

Grade Replacement Policy Revision Recommendations

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I. Problem Statement

Students are not benefiting from the current policy to the intended extent due to policy complexity and administrative barriers (e.g., form, deadline, layers of rules). The result is frustration and angst among students, families, and advisors who misunderstand the process, rules or deadline.

II. Objectives

A. Simplification

B. Automation

C. Student success

III. Background

The CU Boulder [grade replacement policy](#) was implemented in fall 2019.

In order to invoke the grade replacement policy for a course, a student must have received an eligible grade in a prior attempt of the course. Grades of C-, D+, D, D- or F are eligible for undergraduate students, and grades of C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- or F are eligible for graduate students.

When grade replacement is invoked, the grade from the latest attempt of a course replaces the grade from the most recent prior attempt of the same course. The replaced grade is excluded from cumulative grade point average and credit totals in the official academic record; instead, the grade from the latest attempt is included, even if the grade earned in the latest attempt is lower than the replaced grade. Only the grade earned in the latest attempt of a repeated course is used to confirm completion of graduation requirements or to determine a student's academic standing beginning with the term in which the course was repeated. Grades from all attempts of a course remain on a student's transcript, with those attempts that have been replaced appropriately indicated.

Students must take positive action to invoke the grade replacement policy for a particular course by the end of week 10 of the semester in which they are

repeating the course. A form must be submitted via the Office of the Registrar website. Once a student invokes the grade replacement policy for a course, that decision is irrevocable.

Students have been confused about the policy since its institution. In particular, (a) they are confused about the deadline to apply, or (b) they believe that grade replacement will take place automatically, without their applying. The result is that many students miss the chance for grade replacement even if they are repeating the course.

The pandemic in spring 2020 led to policy and deadline flexibility for grade replacement, which, although prompted by compassion for student needs, resulted in further confusion. As of fall 2020, the application deadline was permanently moved from week 3 to week 10, but this deadline change has not alleviated the basic sources of confusion mentioned above.

<https://www.colorado.edu/registrar/students/degree-planning/grade-replacement/policy>

IV. Proposal

A. **Simplification and Automation:**

1. When students repeat a course that is eligible for Grade Replacement, **grade replacement should be automatically applied.**
 - a) The application form and deadline should be eliminated.
 - b) The grade from the best attempt (versus last attempt) should be the one that remains after grade replacement.
2. The credit limit for grades that can be replaced (10 for UGRD, 6 for GRAD) should be lifted.
3. Minimum grade thresholds for grade replacement eligibility should be kept.
4. Students should be able to opt out of grade replacement upon request to the Registrar (replacing the opt-in process)
5. The Registrar's Office will continue to flag grades earned via a documented case of academic dishonesty; these grades are not eligible for grade replacement.

B. **Processing and Implementation if Approved:**

1. Both degree-earning and non-degree students will be eligible for grade replacement.

2. Grade replacements will be processed at the end of the semester, after final grades are posted.
3. These revisions will be implemented for spring 2022 if possible.
4. Whenever they are implemented, revisions will go into effect for the current and future terms, and will not be applied retroactively for students who have already repeated courses.

C. Results for Student Success:

Optimizing grade replacement will benefit students by improving their academic record, minimizing frustration, and increasing persistence and graduation.

V. Review and implementation process

- A. Provost directed Deans to review this proposal, October 2021.
- B. Deans endorsed, Nov. 19, 2021 (see memo attached).
- C. BFA review process TBD, January 2022.
- D. Provost approval, TBD.
- E. Implementation ASAP after approval.

MEMO

To: Russ Moore, Katherine Eggert, Kristi Wold-McCormick, Shelly Bacon

From: Lori Bergen on behalf of academic deans

Re: Problem Policy #1: Grade Replacement Policy Revisions

Date: November 9, 2021

Academic deans have met and discussed the Grade Replacement Policy Revisions that seek to address the challenges articulated in the problem statement, most specifically:

Students are not benefiting from the current policy to the intended extent due to policy complexity and administrative barriers (e.g., form, deadline, layers of rules). The result is frustration and angst among students, families, and advisors who misunderstand the process, rules or deadline.

Our discussion kept the following objectives in mind: to simplify the process of grade replacement, to provide opportunity for automation within the process, and to seek to optimize student success. We recognized that optimizing grade replacement will benefit students by improving their academic record, minimize frustration and increase persistence and graduation.

With these things in mind, we make the following recommendations regarding the policy:

Section A. Simplify

Recommendation 1: Simplify the process by automatically applying grade replacement. When students repeat a course that is eligible for Grade Replacement, grade replacement should be automatically applied.

Recommendation 2: Remove the credit limit. The current limits are 10 credits for undergrads, 6 for grads. The recommendation to remove credit limits should be reviewed with BFA, and proceeding with this recommendation should be done with knowledge that it could lead to extended time to degree, could lead to too many course repeats, and could create inequity that would benefit students with resources to retake multiple courses. A middle ground recommendation might be to create a credit cap, perhaps at 15-17 credits for undergrads, with the option to petition for credits to exceed that. However, the recommendation to remove the credit limit was supported by a majority of deans.

Recommendation 3: Eliminate the form and deadline.

Recommendation 4: Calculate the last attempt unless it results in a worse grade

than the previous attempt (in which case the grades would be averaged as is the standard course repeat protocol).

Recommendation 5: Keep minimum grade thresholds for grade replacement eligibility

Section B. Automation

Recommendation 1: Process at end of semester after final grades are posted

Recommendation 2: Implement for spring 2022. However, note that starting mid-academic year will create administrative challenges that would be avoided by beginning the new policy at the start of the academic year, for example, in Fall 2022. In the interest of student success, however, we still support starting in spring 2022.

Section C. Student Success

Key questions for deans

1. Is the credit limit necessary? *No. See Recommendation A.2 above.*
2. Should students be able to opt out? *Yes, with grades averaged as in the standard course repeat protocol.*
3. Best v. last attempt: *Students should be able to keep the best attempt.*
4. Do revisions go into effect for future terms or also applied retroactively for students who have already repeated courses (unless they have graduated)? *No. Revisions should NOT be retroactive, but should begin in Spring 2022 forward.*
5. Does student degree v. non-degree status matter for grade replacement eligibility? If so, why? The UGRD transcript reflects one running, cumulative academic record. *No. Degree status should not matter.*
6. Confirm we should clarify in the policy the exclusion of grade replacement on courses with academic honor code violations, on either the first attempt (making it ineligible to be replaced) as well as the second attempt (which cannot be used to replace a prior attempt). *This position is confirmed.*