



Grading Approach
2019–2020 Academic Year (Third Trimester)
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Could we have received this information sooner? Is it too late now?

We agree it would have been ideal to communicate this information at the beginning of the third trimester. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges that have been difficult to predict and plan for. As with many elements of this crisis, we have needed to wait for guidance from regional and local officials on how to proceed.

To account for these unforeseen delays, we are instructing teachers to assess distance-learning work only after the point when students have been able to submit work. In other words, students will not be penalized for periods of time when they may not have had access to technology or if they faced other challenging circumstances beyond their control.

Q. Can students submit packets and independent work from their books, instead of online work?

We acknowledge the difficulty of maintaining consistent access to technology. We also acknowledge the importance of social-distancing and keeping our students, their families, and our faculty / staff safe. Therefore, we have tried to balance online learning with offline opportunities.

For students who are unable to participate in online learning, school leaders and teachers are working to suggest alternate learning activities. Because these will be difficult to assess, or to provide feedback on, teachers are being instructed to use the “Incomplete-Alternate (I-A)” designation under such circumstances *without judgment*.

Q. Is there a deadline for submitting work for the third trimester?

Teachers will be providing opportunities for learning until the scheduled **end of the school year on June 12, 2020**. Some of these activities may require that students’ submit work. Others will be targeted for enrichment or practice.

We ask that you please understand, too, that teachers need time to review students’ work and submit grades. This is particularly challenging in an online environment, when email inboxes can fill-up quickly. Therefore, we are asking that students not submit large batches of “make-up” work as the end of the school year approaches.

As indicated previously, students will not be penalized for being unable to submit work for reasons beyond their control. Students with significant amounts of missing work will receive an “Incomplete-Alternate (I-A)” designation *without judgement*.

Q. Will students have to “make-up” work, next year, if they receive an “Incomplete-Alternate (I-A)?”

No. Students will not have to submit make-up assignments before the next school year. Nonetheless, we are developing plans and working with partners to address students’ social, emotional, and learning-related needs in the next and following school years. As we do at IMS, schools around the country recognize the need to adjust plans and to support students with content they would have experienced in the third trimester of 2019-2020.



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Q. Doesn't an "Incomplete-Alternate (I-A)" carry a negative mark on a student's school records?

No, an "Incomplete-Alternate (I-A)" does not mean a student has failed. It is not intended to carry any other negative connotation, because we recognize that students may not be able to participate in distance-learning activities due to circumstances beyond their control.

We are working with high schools and scholarship committees, so that they understand our need to adjust our grading approach in the third trimester of 2019-2020. We are providing a "Grading Profile" for IMS, explaining our approach. High schools admissions officers and scholarship committees also recognize the need to adjust their approaches to selection. Many are offering students the opportunity to submit a "Personal Learning Profile" or portfolio of their work during the third trimester.

Q. If a student earns a "High Pass," is this equivalent to an "A?" Is a "Pass," like a "B" or "C?"

No. Students who earn a "High Pass" do so on the basis of their consistent and exemplary work in a distance-learning environment that potentially includes being especially responsive to teachers' feedback. This does not necessarily equate to an "A," because traditional letter grades use a separate percentage-based scale. Likewise, the same is true of a "Pass"—that it should not be considered the same or even nearly the same as a "B" or a "C."

Q. Will IMS be offering summer school?

Because students will have additional learning needs, as a result of the prolonged school closure due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are planning to offer expanded summer school sessions with our partners at Catapult Learning. This offering will include learning opportunities in mathematics, literacy, STEM, and additional Family Connections support. Your school's principal will be sharing more details soon.

Q. What will school look like next year?

While there is still much that needs to be determined, we are developing plans to reopen schools as safely as possible in the fall. Of course, we will do so in accordance with all related guidance for schooling that is being provided by the PA Department of Education, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and the Health Department of the City of Philadelphia.

Q. How do I have my other questions answered?

Please contact the student's teacher, first, who may be able to answer your questions. You may also contact the school's principal, who will work with the IMS Central Office to address any questions you may have.