

DISCONTINUED WITH FAILURE (DF) GRADE

RESOLVED AB01/104 APPROVED AT ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 4 DECEMBER 2003

That the Academic Board approves that the grade of DF be abolished and that students who discontinue without special permission after the discontinuation date receive the marks achieved up to the time of the discontinuation. (File: 011341)

DISCONTINUED WITH FAILURE (DF) GRADE

Issue

The Academic Board has recently approved a proposal to move the last date to withdraw without failure from the HECS census date (end of week 4 or 5) to the end of week 8. The need for DF, representing a discontinuation *with* failure after the extended discontinuation date, is now less evident.

Background and Discussion

The grade DF (Discontinued with Failure) is applied to results for students who have applied to withdraw from a course after the last date to discontinue without failure, where either

- No evidence is provided to support a request for discontinuation *without* failure
- Any such evidence is not considered sufficiently compelling by the Course Authority, Program Authority or Registrar

DF is not usually applied after the end of session. With the change of DOF date, there is now a window of only about 6 weeks during which DF may be applicable.

AF and DF

DF can be applied to a result whether or not any assessments were attempted. Where a student does not apply to withdraw but also does not attempt any assessment, the grade AF (Absent Fail) should be submitted by the Course Authority. If *any assessment at all* is attempted by the student, a mark (even 00) should be submitted. Long ago AF meant "absent from the examination," but this no longer applies given the wide variety of assessment practices in use.

AF has no impact on a student's WAM. DF is equivalent to 00FL and thus significantly affects the WAM. This rule was accepted by the Academic Board when the WAM was adopted as a recommended progress measure, although it may have been overshadowed by more immediate issues. The reason for the rule was to provide a disincentive for students to abandon a course without grounds that would earn a discontinuation without failure. Anecdotal evidence exists that some students would prefer a DF to a risk of failure with a mark, or even a low pass where expectations were much higher.

If DF is no longer used, a student who would have received such a grade would now be committed to completing remaining assessments for the course. If little or no effort were made in these tasks, a very low mark would result. The low mark would impact the student's WAM, though less than the present practice.

Statistics Semester 1, 2001

In S1 216 students received DFs (a total of 372 DFs). 94 of these were commencing students, most of whom also withdrew from the University. About a quarter of the

remaining 122 students had a WAM at the end of 2000 of 65 or greater. On average they lost almost 12 marks from their cumulative WAM.

<i>Prior WAM</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Mean WAM difference</i>
less than 50	27	-4.34
50 to 55	22	-4.64
55 to 60	18	-8.41
60 to 65	10	-6.89
65 or more	45	-11.9
TOTAL	122	-8.01

Recommendation

Given the quite low current usage of the DF grade, and the diminished future need given the reduction in the number of weeks where it could be applied, there seems little justification for its continued application.

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