

Grading Policy

Grading Philosophy

Wilmette Institute is committed to high academic standards that reflect real-world demands for excellence. Upon reflection on how student learning outcomes can best reflect our mission, the Wilmette Institute has adopted a model that focuses faculty and student attention on success and the willingness and capacity to make improvements to achieve success. It has also eschewed failure as an academic standard. Our rubrics focus on student competency in building the capacities set out in the course learning outcomes, avoiding the success/failure academic performance model. Academic performance is therefore evaluated using “proficient” for those able to demonstrate the identified capacities and “emerging proficiency” for student work that still needs improvement to achieve proficiency as described in the course learning outcomes. We also use “high proficiency” for student work that demonstrates superior competency regarding course learning outcomes.

All certificate courses at Wilmette Institute are offered at the graduate level. The grading descriptors for all courses are: “High Proficiency” (HP), defined in traditional terms as a minimum of 90%; “Proficiency” (P), defined in traditional terms as between 80% - 89%, and; “Emerging Proficiency” (EP), defined in traditional terms as 79% and below.

Pass/Fail Grading System - Grade Equivalency Chart

Emerging Proficiency (EP)	Proficiency (P)	High Proficiency (HP)
79% and below	80 - 89%	90% and above

Grade Point Averages

Wilmette Institute does not calculate or report Grade Point Averages. GPA is not a factor in determining satisfactory academic progress, graduation, or financial aid (WI does not offer financial aid). GPA on transcripts from other institutions is not a factor in determining admission. Wilmette Institute will report percentage and qualitative grades (Emerging Proficiency, Proficiency, High Proficiency) on transcripts. Institutions receiving WI transcripts for credit can use the percentages to calculate student GPAs according to their methods.

Course Completion

A student must achieve either Proficiency or High Proficiency to complete a course successfully.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is only counted towards the synchronous elements of a course, that is, through the regular video conferences held with students. Asynchronous elements are “counted” by their completion.

All students enrolled in online coursework are expected to participate actively in the course. If a faculty member prefers to count attendance for asynchronous elements of hybrid courses, “participation” is defined as the student’s virtual presence for and participation in discussions, activities, and related forms of electronic contact occurring in a course’s learning environment(s): e.g., participation in on-line discussion about academic matters, media viewing, group activities, whole class or one-on-one chat, and completion and submission of assignments. Broad discretion regarding the required frequency and quality of a student’s participation rests with the lead faculty and should be delineated in the course syllabus.

Assessment of Papers and Projects

Students will receive detailed information on the assessment methods in the course syllabus. The Wilmette Institute does not use standardized examinations that require proctors. Make-up assessments are discretionary to the faculty.

Course Project

At the end of each term, projects or papers are required in all courses. Details about projects or papers and partial and final due dates are published in the syllabus. Projects and papers must be submitted before the due date. If a student has a reason for delay, a reasonable compromise with their instructors can be discussed and recorded with the Office of the Registrar.

Special Grades

The following non-numerical grades may also be assigned:

D = Drop

Students can drop a course within two weeks of the first day of class by notifying the faculty of their decision in writing.

W = Withdrawal

If a student decides to remove themselves from a course more than two weeks after the first day of class but during the first half of the course by writing a letter to the Registrar justifying their decision, they receive a withdrawal (W) on their transcript. If no letter is written or if a student removes themselves from a course after its midway point, then the student will receive an “Emerging Proficiency” grade.

A “W” is awarded to students who notify the Registrar of their desire to formally withdraw from a course after the drop period and before the course midway point. The W is included in the student’s transcript unless it is replaced by a grade on a subsequent attempt. Withdrawal policies and deadlines are outlined in the Admissions package.

AU = Audit

At the option of the Program Coordinator, a course may be audited by permission of the faculty offering a course.

Enrollment as an auditor is subject to permission of the instructor, provided that enrollment in a course as an auditor shall be permitted only after students otherwise eligible to enroll have had an opportunity to do so. Auditors are subject to the same fee structure as Certificate Program students and regular class attendance is expected. Once enrolled as an auditor, an individual may not change to regular student status unless such a change is requested no later than two weeks into the course. An enrolled student may not change to audit after the fourth week of instruction.

An auditor is a student who enrolls in a course for informational purposes only. Regular attendance is customary and expected, but an auditor does not complete assignments, participate in class discussions or forums, or complete course projects.

I = Incomplete

The symbol “I” (Incomplete Authorized) indicates that some required coursework has not been completed and evaluated during the course due to unforeseen but fully justified reasons and that there is still a possibility of passing the course. It is the student's responsibility to bring pertinent information to the faculty member’s attention and to determine from the faculty

member the remaining course requirements that must be satisfied to remove the Incomplete. A final grade is assigned when the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated. An "I" (Incomplete Authorized) should not be assigned when it is necessary for the student to attend additional class meetings to complete the course requirements. When assigning an "I" grade, faculty will complete an online contract visible to the student indicating assignments needing to be completed to meet the terms of the contract. An Incomplete must be made up within the time limit specified by the instructor when the completed "I" grade is assigned. The time limit may not extend beyond 3 months. If the instructor does not specify a time limit, then the student must meet the conditions specified by the instructor within 3 months from the day grades are due on the Academic Calendar (the last day of the term), the same term in which the "I" grade was assigned. This limitation prevails whether or not the student maintains continuous enrollment.

Failure to complete the assigned work within the stipulated time frame will result in an Incomplete being converted to an "Emerging Proficiency."