, if you have a two-week illness I would like to see a memo from a medical professional about it. There is no set list of things that qualify, and I am happy to work with you for any reasonable problem.

What happens if you qualify for an incomplete? You have one year, by university policy, to make up the missed work. When you request an incomplete you can negotiate to make up (re-take) the entire course, or just a portion of the work you missed, depending on the details of your situation. A common scenario is a student who is doing well in the lab and lecture portion of the course, but for a legitimate reason ends up missing two lecture exams. In this case, we might agree to keep your lab score and have you repeat all of the lecture portion of the course. Often I write up a memo about our agreement that we both sign.

There are two opportunities to make up the missed work, Bi 253 in the Summer and Bi 253 the next Spring. Please note that you would not enroll in the course a second time, and you do not have to pay more money. Rather, you are a "ghost" student in the course the second time around as you do not show up on my grade roster. I take your scores for the make-up material and use them to calculate a complete score for the term in which you requested the incomplete. Finally I submit a grade change to move the "I" to whatever grade you ultimately earn. You will get a grade for the term you were originally enrolled.

Sometimes calculating such a grade can be a bit tricky. For example, in Summer the course can be organized differently to accommodate the rapid pace of it. Suppose there is just one midterm in summer, and you need to make up one exam from Spring. The material covered in the one summer midterm will be greater than the one Spring exam you missed. In this particular scenario, you will just have to suck it up and study all the appropriate material to get a good score on the Summer exam. If you get 80% on the Summer exam, and the Spring the exam you missed had 25 questions, I would give you a score of 20 and put this in the formula for Spring term.

Finally, please be aware that by university policy you cannot qualify for an incomplete if you are not passing the course. The reason for this university policy is to prevent students who realize at the end of the 10th week that they are headed for a D- and think, hey I'll just get an incomplete and try again next year, without paying any more tuition. The university does not like that approach!