

Wilkes Honors College Pass/Fail Policies and Guidance to Students and Faculty

Dear faculty, students, and advisors,

After consulting with members of each concentration board and researching admissions standards and procedures, we have developed the following comprehensive guide for making your decisions about opting in to Pass/Fail for the Spring 2020 semester. The option to choose Pass/Fail will open April 8th and run through April 22nd at 11:59 p.m. **We want you to make the most informed decision possible, so please read carefully through the contents of this guide.** Please keep in mind, once you make the decision to select the Pass/Fail option and your form is processed, **you will not be able to change it back.** The decision to select the Pass/Fail option is **irreversible.** These guides were developed specifically to help you think-through the implications of Pass/Fail for your post-graduation and career plans.

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- I. University Rule Changes and Eligible Courses

In addition to the option to elect a P/F grading option, FAU has modified other academic policies to ameliorate the unexpected challenges you may be facing.

1. FAU policy states that students may take a maximum of 12 credits of Pass/Fail during their entire course of study. Spring 2020 Pass/Fail coursework will not count toward this total. For example, if you have never taken a Pass/Fail course and elect to change your grade mode this semester, you will still have the option of electing up to 12 Pass/Fail credits in the future.
2. Withdrawals from Spring 2020 classes will not be counted towards the limitations in place on course withdrawals (two courses maximum at the lower division and three courses at the upper division). **Please note that the withdrawal deadline for Spring 2020 is April 10.**
3. Students on academic probation at the end of Fall 2019 will not be placed on academic suspension because of poor performance in Spring 2020 coursework. Probation will be continued into Fall 2020 for these students. Students performing poorly in Spring 2020 coursework, however, may still be placed on probation.
4. Students returning from suspension will not be dismissed because of poor academic performance in Spring 2020. Students will be allowed to return for another semester to improve their academic performance.

5. Undergraduates currently taking graduate courses may opt to take those courses using Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading for course grades in the “C” to “A” range.

Which courses are NOT eligible for the Pass/Fail option?

1) Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and most Lower-Division Mathematics Courses. (These courses are still eligible for the No Credit (“NC”) grade, as long as the student has not reached the maximum of four NC grades.) See the list of WHC courses offered this semester below.

2) Courses Taken by Majors and Pre-Majors in the College of Business.

3) Courses Taken by Majors and Pre-Majors in the CECS (College of Engineering and Computer Science).

All undergraduate courses that are not in one of the three lists above are eligible for the Pass/Fail option.

II. Pass/Fail Guide for Students Interested in Graduate School in the Social Sciences and Humanities

While almost every graduate program is likely to put an asterisk next to this semester when evaluating applicants, the general advice from faculty members in the social sciences and humanities is to complete your courses for a grade whenever possible. Although several schools have already noted that they will respect decisions regarding the adoption of P/F and other grading options during the unprecedented period of COVID-19 disruptions, the best way to demonstrate your mastery of the course material will be to take the course for a letter grade. If you do decide to switch a course to Pass/Fail, keep in mind the following:

- A “P” grade is equivalent to a “D-” or higher. An “F” grade is similar to an “F” grade in a standard graded course.
- There may be repercussions for your financial aid. For more information about Satisfactory Academic Progress and the impact of grades on your aid, click [here](#).
- If you are currently retaking a course for Grade Forgiveness on a prior attempt, the “P” grade will not assist you in raising your GPA.
- If you are considering a mix of Standard graded coursework and Pass/Fail coursework, you should calculate your potential term GPA using this [GPA calculation tool](#). The wrong mix of graded and Pass/Fail coursework may lead to a poor term GPA and may have an impact on your financial aid.
- As the “P” grade does not calculate into the GPA, any course you select to be changed will not count in your GPA.
- The Dean’s List and President’s list require a minimum of 12 credit hours of Standard graded coursework.
- If you are currently on academic probation or returning from academic suspension, opting for Pass/Fail grading may not be in your interest. You will need Standard graded coursework to ensure that your term GPA reaches or maintains a 2.0 GPA or higher.

- If you are considering continuing on to a graduate or professional degree, you should not choose the Pass/Fail option in courses required for admission to those degrees.
- A “P” grade in an eligible course will meet prerequisite and degree requirements, but be aware that if you take the Pass/Fail option in a course that is a prerequisite to a course you will take in the future, your poor course performance (C- to D-) in the prerequisite course may result in challenges in subsequent coursework.
- Courses taken at the College of Business are not eligible for P/F option.
- If the course is a WAC (Gordon Rule) course, the system will not allow you to switch to the P/F option. The following courses offered this semester in the Wilkes Honors College are WAC/Gordon Rule:

ANT4244	Honors Ritual and Symbolism	Corr, Rachel	WAC
ANT1933	Honors Physical Anthropology	Vannucci, Robert	WAC
ENC1101	Honors College Writing	Raiger, Michael	WAC
ENL2022	H British Literature Since 1798	Raiger, Michael	WAC
LIT1051	Honors Comedy & the Devil	Harrawood, Michael	WAC
LIT1933	H Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings	Raiger, Michael	WAC
LIT 2010	H Interpretation of Fiction	Raiger, Michael	WAC
PHH3100	Honors Ancient Greek Phil	Baima, Nicholas	WAC
PHI2642	Honors Ethics Social Diversity	Tunick, Mark	WAC
PHI3300	Honors Theory of Knowledge	Kennedy, Ashley	WAC
MAC2311	Honors Calculus-Analyt Geom 1	Dodel, Silke	GR computational
MAC2312	Honors Calculus-Analyt Geom 2	Toeniskoetter, Matthew	GR computational
MAC2312	Honors Calculus-Analyt Geom 2	Toeniskoetter, Matthew	GR computational
MAC2312	Honors Calculus-Analyt Geom 2	Dodel, Silke	GR computational
MGF1107	Honors Math for Liberal Arts	Adams, Craig	GR computational
STA2023	Honors Introductory Statistics	Milbrand, Alexandra	GR computational

***All thesis sections are WAC except for ART 4970 and SPW 4970. Therefore, no student may switch their thesis course to Pass/Fail other than for ART 4970 and SPW 4970.

III. Pass/Fail Guide for Students Interested in Graduate School in the Physical Sciences and Math

The strong advice from faculty members in our science and math disciplines is to complete your courses for a grade, particularly any courses required by the graduate program you hope to attend. Although several schools have already noted that they will respect decisions regarding the adoption of P/F and other grading options during the unprecedented period of COVID-19 disruptions, the best way to demonstrate your mastery of the course material will be to take the course for a letter grade. In particular, courses required for admission to a graduate

program should not be taken as P/F if at all possible. If you do decide to switch a course to Pass/Fail, keep in mind the following:

- A “P” grade is equivalent to a “D-” or higher. An “F” grade is similar to an “F” grade in a standard graded course.
- There may be repercussions for your financial aid. For more information about Satisfactory Academic Progress and the impact of grades on your aid, click [here](#).
- If you are currently retaking a course for Grade Forgiveness on a prior attempt, the “P” grade will not assist you in raising your GPA.
- If you are considering a mix of Standard graded coursework and Pass/Fail coursework, you should calculate your potential term GPA using this [GPA calculation tool](#). The wrong mix of graded and Pass/Fail coursework may lead to a poor term GPA and may have an impact on your financial aid.
- As the “P” grade does not calculate into the GPA, any course you select to be changed will not count in your GPA.
- The Dean’s List and President’s list require a minimum of 12 credit hours of Standard graded coursework.
- If you are currently on academic probation or returning from academic suspension, opting for Pass/Fail grading may not be in your interest. You will need Standard graded coursework to ensure that your term GPA reaches or maintains a 2.0 GPA or higher.
- If you are considering continuing on to a graduate or professional degree, you should not choose the Pass/Fail option in courses required for admission to those degrees.
- A “P” grade in an eligible course will meet prerequisite and degree requirements, but be aware that if you take the Pass/Fail option in a course that is a prerequisite to a course you will take in the future, your poor course performance (C- to D-) in the prerequisite course may result in challenges in subsequent coursework.
- Courses taken at the College of Engineering and Computer Science are not eligible for P/F option.
- If the course is a WAC (Gordon Rule) course, the system will not allow you to switch to the P/F option. The following courses offered this semester in the Wilkes Honors College are WAC/Gordon Rule:

ANT4244	Honors Ritual and Symbolism	Corr, Rachel	WAC
ANT1933	Honors Physical Anthropology	Vannucci, Robert	WAC
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MGF1107	Honors Math for Liberal Arts	Adams, Craig	GR computational
STA2023	Honors Introductory Statistics	Milbrand, Alexandra	GR computational

***All thesis sections in the sciences and math are WAC. Therefore, no student may switch their thesis course to Pass/Fail in science and math.

IV. Pass/Fail Guide for Students Interested in Law School

It is impossible at this time to know for certain how law school admissions offices will respond to P/F grades during this pandemic, but we can say that law schools generally look at trends over time: poorer grades in freshmen year are often weighed less if there is improvement in later semesters. Law schools want to see that you take challenging courses that involve critical thinking and writing, especially in your junior and senior years. Many but not all law schools are using a mandatory P/F system for their own law students this semester, and so they will surely understand that this semester is unusual.

Should I choose a letter grade or P/F? Whereas some universities like Columbia are making P/F mandatory for their undergraduates this term—and so those students had no choice but to receive a P or F—Florida SUS schools are making this elective, and so you have a choice to make. If you are likely to get a good grade (B or better), it makes sense to stick with the letter grade option. Even if your cumulative GPA was an A or A-, and you end up getting a B or B+ in a course this semester, you can always use your application essay to explain why it is lower (e.g. you came down with the virus, you had unreliable internet access, etc.) and law schools should be understanding. In addition, you can explain these circumstances to the faculty you select to write letters of recommendation and they can speak to these hardships as well. Moreover, if you typically get A's, it will be apparent that a B this semester is atypical for you, and it should not hurt you especially when you explain the circumstances.

If you normally get A's but it looks like you will get below a B this term due to hardships you face, selecting the P option shouldn't hurt you. However, if before the pandemic you were already getting a C or D in the course, your faculty will know that, and law schools have been known to follow up with faculty recommenders. You need to be honest in your application letter. Also, if you didn't face hardships and chose the P option because you preferred to just stop working, that could reflect poorly on you. If you choose letter grades for all but one class, and P/F for one class, you should be able to provide a reasonable justification.

V. Pass/Fail Guide for Students Interested in the Health Professions

When applying to become a health professional, each application process requires that your GPA is recalculated according to their set of policies. Below is a breakdown of each health profession and a general statement as to how Pass/Fail for courses are treated for each (along with a link for more information). If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Dr. Monica Maldonado, mmaldonado@fau.edu

Medical School:

AMCAS will calculate Pass (P) as a “D” grade, which carries the weight of 1.0 in the recalculation of the AMCAS GPA, and will be reflected in your application to medical school. This is for all courses that you attempt/receive a “Pass” grade. Currently, medical schools will not accept a pre-requisite course that is accomplished with a P/F grade, and instead require a letter grade for these courses.

AMCAS GPA Calculation Guide:

https://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/78/1c/781c2478-d685-4f1e-ae78-07a765ad4e61/amcas_grade_conversion_guide_students.pdf

Veterinary School:

Many programs (if not all) state that pre-requisite courses for veterinary school must be taken on a letter grade basis; in other words, any required courses taken “Pass/Fail” will not fulfill the requirements for consideration. For courses that are not pre-requisites, a “pass” grade for a course will not be included in VMCAS GPA.

VMCAS Grade Value Chart

https://help.liasonedu.com/VMCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Submitting_and_Monitoring_Your_VMCAS_Application/Verification_and_GPA_Calculations_for_VMCAS/05_VMCAS_Grade_Value_Charts

Physician’s Assistant:

Most, if not all, PA programs require that pre-requisite coursework receive a letter grade, and will not accept a “Pass/Fail” for this course work. Courses that are not a pre-requisite for PA schools that receive a “Pass” grade will not be calculated in the CASPA generated GPA.

CASPA GPA Calculating guide:

https://help.liasonedu.com/CASPA_Applicant_Help_Center/Submitting_and_Monitoring_Your_CASPA_Application/Verification_and_GPA_Calculations_for_CASPA/2_How_Your_GPA_is_Calculated

Dental School:

For non-required courses for dental school, a “pass” grade will not be calculated into your GPA as determined by AADSAS (please see below). On the other hand, pre-requisite courses for dental school are required to receive a letter grade, or; in other words, no pre-requisite courses will be accepted with a “pass” grade.

AADSAS GPA Calculation Guide and Grade Table:

[https://www.adea.org/uploadedFiles/GoDental/The Application to Dental School ADEA AA DSAS/ADEAAADSASGPAGuideRevisedJanuary2017.pdf](https://www.adea.org/uploadedFiles/GoDental/The_Application_to_Dental_School_ADEA_AA_DSAS/ADEAAADSASGPAGuideRevisedJanuary2017.pdf)

Pharmacy School:

Prerequisite courses cannot be taken as Pass/Fail; a letter grade is required. All other courses that receive a “Pass” grade will not be included in the GPA calculation.

PHARMCAS GPA Calculation Guide

<http://www.pharmcas.org/preparing-to-apply/application-process/verification-process-and-gpas/>