

Registrar feedback in GREEN

Motion for Temporary Pass/Fail Grading Option for Spring 2020 Semester

(Revised for April 13, 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting)

All actions contained within this motion are intended to be temporary and only apply to grades earned during the Spring 2020 semester. No permanent changes are being made to the current Policy on Pass-Fail Option for Undergraduates which state the following:

A limited pass-fail option in courses not required for the major, minor or general education program is available at the University.

To be eligible for the pass/fail option, the student must have completed at least 34 earned hours (including transfer hours) and must be a matriculated undergraduate in good standing. Up to two (2) pass/fail courses may be selected in one semester, but no more than four (4) pass/fail courses may be selected throughout the entire undergraduate career.

If a student changes majors to a discipline in which pass/fail credit has been earned, the grade(s) earned in such a pass/fail course(s) shall be retrieved and recorded on permanent record in place of the pass/fail grade. Intent to take a course pass/fail must be filed in the Office of Registrar within the first three weeks of the semester for full semester long courses.

Note: If deemed necessary to apply this temporary policy to future semesters, the policy can be extended by a future motion to extend the temporary policy to additional semesters.

This temporary policy does NOT require ALL students to be graded on a pass/fail basis. The purpose of this temporary policy is to provide a limited option enabling individual students to select pass/fail based on their circumstances.

Students are encouraged to very carefully consider the benefits and potential consequences of selecting a pass/fail option by consulting with their adviser, their professors, and other trusted faculty. The desire of the Faculty Senate is that each student should make the best choice for the student's long-term success.

It is necessary to keep some restrictions in place. Some programs, for example, have requirements (e.g., licensing) that mandate a letter grade. Some programs require letter grades in courses that are important prerequisites for their programs.

Students should consider the possible impact(s) that placing a course(s) on pass-fail can have on their GPA. It's important to remember that an "F" will negatively impact a student's GPA, while a "P" will not improve it.

Students should keep in mind that there are other alternatives available to them if they are concerned about negative impacts to their Spring 2020 grades. One option is an grade of Incomplete, which can be awarded when circumstances beyond the students control prevent the student from completing certain work. There is no negative impact to the students GPA, and the full letter grade will be entered once the work is completed. Undergraduate students ordinarily have the first eight weeks of the subsequent major semester to complete the work, and graduate students have one year. These deadlines can be extended by request of the faculty. In addition, if an individual student feels they were not treated fairly in the grading process, there is an established policy on [Appeals for Grade Changes](#).

Proposed Temporary Pass/Fail Option for Undergraduates (Spring 2020 only)

The following reflects amendments passed during the Faculty Senate meeting April 6, 2020

The standing Policy on Pass/Fail Grades is temporarily amended to allow the following actions

- The deadline for declaring intent to take a course pass/fail for the Spring 2020 semester must be filed in the Office of Registrar by May 10, 2020. The Office of the Registrar will make available an updated request form that students must submit by the deadline.
- Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis during the Spring 2020 semester will not be considered when calculating a student's total number of Pass/Fail elections.

The following amendments will be considered on Monday, April 13, 2020 **(Registrar feedback in GREEN)**

1. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: There is no limit on the number of courses that may be placed on pass-fail for the Spring 2020 semester. *No issues/concerns to implement*
2. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: A notation shall be placed on the transcripts for Spring 2020 semester indicating the exceptional circumstances of Pass/Fail grades earned during that semester *No issues/concerns to implement. This would be done through the transcript key*

that is attached to all official transcripts. A suggestion is “The COVID-19 pandemic required significant academic changes. Unusual enrollment patterns and grading reflect the disruption of the time, not necessarily the student's work.”

3. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: The administration shall make every effort to inform students in advance of any adverse effects that opting for P/F may have on financial aid, transfer of credits, professional accreditations, or applications for further higher education. Students electing P/F should sign a statement that they understand the risks. *No issues/concerns to implement. The Office of the Registrar is currently developing a list of considerations/warnings that can be provided to students who are considering electing a pass/fail option this spring as part of the request form that will require their acknowledgement.*
4. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: The Policy on Withdrawals is amended so that the Spring 2020 semester deadline for withdrawing from a course without instructors' permission is extended to May 10, 2020 *No issues/concerns to implement, although this really is a temporary amendment to our withdrawal policy, not the pass/fail policy.*
5. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: The deadline for Undergraduate student to complete grades of Incomplete earned during the Spring 2020 semester shall be automatically extended to the end of the Fall 2020 semester. Faculty may request extensions to that deadline as needed. *No issues/concerns to implement*
6. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: We reaffirm that the current policy on [Grade Change Appeals](#) stands, and that all reasonable consideration shall be made concerning the significant academic changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic
7. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: For the Spring 2020 Semester, courses taken as Pass/Fail will satisfy requirements for the major, minor, and general education program. *These would need to happen together. This would really mean that all courses applied towards degree requirements, including free electives, would be met with P grades. Because a P has to have a traditional A-D grade equivalent, we would need to set the P for Spring 2020 to a higher equivalent value than the current D equivalent in order for it to meet major/minor requirements, which would also allow it to meet General Education requirements. I might need to use a new notation like P[^] or P[~] to differentiate from P grades used in prior semesters under the standard pass/fail policy. Most major/minor requirements need a C- or higher, so we could set the Spring 2020 pass grade to = a C-, but there are many programs or specific courses in*

majors that have higher requirements (Nursing is the first one that comes to mind).

- a. Alternative motion #6a to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option:
Departments may decide if courses within their majors/minors may be taken on a P/F basis *This would be extremely difficult to implement in the time remaining between final approval of a revised pass/fail policy and the end of the semester. If this amendment is included as currently proposed, it would likely result in considerable end-of-term delays associated with final grade reporting and availability of accurate official transcripts. Each application of a P grade to an approved major/minor requirement would be a manual exception processed by a staff in the Office of the Registrar. This is the only method available to implement this amendment because all degree audit rules are hardwired to comply with our existing undergraduate pass/fail policy to not allow P grades in major/minor requirements. This would also delay end-of-term degree certification processes and the awarding of degrees at a time when students are anxious to document proof of degree completion for employment, graduate school admission and licensure/certification processes. However, if this amendment is expanded to automatically allow pass grades in ALL degree requirement areas (including major/minors), where a new pass notation (P^) is equivalent to a C- or higher (amendment #5), implementation would be significantly less challenging to. This would also require a new low pass (LP) notation for passing grades less than a C-. See comments under #9 for additional considerations.*
- b. Alternative motion #6b to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: General Education courses not encumbered by a major shall be eligible for pass-fail grading for the Spring 2020 semester. Students may opt for P/F in unencumbered General Education courses but the original letter grade will be “uncovered” and used if (i) the course is prerequisite to another course that the student applies to take or (ii) the course is subsequently part of a student’s major or minor when they change or declare their major or minor. *This is possible but will require some reprogramming by the Register which could be completed by the end of the semester. Item i is possible but would require manual overrides (where a prerequisite grade of higher than a D- is required). See additional notes under #8 and #10 regarding prerequisites.*
- c. Alternate Motion #6c to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: for the Spring 2020 semester, an undergraduate grade of C- or higher will be recorded using a P^ notation and will have a numeric value equivalent to “C-” and shall be sufficient for all courses counted in the major or minor and encumbered general education courses, and shall fulfill the prerequisite requirement for any subsequent courses. For earned grades of D-, D, or D+, a notation of “LP” shall be used to indicate a low pass.

This is possible but will require considerable reprogramming by the Register but could be completed by the end of the semester. However, many courses have prerequisites of a grade higher than C- and many degree audit requirements have a graduation requirement of a grade higher than a C-. The proposed P^ notation would be problematic in those circumstances and would not meet those prerequisites or apply to those degree requirements. This amendment cannot be combined with amendment #6a if only selected majors/minors/courses in certain departments will allow pass grades to fulfill major/minor requirements because a P^ (being equivalent to a C-) would automatically fulfill any degree requirements where a C- or higher grade is sufficient.

8. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: If a course graded on a Pass/Fail grade option the Spring 2020 semester and the course is a prerequisite for a subsequent course a grade of 'P' will meet the prerequisite and waive the prerequisite grade requirement, for the subsequent course. Students should discuss this decision with their advisor or instructor, to be sure they have mastered enough of the material to move onto the next course in a sequence of courses. *This is possible but would not be automatic and require manual overrides to be entered by departments for the subsequent course in cases where the prerequisite has a minimum grade higher than a D-. However, if amendment #9 is included with this amendment, the P^ grade would automatically satisfy prerequisites where a minimum grade of C- is required and the LP grade would automatically satisfy prerequisites where any passing grade (D- or higher) is required.*
9. Motion to amend the Temporary Pass/Fail option: The option of Pass/Fail will be extended to Graduate Students for the Spring 2020 semester, after consultation with and the permission of the students Graduate Advisor. Graduate courses graded on a Pass/Fail basis will not count towards the limit of no more than 2 grades of C within the planned program. Graduate students will receive a grade of "Pass" for grades of "C" or higher. *We would need additional detail about what grade should be posted for grades of C- or lower – F? or a new low pass (LP) notation that would not be applicable towards degree requirements? Implementation of this amendment would have to largely be managed by the School of Graduate Studies through manual exceptions to degree audit on an individual student by student basis. This could delay end-of-term degree certification processes and the awarding of degrees.*