

PASS/NO PASS OPTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

University Policy Issued on March 30, 2020

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the University's decision to move instruction to an on-line format for the remainder of the 2020 spring semester, the University will expand the existing Pass/No Pass option for undergraduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses – subject to certain conditions and the student's College approval. This option is only available for classes running during the Spring 2020 term.

All undergraduate students, enrolled during the spring semester 2020, may petition to take an undergraduate course during the Spring 2020 semester on a Pass/No Pass (P/NP) grading basis. Deadlines to petition have been extended and include:

May 1, 2020 for courses running January 15 – May 9

May 5, 2020 for courses running March 16 – May 9

For the Spring 2020 semester, the maximum limit of credits that may be taken P/NP has been lifted, grades of P/NP from this semester do not count toward the 12 credit limit in future semesters, and undergraduate students may petition to choose courses within their Major, Minor, Core or Electives. However, the student must receive approval for P/NP from their Dean's Office. In addition, students petitioning for P/NP for a course in their major must also receive approval from the Program Director of the major. Pre-health students must receive advising and approval from an EDGE advisor. Due to the potential implications of electing a P/NP grading basis, the decision is solely that of the student after advising has occurred. Please note that:

- a grade of "P" indicates work equivalent to a letter grade of "C" or better. Credit is counted toward graduation with no effect on the grade point average.
- a grade of "NP" indicates work equivalent to a letter grade below "C". No credit is awarded, and there is no effect on the grade point average.

Once a student submits a petition to take a course on a P/NP grading basis, s/he may not revert to a letter grading basis.

The online form found here [Undergraduate P/NP Form](#) must be submitted by 11:59pm as of the deadline(s) listed above.

Frequently Asked Questions for Undergraduate Students

Policy Questions

Q: Is Pass/No Pass the same as Pass/Fail?

A: No. Under our Pass/No Pass Option, students must achieve a grade of “C” or better to earn a “P” (i.e., a pass) and receive credit for the course. Grades of C-, D, or F result in a “No Pass” and will typically require a student to retake the course.

Q: How will this affect a student’s Grade Point Average (GPA)?

A: For classes for which students exercise the P/NP Option, the receipt of either P or NP for a course will not be used to calculate a student’s GPA. To determine the specific impact of P/NP vs. traditional letter grading, students might consider using the GPA Calculator (i.e., “GPA Calc” tab) in DegreeWorks.

Q: Am I required to use the Pass/No Pass Option?

A: No. This is simply an option available to students for Spring 2020 only. If no action is taken, the default is that students will receive the final grade for classes submitted by each faculty member at the end of the semester.

Q: If a student chooses the Pass/No Pass Option, must they do so for all classes, or may they choose to do so only for specific classes?

A: Students may exercise this option for any and all classes during Spring 2020 provided that they receive approval to do so. There is no limit to the number of credit hours for which students may petition to exercise this option. Some students may choose to exercise this option for some classes, or as little as one class. Some students may forgo the option and instead default to receiving all “regular” grades.

Q: May students exercise the Pass/No Pass Option for all types of classes?

A: Yes, but additional approval may be required for some types of classes. Students may petition to choose to exercise P/NP for courses within their Major, Minor, Core or Electives. However, the student must receive approval for P/NP from their Dean’s Office. In addition, students petitioning for P/NP for a course in their major must also receive approval from the Program Director of the major. Pre-health students must receive advising and approval from an EDGE advisor.

Q: If a student opts for the Pass/No Pass Option for a class, and receives a “C-”, do they have to retake the class?

A: It depends. Under the P/NP Option, students must receive a grade from the instructor of a “C” or better to pass the course and receive credit. So a grade of C, C+, B-, B, B+, A-, or A is considered passing—credit is awarded. In turn, a grade of C-, D, or F is considered “no pass”—no credit is awarded, and the student may need to retake the course:

- If the exact course (i.e., by prefix and #) is required for the Magis Core, BSBA Core, Major, or Minor, then the student must retake the class.

- If the course is one option to complete a requirement for the Magis Core (e.g., class fulfills Global Perspectives in History), BSBA Core (e.g., Business Elective), Major (e.g., “Choose from List”) or Minor (e.g., “Choose from List”), then the student will need to either retake the course or take an alternative course to fulfill the requirement.
- If the course is a non-restricted elective (i.e., not required), then the course does not have to be retaken. If, however, the course was necessary to help reach the required 128 credit hours to graduate, then the student will need to either retake the course or take an alternative course to help reach the required number of total hours.

Q: Will an instructor know if a student has opted for the Pass/No Pass Option for the course?

A: No. The P/NP status of a student is not made known to the instructor prior to entry of final grades. The instructor still grades the student in the traditional manner. The final grade is then converted to “P” or “NP” when the student’s end-of-term grade report is processed. Faculty members serving in an advisor role may, however, see P/NP on a transcript or in DegreeWorks after the conclusion of the semester.

Q: The deadline for exercising the Pass/No Pass Option is likely to hit before a student knows their final letter grade. If a student submits a petition to take a course on a P/NP grading basis, will they be able to change their mind later?

A: No. Once a student submits a petition to take a course on a P/NP grading basis, s/he may not revert to a letter grading basis. Students should not rush to make this decision.

Q: May students exercise the Pass/No Pass Option for Spring 2020 classes completed during the first half of the semester, i.e., Spring Term 1?

A: No. This option is not available for Spring Term 1 classes that have already ended.

Q: Does this represent a permanent change in the University’s policy on the Pass/No Pass Option?

A: No. This is a temporary revision to the policy and applies to Spring 2020 only.

Advising Questions

Q: As a student, why might I choose to petition to take one or more classes on a Pass/No Pass grading basis?

A: There may be many reasons:
Under the difficult circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the University’s decision to move to an on-line format for the remainder of the spring, students may feel that their grade in one or more classes does not accurately represent what their grade might have been under normal circumstances.

For example, a student who earned an “A” at midterms might now have to care for an ill family member, or perhaps has poor access to the internet. As a result, they find later in the spring that their grade has slipped from an “A” to a “C”—and they want to minimize the negative impact to their GPA. Thus, exercising the Pass/No Pass Option might allow them to protect their GPA for purposes of scholarships, job/internships prospects, graduate school application, or academic honors.

Here's a different scenario: If a student is clearly on target to receive a grade of “F” for the course, and the student exercises the Pass/No Pass Option, the student will receive an “NP” instead of an “F”. In either case, the student receives no credit, and will likely need to retake the course. But, with an “NP,” the student’s GPA is not affected.

Q: As a student, why might I choose NOT to petition to take one or more classes on a Pass/No Pass grading basis?

A: There may be many reasons:

- I am comfortable with the letter grade that I anticipate receiving for the course.
- I believe the letter grade I anticipate receiving will enhance (or not harm) my GPA.
- If I am on target to receive a grade of “D” or better for a course, and if I exercise the Pass/No Pass Option, I will have to retake the course if it is required for Magis Core, BSBA Core, Major, or Minor.
- I plan to apply for graduate school, and I anticipate that having a “P” on my transcript will reflect poorly on my academic ability.
- I plan to pursue a professional license/certification after graduation, and the professional organization does not allow students to take profession-related courses as P/NP.

Q: Any other reasons why I might not exercise the Pass/No Pass Option?

A: Another reason is that some students may appreciate being held to the traditional letter grading standards, which may offer a sense of structure and normalcy.

Q: Do I need to act now?

A: The deadline is May 1, 2020 for full semester courses, and May 5, 2020 for Spring Term 2 courses that started on March 16. Students may want to delay their decision until they have more information about their grades. Students should also wait to make a decision until they have had sufficient time to receive advice and consider the implications.

Q: Does this apply to students who may be completing study abroad courses via distance-learning?

A: Yes. This information has been communicated by the Global Engagement Office (GEO) to all students who had been studying abroad during Spring 2020 and had to return early/complete their coursework online. Please note that the timing and procedure are different for these students.

Given the unique circumstances of this semester, all study abroad grades for courses taken at a university abroad will transfer as "Pass/No Pass" unless a student petitions for the letter grade system to be maintained. Students in this situation must contact a Global Programs Coordinator no later than Friday, April 17, 2020 if they wish to proceed with the letter grade system for their program.

Q: If exercising the Pass/No Pass Option, will students be eligible for the Dean's List?

A: Yes, but Dean's List honors will be determined based on a student's normally graded courses only. There is no minimum number of credit hours required for Dean's List consideration. Note, however, that if a student takes all of their credit hours as P/NP, they will be ineligible for the Dean's List.

Procedural Questions

Q: How does a student petition to use the Pass/No Pass Option for a course?

A: The online form found here [Undergraduate P/NP Form](#) must be submitted by 11:59pm as of the relevant deadline.

Q: With whom should a student discuss this option?

A: Before filling out the online form, students should discuss their application with their academic advisor, Department Chair, and/or EDGE pre-professional advisor. If unsure, students should contact the Dean's Office to obtain a list of advisors (including Department Chair and EDGE pre-professional advisors) who are authorized to discuss this option with them. On the application form, students will be asked to provide the name(s) of the person(s) with whom they spoke. The College office will then verify that the student has been advised appropriately regarding the potential effects of the P/NP option.

Q: Once a student completes the online application form, what happens next?

A: When a student submits the form, it will be transmitted to the Dean's office for review. If the request is approved by the Dean's office, it will be forwarded to the Registrar's office with a copy provided for the student. If the Dean's office representative has questions, they will contact the student.

Other Advising Considerations

- If you are experiencing issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, or are concerned about your academic progress, please contact your instructor, academic coach/advisor, or program director to discuss whether an option such as a temporary withdrawal (LOA) or course withdrawal is appropriate. Refer to the University's Temporary Withdrawal Policy at <http://catalog.creighton.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/leave-absence/>

Refer to the University's Refund Policy at

<https://www.creighton.edu/businessoffice/policies/refundoverpaymentsandwithdrawals/>

- If you are considering applying to a future graduate program or professional school, take into consideration the impact of any P/NP grades on your future application.
- Programs with outside certification (e.g., teacher certification) may require letter grades due to professional/accreditation requirements.
- If you are being reimbursed for tuition from an employer, the military, etc., verify whether reimbursement would be issued for a “P” grade.
- Financial aid – courses with grades of NP are considered attempted but not completed, and students must complete at least 75% of cumulative attempted hours in order to be eligible for federal financial aid.
- Grades of “P” won’t impact a student’s GPA negatively, but it does not help them if they need to increase their GPA either.
- Courses with grades of “P” may not be accepted by home institutions of International students.

Discipline-Specific Guidance

- **ACC Majors: Primary Contact is Dr. Tom Purcell**

Accounting major students who are planning to take the CPA exam should discuss with Dr. Purcell State Board of Accountancy education requirements to determine if the use of the P/NP option will impact their ability to sit for the CPA exam. Nebraska does not limit the ability to use the P/NP option for a course. In Nebraska, provided the student successfully passes the course, the hours reported with a “P” grade will be counted toward either the 30 hours of accounting or other educational hours requirements. An initial inquiry of other states did not find limitations requiring that grades be reported as the normal letter grade and not on a P/NP basis.

- **BIA Majors: Primary Contact is Dr. Ravi Nath**

There are no implications specific to this major beyond those previously listed.

- **ECO-FIN Majors: Primary Contact is Dr. Lee Dunham**

Admission into graduate finance and economics programs is highly reliant on grades in math, statistics, econometrics, and other quantitative courses. Bear in mind taking classes as P/NP might be viewed by admissions committees as an unfavorable signal that could adversely affect admission, scholarship, fellowship, or related important decisions. Further, employers in the fields of finance and economics often consider grades in major courses in

their hiring decisions, and taking classes as P/NP may also be viewed as an unfavorable signal in the application process.

Pursuit of either the CFA or CFP designation is not affected by the P/NP election. For the CFP, candidates must complete all relevant degree program courses with a passing grade, and the CFA only requires that candidates have a bachelor's degree (or be in their senior year) to sit for the CFA exam.

- **M&M Majors: Primary Contact is Dr. Lance Frazier**

There are no implications specific for these majors beyond those previously listed.

- **Students in ROTC Program:**

In order for a Cadet to contract and start receiving scholarship funding they must maintain a current GPA of 2.5 and a cumulative GPA of a 2.5. Additionally, the academic performance of a cadet accounts for nearly 40% of their accessions points (i.e., decides what branch/job they will receive), so taking a pass/no pass could negatively impact both their ability to start their scholarship and the branch into which they are accessed.

ROTC cadets shouldn't be allowed to select Pass/No Pass unless they have had a conversation with their ROTC instructor who will fully lay out the potential negative impacts of this decision.