

# APC Grade Replacement Recommendations

Feb 28 2022 | Emma Witt, Chair

## Summary

The Academic Policies Committee believes that Stockton should consider implementing a grade replacement procedure. Our recommendations are:

- Students should be allowed three attempts at a single course. After the second attempt, they should seek permission from their school office before being allowed to register for a third attempt.
- Grade replacement should be permitted when a student earns a C- or lower in a course. If program standards require grades higher than a C-, students should be allowed to replace those grades as well.
- The grade used in GPA calculation should be the highest grade earned in the course.
- The original grade should not show on the transcript, but a notation that the course was taken and the grade replaced should.
- There should be a limit on the number of grades a student can replace.
- Violations of academic honesty should carry a potential punishment of no grade replacement.
- Grade replacement should not be used in graduate programs

## Impetus

Grade replacement has been discussed multiple times among the Academic Policies Committee (APC) and the Faculty Senate. In 2016-17, APC considered the idea of a grade replacement policy at the request of the Student Senate, but voted against implementing a policy at that time. In May 2021, a request was made to APC from a Faculty Senator (Joe Cirio) to consider such a policy again. APC had an initial meeting about this request in October 2021, and shortly after, a related request was made by the Provost's Office. APC voted 8-0-1 in our December meeting that Stockton should consider grade replacement. Since then, the committee has worked to reconcile the two versions of grade replacement that were presented, researched the way other NJ institutions approach this topic, obtained data from IR, and discussed a range of options.

**This document represents our recommendations to the Senate with respect to the formation of a new University Procedure on Grade Replacement.**

# 1. Course repeat

Students have traditionally been allowed to attempt a single course three times, with a fourth attempt requiring permission of the school office. This was stated in the University Bulletin, but not in a policy or procedure. Part of the grade replacement proposal from the Provost's office was limiting attempts to two per course. After considering the financial aid aspect, looking at course repeat data from IR, and discussing as a committee, we recommend by a vote of 8-0:

***Concerning the number of times a student can take a single course, the maximum attempts should be three. Students can register for a second attempt on their own, but if a third attempt is required, they will have to get permission from their school office before being allowed to register a third time.***

Suggested wording:

### **Repeating a Course for Credit**

A student may repeat any course once without permission except where prohibited by accreditation standards and/or licensure requirements or if stated in the University Bulletin/catalog. A course repeat applies to courses from which the student received a grade or withdrew and received a grade of W. In order to repeat a course, the student must re-register, pay all appropriate tuition and fees, and satisfactorily complete the course (whereupon a separate grade will be assigned).

Students wishing to repeat a course for a second time (third overall attempt) shall be required to meet with their School Dean or Assistant Dean before being allowed to register for the course.

## 2. How should multiple attempts be considered in the GPA?

When a student retakes a course, the current policy averages the two letter grades when calculating a student's GPA. APC considered three options here: count the highest grade, drop the lowest grade, or count the grade of the most recent attempt. The committee vote on this was 7 votes for the highest grade, 1 for the most recent, 0 for drop the lowest. Therefore, we recommend:

***When a student re-takes a course, the highest grade earned should be counted in their GPA.***

Suggested wording:

When a course is repeated, the "prevailing grade" will be the highest grade earned in the course. For these purposes, a grade that is assigned a numeric weight (i.e. A: 4.00, B: 3.00, C: 2.00, D: 1.00, F: 0.00, etc.) is considered higher than a grade that is not assigned a numeric weight (i.e. P, NC, or W).

## 3. When can grade replacement be used?

The circumstances under which a student may wish to replace a grade will vary by student and class. Financial aid can be used to repeat a course one time, irrespective of the grade received in the initial attempt. Other NJ institutions have a variety of approaches, including allowing students to replace any grade (A-F, W, P/NC) or limiting

the grade replacement to grades lower than C's. The idea of "grade shopping" was one of the main concerns of APC and Faculty Senate in 2015-2016, and remains a concern among the committee now. The committee considered the following options:

- Allow students to replace any grade (A-F, I, W, P/NC)
- Allow students to replace C- or lower grades, or any grade below a program's minimum grade requirement.

The committee recommends by a 6-2 vote that:

***Stockton University will permit a student to use grade replacement for any class that has earned a C- or lower. If a program has minimum grade requirements higher than a C-, students in those programs can use grade replacement for grades below the minimum grade requirement for those courses.***

## 4. Transcripts and grade replacement

When a student repeats a course and uses grade replacement, what should go on their transcript? The other NJ institutions studied keep the original grade on the student's transcript, though Rowan is reviewing that aspect of their grade replacement policy. The original grade replacement application from Joe Cirio proposed not showing the original grade, but replacing it with a notation showing that the student had taken the course and that the grade was replaced. The committee considered both options:

- The original grade should remain on the transcript, with some notation (i.e., "R") identifying the grade was replaced.
- The original grade should not be shown on the transcript, rather some notation (i.e., "R") should replace the original grade noting the course was retaken and the grade will be replaced.

By a 5-3 vote, the committee recommends:

***When grade replacement is used, the grade(s) from attempt(s) not used in the calculation of the GPA should be replaced on the student's transcript with a notation signifying that the grade(s) was/were replaced.***

## 5. How many times can grade replacement be used?

Should there be a limit on the number of grades or credit hours a student can replace? Financial aid and satisfactory academic progress will somewhat limit many students in the number of credits or classes they can replace. For example, students are limited to 150% (192 credits) of the credits needed to complete their bachelor's degree, and must maintain a PACE of 67% to remain eligible for financial aid. The committee considered whether or not there should be a limit on the number of times a student can use grade

replacement-not the number of times a student can repeat their courses. The options were:

- Students should be allowed to use grade replacement for as many courses as they want
- Students should be limited to a set number of classes, such as 5 courses
- Students should be limited to a set number of credits, such as 20 credits

Five committee members voted for establishing a limit on the number of times students can replace grades, with two voting for a credit based limit and three for a class based limit. Three members voted to allow students to replace as many grades as they want. By a 5-3 vote then, the committee recommends:

***There should be a limit on the number of times students can use grade replacement. Whether this limit should be course based or credit based, and what that limit should be established as warrants further consideration.***

## 6. Academic honesty

If a violation of the academic policy is upheld against a student, should that student be permitted to use grade replacement? This was a big question for the committee, with many discussions about the varying levels of academic dishonesty, considering the implications of punishing students twice for the same offense, wishing to uphold the integrity of the University, and the current procedures related to academic dishonesty.

We considered the following three options in our vote:

- If an academic honesty charge is upheld, grade replacement should not be an option
- Academic honesty issues should have no impact on grade replacement
- Prohibition of grade replacement should be a potential consequence of academic honesty charges

The committee vote was three for “Academic honesty issues should have no impact on grade replacement” and five for “Prohibition of grade replacement should be a potential consequence of academic honesty charges”

Thus, the committee recommends:

***Procedure 2005 Student Academic Honesty should be edited to indicate that denial of the grade replacement option is a potential penalty for violating the academic honesty parts of the Campus Code of Conduct.***

## 7. Graduate programs

Currently, students in graduate programs are allowed one course repeat, with the grades averaged for the GPA calculation. The committee considered whether or not graduate classes should be eligible to use the grade replacement option and by a 5-3 vote felt they should not be eligible for grade replacement.

Our recommendation is:

***Grade replacement should only be used for undergraduate courses/programs.***

## 8. Course sequencing, exceptions

We believe that limiting re-takes to those grades that are below the minimum grade requirements for many programs will mean that this section of Procedure 2017 can remain as written, since students need at least a C in those courses to move on to the next level. They would be ineligible for grade replacement.

“Some courses are offered in a specific sequence because certain proficiencies in one serve as the basis for the next level course. Students who complete the higher-level proficiency cannot subsequently earn credit in the lower-level course. Examples of such sequences are MATH 1100 Pre-Calculus Mathematics with MATH 2215 Calculus I and LANG 1230 Beginning French I with LANG 1231 Beginning French II.”

Other courses and programs need to be specifically mentioned with respect to grade replacement. For example, First year seminar courses should not be eligible for grade replacement, as having non-first year students in them negatively impacts the overall purpose of having classes specifically for first year students. FRST courses should be eligible for grade replacement, as students failing to earn C or higher grades are required to re-take them. Students who may wish to replace a grade earned in an F-designated section of a specific course should be allowed to, but they should enroll in a non F-designated section of that course.

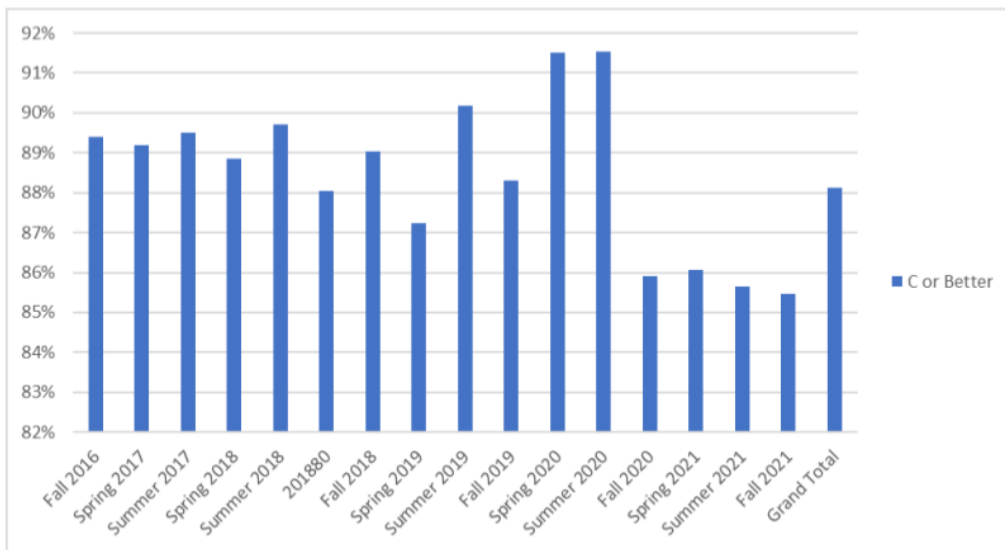
The committee expects that the Faculty Senate will be aware of other considerations related to specific program needs or prohibitions due to accreditation.

# Summary

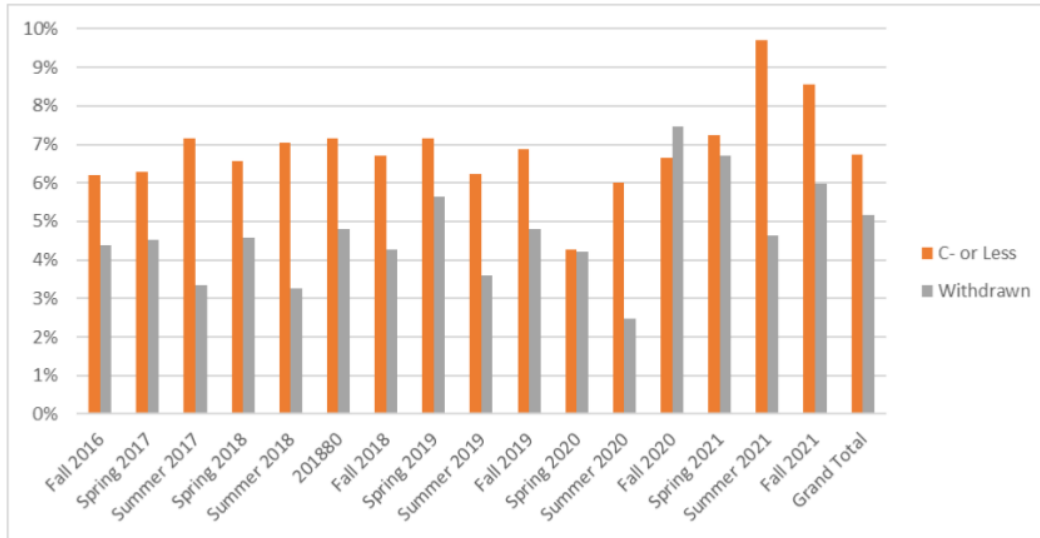
The committee voted 8-0 to send these recommendations to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for consideration by the full Faculty Senate. We would also like to emphasize that this new procedure be evaluated in three years to gauge impacts on student success, faculty workload, and course seat availability.

## Appendix 1: Summary of available IR data

### Successful attempts for courses Fall 2016-21



## Unsuccessful attempts for courses Fall 2016-2021



## Second Attempts

**21%** (6,866 of 33,416) of courses that are not successfully completed on the first attempt have a second attempt

Of those, **69%** complete the course successfully on the second attempt

## Third Attempts

Of the 31% of second attempts that were unsuccessful, there was a third attempt for **32%** (670 third attempts of 2103 unsuccessful second attempts)

**61%** of those third attempts were successful (407 of 670)

Successful third attempts represent **~1%** of the total number of unsuccessful course attempts during this period (407 of 33,416)



## Course Repeat by Program

Programs with the most repeats (% of total unsuccessful that repeat)

ACCT 56%  
BSNS 59%  
FINA 50%  
CRIM 38%  
HLTH 37%  
MGMT 37%  
FRST 36%  
MATH 35%  
CHEM 35%

Overall average = 19%

Question to keep an eye on—will grade replacement increase the overall average of students repeating courses? Will some programs be more/less impacted?

[Workbook with repeats by acronym](#)

[Workbook Repeat outcomes by gender and Race/Ethnicity](#)

[Success rates by program and gender. Race/Ethnicity](#)

# Appendix 2: What do other places do?

[Summary from Provost's Office](#)

[Summary from APC](#)

## Summary Slides

### Course Repeat-How many times can a student take a course

<i>School</i>	<i>Info</i>
Stockton (current)	3 max, needs permission from school for fourth attempt
Stockton (proposed)	2 max, needs permission from Provost for third attempt
Kean	Unclear, students can maybe take a course as many times as they want, but can't use grade replacement for more than 4 courses (or 12 credit hours)
Rowan	Same course cannot be taken more than twice without approval from department chair
TCNJ	Can repeat any course once without permission, includes W courses. Permission must be given by department chair for 3rd attempt
Montclair	Student earns F, D-, D, D+ or WD (withdrawal?). Can repeat once. Special permission from Dean of College/School required for third attempt. Never a 4th attempt
NJIT	Can repeat a single course up to 4 times, including W
Ramapo	Distinguishes between repeat (4 times total for career) and retake-(unlimited)
Thomas Edison	Can repeat courses as many times as they want
WPU	Must have lower than C grade, not more than twice for single class

## Summary of Grade Replacement Policies-Transcript and GPA

### Q. What happens to a student's original grade on the transcript when they retake a course?

- A. The grade remains on the transcript at all other institutions considered. This is under review at Rowan, and "R" is added to the transcript for repeated courses at Kean and Ramapo

### Q: How is the repeated course considered in a student's GPA?

- A. At four of the other institutions, the highest grade is used in GPA calculation (Kean, Rowan, TCNJ, Thomas Edison). At two, the grade of the last attempt is used (Montclair, WPU). Ramapo is different based on whether the course is a retake or repeat. At NJIT, the lowest grade is excluded in GPA calculation, all others are included.

## Summary of Grade Replacement Policies-Limits, Forms, Academic Honesty

**Q. Is there a limit on how many times a student can use the grade replacement option?**

A. Three of the other institutions have specific limits on the number of times a student can use grade replacement (Kean: 4 courses or 12 credits; Ramapo: retake as many times as they want, repeat can be used no more than 4 times; WPU: max of 5 courses).

**Q. How do students get the grade replacement?**

A. Three of the other institutions have forms for students to fill out (Kean, TCNJ, Ramapo).

**Q. What about academic honesty?**

A. Ramapo has specific provision stating that the repeat option is not available if an academic integrity violation occurred and sanction was imposed

## Other aspects

**Graduate programs**-three of the institutions address graduate programs, one does not allow graduate students to use grade replacement in any circumstances (Kean), one only under exceptional circumstances (Montclair), Ramapo allows grad students to retake but not repeat a course.

## Appendix 3: Proposals for grade replacement

[Initial proposal from Joe Cirio](#)

[Joe Cirio Response to APC Feedback](#)

### Provost's Office Proposal

**"Repeating a Course for Credit**

A student may repeat any course once except where prohibited by accreditation standards and/or licensure requirements or if stated in the University Bulletin/catalog. A course repeatThis also applies to courses from which the student received a grade or withdrew and received a grade of W. In order to repeat a course, the student must re-register, pay all appropriate tuition and fees, and satisfactorily complete the course (whereupon a separate grade will be assigned).

When a course is repeated, the “prevailing grade” will be the highest grade earned for that course. For these purposes, a grade that is assigned a numeric weight (i.e. A: 4.00, B: 3.00, C: 2.00, D: 1.00, F: 0.00, etc.) is considered higher than a grade that is not assigned a numeric weight (i.e. P, NC, or W).

All grades earned will remain on the student’s permanent transcript, but only the prevailing grade is and will be calculated in the cumulative grade point average. However, for courses for which a student has received a charge of academic dishonesty, and that charge has been upheld, both grades will remain on the transcript and be factored into the student’s GPA.

Except where specified in the University Bulletin, a course passed more than once may only be counted once toward graduation.

In exceptional circumstances, and where not prohibited by accreditation or licensure requirements, a course may be repeated more than once with permission from the Office of the Provost or designee. “