

Dear CAPS, Seminary, and Graduate School Students,

After careful consideration of the student experience and research on what schools locally and nationally are doing, the academic administration and the Faculty Affairs Council **decided to move most spring 2020 courses to pass/fail grading if they were originally scheduled as fully or partially face-to-face courses**. We are implementing this policy because of the unexpected mid-semester transition from face-to-face to online format. We know that you are experiencing disruption in many aspects of your lives, so we want to ease some stress and anxiety by allowing you to take courses as pass/fail.

Pass/Fail grading is now the default for courses that were scheduled as face-to-face courses, but letter grading is still available. If you want to be graded on the A-F scale, you may do so using a form that is still being created. It will become available later this week and will come to you in an email.

We have created an FAQ page that should answer your questions about this decision. That FAQ is provided below in this email but is also available via this [FAQ hyperlink](#) in an easier-to-read format. If, after reading through the FAQ, you have additional questions or concerns, please first talk with your professors and your student success advisor. If you have additional concerns, please let me know.

Be well!

Randy Bergen

FAQ about Pass/Fail Grading - SPRING 2020

What courses have moved to pass/fail grading?

Nearly all spring 2020 courses that were face-to-face or hybrid (i.e. online with some scheduled in-person sessions) that were either in session on March 16 or had not yet started are moving to pass/fail grading.

Courses that ended on or before March 15 did not move to pass/fail grading but used standard grading policies.

Some programs leading to licensure may require that all courses issue letter grades. Those programs will not use a pass/fail grading system. Those programs are still being determined. If you are in one of those programs, you will be told via email from a university officer (dean or associate provost) that letter grades, not the pass/fail option, are still being used.

What is a passing grade?

The definition of a passing grade differs by school and is based on the published definition of pass and fail in each school's respective catalog.

A grade of D is passing in the College of Adult and Professional Studies

A grade of C is passing in Bethel Seminary

A grade of B is passing in the Graduate School

A passing grade will show up on your transcript as "S." Any failing grade would show up as a "U."

How are passing or failing grades calculated?

As is usually done, faculty will grade papers, tests, quizzes, etc. throughout the course and then calculate a final letter grade at the end of the course. Unless a student has requested a letter grade, the final letter grade will be converted to S/U, and the S or the U will appear on their transcripts. If a student has requested a letter grade, the appropriate A-F grade will appear on their transcripts.

What if I want a letter grade instead of a pass/fail grade?

If you do not want to be awarded a pass/fail grade, but instead, want to get a letter grade, you can. To request a letter grade using the A-F scale, you will be able to submit a request using an online form. That form is in development and the URL will be sent to you soon. Your response will be transmitted to the Registrar.

In order to request a letter grade, you MUST complete the form NO LATER THAN 11:59 PM on the date listed below.

CAPS and GS STUDENTS

- If your class ends on April 5, you must select the "Letter Grade" option by April 1
- If your class ends on April 19, you must select the "Letter Grade" option by April 12
- If your class ends on May 3, you must select the "Letter Grade" option by April 26
- If your class ends on May 24, you must select the "Letter Grade" option by May 17

SEMINARY STUDENTS

- You must select the "Letter Grade" option by May 1.

Can I stop working in the class after I earn the minimum grade required to pass?

No. Students should plan on engaging with all of their classes and completing assignments. Many faculty will be including the following statement in their syllabi:

- In order for students to earn a grade of S, they need to remain engaged with all course assignments throughout the entire length of the course. Students are expected to complete all papers, projects, tests, and other assignments required by the instructor.

How will the change to pass/fail grading affect my GPA?

Courses in which students are graded S/U will not count toward GPA calculations. If students only take courses graded on the pass/fail scale, their cumulative GPA will not change from what it was before the term began. They will not have a term GPA. Any courses taken for a letter grade will, as normal, count toward GPA calculations and will affect the cumulative GPA and the term GPA.

I was repeating this course because I need to boost my GPA. How does the pass/fail decision affect me? The grade in the most recently taken course is used to calculate cumulative GPA even though all earned grades appear on the transcript. Grades of S will replace prior grades in the GPA calculation. However, pass/fail grades do NOT get calculated in cumulative GPA. So, although a passing grade of S would prevent a (prior) low grade from factoring into your GPA, your GPA will not be increased by the S grade.

Example 1 : If you got a C- in a course last spring and are repeating the same course this spring and you earn an S or a U, the original C- will no longer be counted in your GPA, but neither will the S or U be counted in the GPA.

Example 2: If you got a C- in a course last spring and are repeating the same course this spring and you ask for a letter grade, the C- will not be counted in the GPA but the new letter grade will be counted whether it is lower, higher, or the same.

I am on academic probation and need to earn a higher GPA to get off probation. What will happen if all my courses are pass/fail and graded as S/U?

If students take all courses as pass/fail this semester, academic probation and dismissal decisions will be slightly modified as follows:

- Students currently in good academic standing who do not pass at least half of their classes this spring may be placed on academic probation.
- Students on probation who earn S grades in at least half of their classes this spring will continue on probation.
- Students on probation who do not pass at least half of their classes this spring may be dismissed.

If students take only courses for a letter grade, then probation and dismissal decisions will be based on published catalog policies for probation and dismissal.

If students take a combination of pass/fail and letter grade courses, then academic standing will be based on letter grades earned in all courses.

All students -- especially those on academic probation -- who have questions about their academic standing are encouraged to consult with their student success advisor to fully understand how the S/U or A-F grading systems may impact their academic standing calculation.

How does this affect my financial aid?

Students receiving financial aid must demonstrate "Satisfactory Academic Progress." Satisfactory Academic Progress is defined differently for different schools. The Office of Financial Aid is working on updating their policies to incorporate a system for evaluating the quality of a student's academic performance based on S/U grading. Consult the appropriate web pages for more information

CAPS students [here](#)

Bethel Seminary students [here](#)

Graduate School students [here](#)

I want to go to graduate school. How will pass/fail grading affect graduate school admission?

It is not possible to say how graduate programs will use S/U grades in the admissions process. Students planning to go to graduate school are encouraged to speak with the appropriate admissions or faculty representative from the intended school/program before remaining with the S/U option.

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