

## Study and Examination Guidelines

Approved by the University Council on November 20, 2020

### 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 18-week semesters, whereby individual session lengths may vary or be held in block format depending on the degree cycle, level, and discipline.
- 1.2. In special cases, courses may also take the form of directed or independent studies under the direction of an instructor. In directed studies up to 5 students work through the complete course material outside of the classroom whereas in an independent study a single student works independently on a topic not offered as a regular course.
- 1.3. WVPU courses may be offered on site in class, fully remote with synchronous broadcasting of sessions online, or in hybrid form, combining in-class and remote components as well as synchronous and asynchronous elements.

### 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 (ABCD 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 will receive a grade according to the work submitted.
  - 2.3.1. If a student does not provide enough coursework to pass the course by the grading deadline, the student will receive an F.
  - 2.3.2. In exceptional cases and in the case of thesis projects, instructors may assign a grade of Incomplete (I) to allow for the student complete their work.
    - 2.3.2.1. When receiving an Incomplete (I), a student has one semester to complete his or her work after which the student will receive a failing grade.
- 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).
  - 2.6.1. All attempts to complete a course as well as those registered and withdrawn are recorded and presented in the student's official transcript of records.

### **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 respective Department Head.
  - 3.3.1. In the case of Webster University 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 will not 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 (<https://webster.ac.at/academics/academic-policies.html>).

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 Director or Associate 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 respective department coordinator 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. Final examinations for all courses generally are scheduled in the final week of the semester.

5.2. Mid-term exams, if applied, may be held either in class or during an additionally scheduled examination week.

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+		B+	
B	2 - Gut - good	B	2 - Gut - good
B-		B-	
C+		C	
C	3- Befriedigend - satisfactory	C	3 - Befriedigend - satisfactory
C-		F	
D+		5 - Nicht genügend - unsatisfactory	
D			
F	5 - Nicht genügend - unsatisfactory	P	Absolviert
P	Pass		
Additional WVPU grading options			
CR	No grade/credit		
I	Incomplete		
W	Withdrawn		
WF	Unofficial withdrawn, thus F		
IP	In progress		
NR	Not reported for the course		
Z	Placeholder for a late submitted grade		
ZF	Incomplete and not completed within one academic year		