Q: How will students know which of their Spring 2020 classes can be changed to pass/fail (P/F)?
   A: Undergraduate students will be able to select the pass/fail grading option for any
   undergraduate class that is in progress. There is no limit on the number of classes that
   may be taken P/F. However, completed classes in which grades have already been
   assigned may not be changed to P/F.

Q: Does this opportunity have any effect on classes that are set up to be graded as pass/fail only
   already (e.g., internships, practica, etc.)?
   A: No, these changes to rules and limits associated with pass/fail options do not apply to
   classes that are set up to be graded as pass/fail only already.

Q: How will students select P/F for courses?
   A: Students can log into the MySanDiego Portal and navigate to the 'My Academics' page,
   click the 'Register for Classes' link, and then click the 'Register for Classes' link again on
   the new page. Select the 'Spring 2020' term and click 'Continue', click on the 'Schedule and
   Options' tab, and click the dropdown for 'Grade Mode' and select 'Pass/Fail' for each class
   they want to change, then click the 'Submit' button. Note, in cases where students have
   an advisor hold for Fall 2020 registration, this hold will prevent them from selecting P/F
   grading options for courses in Spring 2020. Students will need to connect with their
   advisor to have this hold removed. Advisors may want to counsel students regarding
   P/F decisions in Spring 2020 and classes for Fall 2020 at the same time.

Q: What is the deadline for selecting pass/fail options for Spring 2020 classes?
   A: The deadline is Friday, May 1, 2020, at 5 p.m. (PDT).

Q: Will these courses count toward degree requirements?
   A: Yes. If students select the pass/fail grading option for a course, the course will count
   toward all appropriate degree requirements as if they had taken it on a graded basis. This
   also applies to major/minor requirements. Students' degree audits will be updated to
   reflect the change in pass/fail rules for the Spring 2020 semester.

Q: Are students still required to have taken 12 units at USD in order to be eligible for pass/fail
   during Spring 2020?
   A: No. All undergraduate students may take classes P/F in Spring 2020. They may select
   the pass/fail grading option for any or all of their classes for the Spring 2020 semester,
   unless the class has already been graded. Please keep in mind that students will need to
   be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units (regardless of grading option) in order to maintain
   full-time student status.

Q: If a student is studying abroad this semester, can they take classes P/F?
A: Yes, using the following guidelines. Students are advised by the International Center to request letter grades only and not accept P/F options from partner universities. Students who would like to select the P/F option for classes taken abroad should do so through the MySanDiego portal. Students should email the International Center if they have additional questions about taking study abroad classes on a P/F basis.

Q: Will these courses count against any limits on pass/fail classes?
   A: No. Classes for which students select the pass/fail option for the Spring 2020 semester will not count toward any limits on taking courses pass/fail — either semester limits or limits for the undergraduate career.

Q: How will this change affect a student’s GPA?
   A: The P grade is not counted in the grade point average nor used in the determination of honors. The grade of F earned under the pass/fail option is included in the calculation of the grade point average.

Q: If students receive a high final grade in a course that they have designated for pass/fail, may they later ask to substitute that grade for the grade of P?
   A: No, students may not change the grading method after the posted deadline for making changes.

Q: If students select pass/fail grading for a class during the Spring 2020 semester, will they be able to repeat the course for a letter grade in a future semester?
   A: Yes, as long as they meet all other requirements for repeating a course. For example, a student who receives a grade of P cannot repeat the course in a future semester because only courses in which the student earned a D or F can be repeated.

Q: How will the changes to pass/fail affect repeated credit?
   A: A pass/fail course in which a failing grade was received in Spring 2020 and which could not ordinarily be taken on a pass/fail basis may not be repeated on a pass/fail basis, but may be repeated for a letter grade. This rule applies to courses in a major (including the preparation for the major), a minor (six graded upper-division units) and the core curriculum. Courses may be taken on a pass/fail basis in Spring 2020 to replace a previous letter grade of D or F.

Q: If a student is taking a preparatory course for their major, can they elect to take the course as P/F?
   A: Yes, for the Spring 2020 semester only. Since students must earn a C- or higher to receive a P, the grade requirement will be satisfied. Similar policies apply to all classes that require a prerequisite with a grade of C- or better.

Q: What would be the advice about taking classes P/F in Spring 2020 for a student who has a USD merit scholarship?
   A: A full-time student with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 will retain their merit scholarship if they (1) take at least one Spring 2020 class for a standard (letter) grade and achieve a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher, or (2) take all of their Spring 2020 classes pass/fail and pass them all. If a student falls below a cumulative 3.0 GPA after this spring
semester, the Office of Financial Aid (OFA) will communicate with them about their scholarship status. Students whose GPAs were below the minimum scholarship requirement prior to Spring 2020 (on merit probation) could be adversely affected by taking too many classes P/F, as they need to raise their GPA to reach the minimum standard for renewal of their scholarships. The OFA will reach out to all students who are on merit probation this spring, to advise them to talk with their academic advisor about how the pass/fail option could impact their merit scholarship.

Q: How will Spring 2020 classes taken P/F be graded?
A: Faculty will continue to record letter grades. They will not know whether students have selected the P/F option. A grade of C- or above will earn a 'pass' and be recorded on students’ records as a P. Grades of D+ or below will earn a 'fail' and will be recorded as an F. Students won't be able to see their letter grades if they select the P/F option.

Q: How will P/F grades affect students who are on academic probation?
A: The pass/fail option is available to all students regardless of a student’s current academic standing for the Spring 2020 semester. Students on academic probation in Spring 2020 who elect to take all of their courses on a pass/fail basis will have the probationary period extended for one semester, provided they pass all of their courses. Criteria for returning to good academic standing still apply (must have a cumulative GPA and semester GPA of 2.0 or above and no grades of incomplete).

The fundamentals of the current academic probation policies will remain the same as stated in the catalog. But, because no grade points are associated with grades of P, students should consider the implications of taking a class pass/fail.

It is important to remember that in the P/F system, instructors will assign a standard (letter) grade to each student who has elected to take a class P/F. If that letter grade is a C-, or higher, the student will receive a grade of P and the passing grade will not be used in any grade point calculations. However, if the letter grade is D+ or lower, the recorded grade will be F and the course will be used in grade point calculations.

At the end of the semester, academic probation actions will be based on the courses in which students have earned a standard letter grade, including an F earned in a P/F course. The general practices for determining probationary status at the end of the Spring 2020 semester are as follows. Modifications to the usual practices are in italics:

1) Students who began the semester in good standing will remain in good standing if their Spring 2020 semester GPA is 2.0 or higher, or if they take all classes P/F and receive a passing grade in all classes.
2) Students who began the semester in good standing, will be placed on academic probation if their Spring 2020 semester GPA is less than 2.0.
3) Students who began the semester on academic probation will remain on academic probation if they take all of their classes P/F and pass all classes.
4) Students who began the semester on academic probation and take at least one course for a letter grade will achieve good standing if, at the end of the Spring 2020 semester: a) their spring GPA is at least 2.0, and b) their cumulative USD GPA is at least 2.0, and c) they received no grades of incomplete.
5) Students who began the semester on academic probation and take at least one course for a letter grade will be eligible for academic disqualification if, at the end of the Spring 2020 semester, their spring GPA or their cumulative USD GPA is less than 2.0.

Because receiving a low grade in a P/F course will result in an F which is used in GPA calculations, students should choose carefully when deciding whether to take a class P/F if they think they may earn a grade of D+ or lower. If a student anticipates receiving a D+, D or D-, then they will be better off selecting standard grading rather than P/F because the D grades will result in a higher GPA. Students who believe they may earn one or more standard grades of D+ or lower should also identify classes to take for a standard grade to offset any low expected grades. For example, if a student anticipates receiving a D in a four-unit class, they should identify at least four units of classes where they expect to earn at least a B. Students are advised to err on the side of caution, however, and take extra units for a standard grade in case the anticipated D becomes a D-, or the B a B-. This will help students avoid being placed on probation under item 2 above, or being disqualified under 5.

The dean’s offices recognize that this semester is unusual, and that individual circumstances mean that no single strategy for taking classes P/F is appropriate for everyone. Students who are uncertain about how taking classes P/F may affect their probation status should contact their Dean’s Office.

Q: If students are considering applying to law school or medical school, can they choose the pass/fail grading option for their classes?

A: For pre-med students: As of now, there is not a formal consensus from health professional schools about accepting prerequisite courses taken pass/fail. The situation is evolving, and as we learn more about the health professional school policies, we will keep you updated. For now, we advise students to proceed in prerequisite classes as if receiving a letter grade, but wait until closer to the pass/fail deadline before making a final decision. Students should visit the USD Pre-Health Advising web page for updated information. Students can keep their prerequisite course grades as a letter grade but select other courses as pass/fail. This way, they will be able to focus more on prerequisite courses than other courses. If a student is trying to raise their GPA (total, science, and/or non-science) this semester, they should keep the letter grade as long as they are doing well. Students are encouraged to reach out to the pre-health advisor at cagomez@sandiego.edu to help navigate this decision.

For pre-law students, law schools understand that this semester is unique, and that student transcripts nationally will include an inordinate number of P/F classes. If students are confident that they are doing well in a class, and the grade that they are likely to receive will be equal to or higher than their current overall GPA, then they should probably take that class for a letter grade. If they suspect that the grade they will receive will be lower than their current GPA, then they should probably take that class P/F. If in doubt, it is probably better to take the course P/F. If students are still worried about this when they apply to law school, they may add a brief addendum to their application explaining why they took classes P/F in Spring 2020. Students should be confident that law
schools will already know and understand. Students can visit the USD Pre-Law Advising web page for more information.

A brief statement explaining changes in USD’s grading policy in Spring 2020 will be added to student transcripts.

Q: What if students require letter grades for professional programs, employment or applications to graduate programs?
   A: We will ensure that those who need evidence of their academic achievements this spring will be able to get it. Because letter grades will be recorded, it will be possible for students to request an official letter containing those grades should that be necessary. To obtain this letter, students should contact the Office of the Registrar at registrar@sandiego.edu.

Q: Do the changes to pass/fail grading for Spring 2020 apply to undergraduate students enrolled in graduate and/or post-baccalaureate classes?
   A: No. The pass/fail grading option applies to undergraduate courses only.

Q: Are these changes to pass/fail grading for Spring 2020 also applicable to graduate or post-baccalaureate students who are enrolled in undergraduate classes during the Spring 2020 semester?
   A: Graduate and post-baccalaureate students should check with their academic program for information on pass/fail options for Spring 2020.

Q: How will this change affect Latin honors (i.e., Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Cum Laude)?
   A: Any course for which students select the pass/fail grading option during the Spring 2020 semester will not be factored into the GPA calculations for Latin honors unless they earn an F.

Q: If students are taking courses at another institution this semester, can they take these courses P/F?
   A: USD will accept classes taken at other institutions on a pass/fail basis in Spring 2020. While our normal policy is not to accept transfer courses taken on a pass/fail basis, these are not normal times.

Q: Are these changes to the pass/fail rules permanent?
   A: No, these changes are for the Spring 2020 semester only due to the impact of COVID-19.

USD has not made a decision about pass/fail grading for our classes in Summer 2020, so we will defer a decision about accepting pass/fail grading for summer transfer classes at this time.

List of resources from higher education:

Updated: 4/14/2020