

# I-Grades

The decision as to whether or not the student will be permitted to enter into a contract for the completion of a course rests with the professor. If the professor is not available, the student should contact the appropriate department/program Chair.

The agreement must be arranged prior to the deadline for submission of final grades and a copy of the agreement must be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar by the professor. Course requirements must be completed within a maximum of 60 calendar days after the end of the semester.

The contract must indicate what the letter grade for the course will be if the student does not complete the coursework specified in the professor-student contract (i.e., the grade earned in the course to that date).

Unless the Office of the Registrar has been notified before, at the end of the 60-day period, the "I" symbol will be changed to a letter grade as determined by the professor, or, if the specified coursework has not been completed, the "I" will be changed to the grade indicated in the professor-student contract.

Extension of the "I" symbol contract beyond the 60-day period can be made at the discretion of the professor.

*Source: 2022-2023 Academic Calendar, & Grades and Examinations Policy,*

## FAQ on I-Grades

### What is an "I" grade?

"I" stands for 'incomplete'. This kind of grade is a temporary notation, often input at the end of a semester, which holds no value towards a student's GPA. You will only see an "I" on your grades list if you have negotiated an agreement with an instructor at MRU. An "I" grade begins as a written agreement (like a contract) between you and your instructor. It is a form filled out and forwarded to the Registrar's Office which states pending course requirements to be completed and the completion due dates you agreed upon with your instructor, and what will happen if the agreement expires and the coursework is not received by the agreed upon due date. The decision to enter into such a "contract" rests with the professor. If the professor is not available, you should contact the appropriate program Chair.

### When might an "I" grade agreement be useful to request?

There are a number of circumstances where it may be beneficial to you as a student to initiate an I grade, but it's up to you to decide whether or not you want to discuss this option with an instructor. Normally students may make such a request towards the end of the semester, or even after the last day of classes in a semester. Sometimes, life circumstances arise at the end of a course that are unpredictable. Students who want to attempt to finish their course, rather than withdraw with cause, might choose this option. **NOTE: If you enter into an "I" grade agreement, you will not be**

**subsequently eligible for a withdrawal with cause.**

### **What is the deadline for applying for an “I” grade?**

The agreement must be arranged prior to the deadline for submission of final grades. Though instructors have the discretion within institutional policy to adjust deadlines within the duration of a course (though not all instructors do adjust their deadlines), the “I” grade timelines are more fixed once there is an agreement in place.

### **Do students generally have the right to receive an “I” grade agreement?**

An “I” grade agreement is unfortunately **not** a right or guarantee you have as a student. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t make a case for requesting one. What kinds of life and academic circumstances are you experiencing which are impacting your ability to complete the course work? Consider seeking out the help of the [Student Advocacy Resource Centre](#) before you make this request of your instructor. We can help you navigate potential conflict situations, before they become more challenging.

### **Who agrees to, and fills out the I-grade form to send to the Registrar’s Office?**

The initial “I” grade or “I” grade agreement is first negotiated between you and your instructor. According to policy, your instructor has the discretion to make the initial call to grant you the “I” grade agreement or not. Although extension requests beyond 60 days of the agreement deadline are at the discretion of the professor, in practice, these extension requests sometimes involve consultation with the department Chair, who often weighs in on the call to extend the agreement or not.

### **What kinds of skills might be helpful to practice, prior to contacting your instructor to make this request, to increase the chances of a successfully negotiated “I” grade agreement?**

In our experience, working on active listening/communication skills, as well as conflict resolution skills, increases your chances of success. Ask probing questions, demonstrate that you’ve heard the instructor’s needs and communicate the importance of your needs in an objective way. It is easy for a request or conversation to escalate into a conflict. Being prepared with how to navigate a conversation, along with basic strategies on how to de-escalate a conflict, can help create positive results. The [Student Advocacy Resource Centre](#) would be happy to enhance your skills in these areas.

### **What is fair to put into an agreement?**

Fairness is relative to the person being considered. Be thoughtful and accommodating of fairness *for both you and your instructor*. For example, it would not be fair that you receive an ‘F’ grade for failing to meet the agreement’s deadline, if previous to the “I”-grade agreement you had completed 60% of the coursework and achieved 53% of your final grade from this portion of the coursework, but did not complete the remaining 40%. However, there are some exceptions to this example. It could also be unfair for you to ask an instructor to extend your assignment deadline beyond when their employment contract ends at the end of a semester. If either of these situations, or another question comes up related to fairness, consider speaking to the [Student Advocacy Resource Centre](#) before you sign or negotiate the agreement.

We can attend your meeting with your instructor with you where you negotiate the terms of your agreement. We won’t speak for you at the meeting, but we can help take notes or prepare you for this meeting so that you know your rights, are informed on policy, and have ideas of what you could propose in the agreement. We’re here to support you.

### What if I can't reach my instructor to negotiate an "I"-grade agreement?

You may wish to retain any written attempts and record any phone call attempts you've made, with dates and times, in a document. One potential option may be to copy the department Chair into your email correspondence to the instructor, so they are also aware of your request. Either the department Chair or their Administrative Assistant very likely will know if the instructor is unreachable for any reason, and may be able to suggest other options in this circumstance. Make no assumptions about why the instructor is not responding, and seek out extra help in a timely fashion.

### What if my instructor doesn't allow me a full 60 days to complete the coursework?

According to the Academic Calendar, all coursework must be completed within a maximum of **60 calendar days** after the end of the semester. Extension of the "I" symbol contract past 60 days can be made at the discretion of the professor or designated Chair, in the absence of the professor. If you think this is not enough time for you to complete the remainder of the course work, negotiate some possibilities, BEFORE the agreement is signed. Consider asking probing questions like:

- What kinds of solutions has the department come up with in past for I-grade terms when students and instructors are challenged in finding an agreeable date?
- How possible is it for the instructor to make an alternate arrangement with someone else in the department to mark the remainder of work?
- What kinds of substitutions could be made, in lieu of my illness/trauma/car accident that would allow for more time to complete coursework?

### What if my instructor declines my request of an I-grade agreement? What options do I have?

- Contact the department Chair to discuss other possibilities in your situation · Consider filing a final grade appeal and consulting the Student Advocacy Resource Centre first, for some assistance on doing so.
- If mental or physical illness were a factor, you may need to repeat the course, depending on the amount of work you didn't submit. If a part of it involves a final exam, it may still be possible to defer a final exam through the department office, based on severe, or unanticipated circumstances.
- If mental or physical illness were a factor, you may consider consulting Accessibility Services to see if there is an option for future accommodation or temporary accommodation, relating to a transitory condition. For example, if you were hospitalized or underwent treatment for a serious illness, depending on timelines of when you share this information, there may be ways that you could be accommodated.

### What happens when the "I" grade agreement expires?

Ultimately, students who enter into this agreement get a letter grade at the agreement's expiry in the form of a final mark. If coursework is completed by the deadline in the submitted agreement, the instructor marks your work. If you don't meet the deadline, it's possible that you would then fail the assignment, and in some cases, you may fail the course when the deadline is missed, depending on what percentage of the coursework was remaining to complete your agreement.

## Am I eligible for a credit or refund in the I-grade situation?

There are no refunds or credits attached to an I-grade.

*Source: 2022-2023 Academic Calendar*

Prepared by the Student Advocacy Resource Centre,

2022-2023 ☐ 403-440-7779 ☐ [advocacy@samru.ca](mailto:advocacy@samru.ca)

