

PASS/FAIL POLICY FOR THE SPRING 2020 SEMESTER

Approved by Russell L. Moore, Provost

March 25, 2020

Amended April 2, 2020

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to extend flexibility in regard to Pass/Fail (P/F) grading at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) in light of the global health emergency caused in spring 2020 by the COVID-19 virus. This flexibility recognizes that CU Boulder students are being asked to maintain continuity in their studies at the same time as they are undergoing upheaval in their place of residence, the configuration of their communities, and other economic and personal circumstances. They may also be coping with illness, quarantine, or self-isolation for themselves or family members. Finally, they are dealing with the stress and anxiety caused by the uncertainty of these times and by enormous changes to normal social interactions, including normal instructional, academic and research-related interactions.

This policy is supported by University of Colorado President Mark Kennedy's suspension of the Pass/Fail, Drop/Add, and Withdrawal provisions of APS 1025, the Uniform Grading Policy, and placement of these provisions are under the jurisdiction of each CU campus through summer 2020.

DEFINITIONS

As per Colorado Department of Higher Education mandate issued on March 27, 2020, CU Boulder has adopted a distinction for the spring 2020 semester between the grades of "P" and "P+." For spring 2020, a "P" grade is earned when the instructor assigns the student a grade of D-, D, or D+. A "P+" grade is earned when the instructor assigns the student a grade of C- or higher. In this policy, references to grades of "pass" or "P" refer to either a grade of "P" or a grade of "P+."

POLICY

Students in every undergraduate and graduate degree program (with the exception of the Law School as outlined below) may opt for a Pass/Fail (P/F) grade in almost every course in the spring 2020 semester, with limited exceptions as described in the procedures attached to this policy. P grades earned in the spring 2020 semester will not be counted against the P credit limit in any degree or major.

Colleges, schools, and departments/programs will retain the ability to enforce prerequisite grades. They will also be given the tools to advise students throughout the semester that the P/F option may not be a good choice in some courses for some students, given those students' individual goals.

The Law School will employ a mandatory Credit/No-Credit grading system, as described in the procedures attached to this policy.

PROCEDURES

Undergraduate Students

- Undergraduate students may choose the P/F option in any of their undergraduate courses for spring 2020, with limited exceptions as outlined in the “General” section below.
- Pass grades earned in spring 2020 will not be counted against school/college limits on P credits for undergraduate degrees, or against limits on P/F credits within undergraduate majors.
- For classes that have a minimum grading requirement: if a student receives a “P” in that course, the “P” satisfies the minimum grading requirement and counts for the major or degree, even if the underlying grade earned by the student is below the minimum grade requirement. However, prerequisite grade requirements will be enforced as described below.
- Colleges/schools and departments/programs are responsible for advising students who have chosen the P/F option on courses that are inadvisable for the students’ individual goals. Through the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, the Office of the Registrar will generate weekly reports of undergraduate students who select the P/F option on any class. The report will include student details such as name, ID, classification, major, career level, etc. Reports for each school/college’s students and for the Program in Exploratory Studies (PES) will be sent to the respective associate and assistant deans (including the associate vice provost for advising and exploratory studies) who serve on the Undergraduate Student Success Committee. The associate/assistant deans are responsible for disseminating to advisors and departmental administrators as necessary. If a student has selected a P/F option on a class that is inadvisable for their individual goals (e.g., licensure or intent to apply to graduate or medical school), they should be advised to change the P/F option back to a letter grade, but the responsibility to change back to a letter grade remains with the student.
- Colleges/schools and PES are responsible for checking P grades against prerequisite grading standards for their courses. At the end of the semester, the Office of the Registrar will run reports of all classes and students for which the P/F option was selected, along with the original faculty input grade and final/official grade (P or F). Reports for each school/college’s students and for the Program in Exploratory Studies (PES) will be sent to the respective associate and assistant deans (including the associate vice provost for advising and exploratory studies) who serve on the Undergraduate Student Success Committee. The colleges/schools and PES can use this report to override students’ requisites in cases where the P grade does not satisfy the minimum grade required for a prerequisite. The P grade will remain on the student’s transcript, but the student will need to retake the course to satisfy the prerequisite requirement. The faculty input grade should not be broadly shared or used for purposes other than analysis and requisite clearing.

Graduate Students

- Graduate students may choose the P/F option in any of their graduate courses for spring 2020 that would ordinarily receive a letter grade, with limited exceptions as described in the “General” section below.
- Except for the limited exceptions as described in the “General” section below, P grades earned in spring 2020 will satisfy degree requirements.

- For classes that have a minimum grading requirement: if a student receives a “P” in that course, the “P” satisfies the minimum grading requirement and counts for the major or degree, even if the underlying grade earned by the student is below the minimum grade requirement. However, prerequisite grade requirements will be enforced as described below.
- For spring 2020 courses, the Graduate School will lift its rule that P/F courses may not satisfy degree requirements.
- Colleges/schools and departments/programs are responsible for advising students who have chosen the P/F option on courses that are inadvisable for the students’ individual goals. The Office of the Registrar will generate weekly reports of graduate students who select the P/F option on any class through the remainder of the semester. The report will include student details such as name, ID, classification, major, career level, etc. Reports for each school/college’s students will be sent to the respective associate or assistant dean for graduate studies. The associate/assistant deans are responsible for disseminating to advisors and departmental administrators as necessary. If a student has selected a P/F option on a class that is inadvisable for their individual goals (e.g., licensure, employment, intent to apply to a PhD program, or other reasons), the department will advise the student to change the PF option back to a letter grade, but the responsibility to change back remains with the student.
- Colleges/schools are responsible for checking P grades against prerequisite grading standards for their courses. At the end of the semester, the Office of the Registrar will run reports of all classes and students for which the P/F option was selected, along with faculty input grade and final/official grade (P or F). Reports for each school/college’s graduate students will be sent to the respective associate or assistant dean for graduate studies. The colleges/schools can use this report to override students’ requisites where a P does not satisfy a prerequisite requirement. The faculty input grade should not be broadly shared or used for purposes other than analysis and requisite clearing.

Law Students

- Law courses will be graded on a Credit/No-Credit (CR/NC) basis in spring 2020. A CR grade is equivalent to a Pass in Law’s normal grading system. The NC grade is to be assigned to those students not performing sufficiently, in the judgment of the instructor, to receive credit for the course.
- CR/NC grading is mandatory, not optional, for all law school courses.
- A grade of NC does not affect GPA. On the other hand, a student receiving an NC will not get credit for the course counting toward graduation. Additionally, any student receiving an NC for a required course will have to retake that course.

General

- The deadline to choose the P/F option is extended until the last day of classes for the spring 2020 semester. For most courses, that date is April 30, 2020. For a course on a special term schedule (such as short courses), the deadline is the last day of classes for that course.
- Courses taken on the B3 campus are not available for the PF option.
- Special-term courses in progress as of the date of announcement of this plan are included in these provisions as long as their end date is on or before the end of classes for the regular term: April 30, 2020.

- Immediately, the Office of the Registrar will provide each college/school (other than Law) with a list of its spring 2020 classes that are designated as letter graded only (LTR). No later than March 25, 2020, each college/school must return its list to the Registrar with justification for any course that should remain LTR. Justification will require the college/school to demonstrate that no student whatsoever should ever take that course PF. (Examples might include courses taken only for the purposes of licensure, if requirements for licensure require a letter grade.) For those courses only, P/F will not be an option; all others will be designated for spring 2020 as courses for which a student may opt PF (OPT).
- The Office of the Registrar will complete all conversions of spring 2020 LTR courses to OPT by March 27, 2020, and those courses will be available after that date for students to choose the PF option through the last day of classes (April 30th for full semester classes, or the last date of special session classes that have not already concluded).
- The Office of the Registrar and the senior vice Provost for academic planning and assessment will collaborate with the Office of Strategic Relations and Communications on appropriate communications to students, faculty, colleges/schools and advisors.
- The Office of the Registrar will explore the possibility and feasibility of placing a notation on students' transcripts or on the legend/key for courses taken P/F in spring 2020 to indicate that the spring 2020 semester was subject to expanded P/F options because of the global health emergency.