

OSC Graduate Courses: Pass/Fail grading for Spring 2020

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

From: Brian Anderson

Dear OSC Spring 2020 **graduate** course instructors and graduate students,

You have all been sent the email from the Provost on revised grading policies for the Spring 2020 semester. I'm writing to clarify the assignment of Pass/Fail grades if a graduate student in your OSC course elects to change to the P/F grading method for that course, or if you are a graduate student considering that grading option. The relevant part of the Provost's message is reproduced here:

- "During the Spring 2020 term only, and at the discretion of the individual student, any course may be graded on a pass/fail basis, and these courses will count toward program requirements and satisfy future prerequisite requirements if a passing grade is earned. A student wishing to move to the pass/fail grading option must notify the registrar by the last day of class for the Spring 2020 term."

You also need to be aware of the Pass/Fail grading policy given on the Registrar's website <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/grades/passfail-option>. In particular, for **GRADUATE STUDENTS** (and *only* graduate students):

- "For certain courses, a graduate student may elect to register under the Pass/Fail option. Under such registration, the only final grades available to the student are P (pass) or F (fail). **To receive the grade of P, the student must be doing work comparable to a C or better.** If a course is taken under the Pass/Fail option, the grade of P or F will be permanently recorded. If the course is passed, the units of credit may be applied toward the degree at the discretion of the student's major advisor. Pass/Fail grades are NOT included in the GPA."

OSC Academic Programs interprets the Registrar's policy as saying that if a student would have otherwise received an A, B, or C according to the grading policy used in a graduate class, then the student is to be awarded a grade of Pass under the P/F grading scheme; a grade of D or lower is to be associated with a Failing grade in the P/F grading scheme.

Instructors: Graduate students in your classes may elect to switch to the P/F grading scheme. To determine a course grade of P or F, we ask you to first determine the student's letter grade in accordance with your grading policies applied consistently for all students in the class regardless of the grading method that they have chosen. Then for consistency across OSC graduate classes in the awarding of P/F grades for this Spring 2020 semester, and for consistency with the Registrar's policy, **we ask you to associate a letter grade of A, B, or C with a Pass, and a D or lower with a Fail**, for the students electing the P/F grading option in your class. *Please note that this grading method does NOT apply to undergraduate classes.*

PhD and MS Plan of Study with P/F options

A grade of P or F in a course will not count towards GPA calculation, but only P/F courses that are passed with a P will be allowed on a student's plan of study. Other OSC plan of study requirements and limits are not affected by the student's choice to switch to the P/F grading scheme for a Spring 2020 graduate course, namely:

- a student may list one C-graded course on the plan of study **with advisor's approval**, even if Spring 2020 classes with a grade of P are also on the plan of study;
- PhD students may list up to 6 units of non-letter-graded coursework on the plan of study (P/F-graded classes taken in Spring 2020 do *not* count towards this limit);
- MS students may list up to 3 units of non-letter-graded coursework on the plan of study (P/F-graded classes taken in Spring 2020 do *not* count towards this limit);
- PhD students may still have their credit-hour requirements waived down to 45 units **with advisor's approval**, and Passed Spring 2020 classes on the plan of study will count towards satisfying these credit-hour requirements.

PhD Qualifying Exam

PhD students: the PhD qualifying exam is scheduled for August 17 and 18. All PhD students who are currently in their first academic year, and all other PhD students who have not yet passed the exam, must take the exam in August 2020 regardless of letter grade received or P/F grade received in the core courses taken in preparation for this exam. (We will let you know if the COVID-19 situation changes how the qualifying exam is administered or if it must be postponed, but for the time being we are proceeding under the assumption that it will be held as usual and as scheduled.)

Please let me know if you have questions about any of this.

Thanks,
Brian

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