

## Points of Consideration from the Registrar's Office

Introduction: The WP/WF/I Marks Ad Hoc Committee is now reviewing the college's current policy of granting I marks to students. Under the current policy, teachers may give students up to one year to complete an I mark; any I mark where the work isn't completed automatically goes to a WS mark, unless the instructor submits a different mark; and many faculty offer an I mark to give students the opportunity to take the entire course over without having to pay for it again.

In reviewing these policies and practices, the Registrar's Office has consulted current practices in other Michigan community colleges, and offers the following points of consideration as our discussion continues. Senate members are asked to look at these points as they review the faculty comments from last Spring, and offer suggestions on how, or if, the current I mark policy should be adjusted. The committee will review these suggestions, and submit a proposal for the Senate to consider in October.

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- One year is too long to allow work to be made up.
    - The most-common time period at other CC's in Michigan I heard back from is by the end of the next major semester (skipping Summer Semester). To me, this seems a good practice.
    - An unresolved I mark creates an open-ended record. We cannot process a graduation for a student with an open-ended record. The one-year expiration can keep a student's graduation hanging in limbo, which is especially frustrating for students when the class in which the I mark was received is not needed for graduation.
    - An unresolved I mark does not pass prerequisite checking. The longer it is out there unresolved, the longer it may take for the student to take the next class in the sequence.
    - Classes in which an I mark has been received may impact a student's financial aid award for that semester and future semesters. Giving up to a year to complete an I mark can push the completion into a new fiscal year, possibly costing the College money if the original and subsequent awards are affected.
    - A lot of staffing changes can occur in one year, and there is a reasonable chance the instructor who gave the I mark will no longer be here.
    - Adjuncts will give I marks to students, and then they may never teach at OCC again, leaving someone else to handle the make-up work.
  - Faculty should not give I marks that allow student to take the entire class a second time.
    - An I mark is not a permission to retake the entire class. It is an opportunity agreed to by the student and the instructor to complete some final coursework the student was unable to complete due to unforeseen circumstances. An instructor is under no obligation to give an I mark.
      - For example, I marks should only be given (instructor's option) when the student has a final test or final assignment to complete in class.

- When an I mark is given to a student so he/she can retake the entire class, the student often registers and pays for the class again anyway. We do not grant refunds to students who do this because the I mark instructions in the Catalog are clear.
- If students have extenuating circumstances out of their control that make it so they cannot continue the class, they should drop the course and then check with Enrollment Services to see if a special-circumstances refund opportunity exists. If not, the student can file a Petition for Tuition Refund for consideration in Enrollment Services, but doing this is no guarantee that a refund will be granted.
- Unresolved I marks should become an F grade instead of a WS mark.
  - For a majority of the CC's in Michigan I heard back from, an unresolved I mark becomes an F grade (or whatever that school's equivalent grade would be).
  - Because WS marks (and WP and WF marks before that) are non-punitive, students often don't take them seriously and never bother finishing them, creating additional work in various offices that is unnecessary.
  - If unresolved I marks became an F grade, students would hopefully be more certain about their intentions when making I-mark requests.

My recommendation would be that an I mark not even be a consideration for a student if he/she still has the opportunity to drop the class. Here are the criteria I recommend, which must all be met:

- Unforeseen circumstance comes about after the drop deadline has passed
- The student has been attending regularly
- The student is passing the class at the time of the unforeseen circumstance