

Spring 2020 Course Pass/Fail Policy FAQ

Given the current situation involving COVID-19 may entail personal, family, and access concerns that could be causing you significant challenges and stress as you navigate your course work, the University has made a modification to our Course Pass/Fail Policy to address these concerns and hopefully alleviate some of the stress.

We have implemented the following changes to our Course Pass/Fail Policy:

- For this Spring 2020 Semester only, those of you who are undergraduate students may choose to change any or all of your course grades to Pass/Fail. (Graduate courses will not be eligible for this Pass/Fail option.)
- You will have the opportunity to view your actual letter grade first, before making this decision. After viewing the letter grade, which will be available for you to view no later than May 21, 2020, you may elect to keep that letter grade or request that it be changed to Pass/Fail.
- We know that some courses require a C- (1.7) or higher as a minimum passing grade or as a prerequisite for enrolling into a higher level course. We therefore want you to know that we will also be waiving that minimum grade requirement if you elect to take such a course Pass/Fail.
- If you elect to change one or more of your classes to Pass/Fail, you may submit your request via myframingham to the Office of the University Registrar starting May 18, 2020 and no later than May 27, 2020.

As long as you receive a grade of D- or higher, selecting a Pass/Fail grade will not affect your current GPA.

We recognize that many of you will have questions related to this option, and we will keep the information on this page updated as additional information becomes available. There is an option to submit your question at the bottom of this page if you do not see your question answered here.

General Questions About the Course Pass/Fail Grading Option

I have read the email about the possibility of the grade of Pass/Fail for my Spring 2020 courses but I am not quite sure what it means. Could you explain further, how the Pass/Fail option for my Spring 2020 grades will work?

- If you receive a letter grade for the course that you think would lower your overall GPA, you can choose the grade of Pass instead.
- If you are happy with the letter grade you receive, and think it would bring up your GPA, then you would probably want to choose to keep the letter grade.
- If you fail a Spring 2020 course, the effect would be the same regardless of whether you chose to keep the letter grade of Pass/Fail, since either would involve a failing grade.

Following the final exam period, faculty will be posting the final letter grades. Once you have your letter grade(s), then you can make the decision if you want to request a grade of Pass for any or all of your Spring 2020 courses. Your academic advisor or the Academic Advising Center can help you think this through.

Any decision about requesting a grade of Pass for any or all of your Spring 2020 courses will not impact your ability to select a course as Pass/Fail in the future

How will the Course Pass/Fail Option work?

Your professor will submit a letter grade for you based on the work you do for the semester. You may choose any or all courses for which a final grade of A through D- was submitted to convert to a Passgrade. All F grades will automatically remain as an F grade. You must submit your choice, if any, no later than May 27, 2020 to the Office of the University Registrar.

How does a grade of Pass work in my GPA?

A grade of Pass will indicate that you completed the course, and you will receive full credit, but it does not impact your GPA.

What does a grade of Fail do to my GPA?

A grade of Fail indicates that you did not complete the course successfully, so you will not receive credit, and it will not satisfy any requirements. It will be used in calculating your overall GPA..

Can I choose to receive a letter grade instead of a Pass grade?

Yes, for all students the default will be the final letter grade as submitted by the course instructor. So unless you choose to request a grade of Pass for a particular course or courses, the letter grade will be the grade of record.

What will happen to my overall GPA if I choose all grades of Pass for the spring semester?

Your overall GPA will stay the same as it was coming into the spring 2020 semester. The exception would be if any of your spring courses were a repeat for a previous semester, quality points and credit would no longer be included in the calculation of your overall GPA.

What will happen to my overall GPA if I am currently repeating a course and choose a grade of Pass for the spring semester?

If you are retaking the course, the Pass grade would replace the previous grade. The previous grade, presumably a low grade, would be removed from your GPA calculation. This would raise your GPA. Once you know what the final grade for your course would be, you can calculate whether keeping the Spring grade would raise the GPA even further. In that case, you should choose to leave the letter grade for the Spring course as is. Your academic advisor or the Academic Advising Center can help you think about this.

How will I choose to take a grade of Pass for a specific course or courses?

The Office of the University Registrar is working with Information Technology Services to design a web form that will be available through myFramingham for you to let us know your choices. More specific information will be provided here over the coming weeks.

What is the deadline for choosing to take a grade of Pass for a specific course or courses?

The deadline is May 27, 2020.

If I choose to take a letter grade, can I change my mind later and go back to a Pass/Fail grade?

No. Once past the deadline, you may not change your mind.

If I choose to take a grade of Pass, can I change my mind later and go back to the letter grade?

No. Once past the deadline, you may not change your mind.

Will I be able to see my letter grade before making my decision?

Yes, you will be able to see the original letter grade in myFramingham as well as on your degree audit prior to making your choice about whether or not you want to request a grade of P.

Will Framingham State University keep a record of my original letter grade?

Yes, the original letter grade submitted by your faculty member will be stored in our student information system, but it will not appear on your official academic transcript if you have requested a grade of Pass for the Spring 2020 course or courses.

What happens if I need to take an incomplete this spring?

You may still work with your faculty member on requesting an incomplete this semester and submitting the required Incomplete Contract to the Office of the University Registrar. Once you complete the work, you may contact the Office of the University Registrar regarding whether or not you want to take a grade of Pass or the final letter grade the course instructor has submitted.

Will professors continue to grade assignments with letter grades or just pass/fail?

You should review all assignments and grading policies for each course with the course instructor. All faculty are required to submit letter grades at the end of the semester.

If I choose to have the Pass grade in a class, and I need a minimum GPA for that class in my major, how will that affect my enrollment in a Fall 2020 course?

During the summer, the Office of the University Registrar would normally notify students and remove them from fall courses if they have not met the certain grade prerequisites required. Instead, the Office will not remove the student from the fall course, but will inform the course faculty and the student's advisor that the student may need additional assistance in order to successfully complete the fall course.

I was repeating a course this semester to improve my GPA. Will choosing the grade of Pass help?

Yes, if you previously failed a course, the original grade will not count in your GPA once you have received a Pass grade in the repeated course. For specific questions about whether to choose a letter grade in a repeated course, you should consult with your academic advisor or the Academic Advising Center.

If I choose to withdraw with a grade of 'W' before May 1st, will I be eligible for any refund or other adjustment on my student account?

No, you will not be eligible for any adjustments to your student account. All instruction is ongoing, and the standard tuition and fee refund policy for spring 2020 remains in effect.

Will the Pass/Fail policy apply to graduate courses?

No, this policy only applies to undergraduate coursework.

Academic Honors Questions

If I am graduating this semester and I take all Pass grades, how will it impact my degree honors (e.g. cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude)?

If you take all Pass grades in Spring 2020, your degree honors will be calculated on your cumulative GPA at the end of the Fall 2019 semester.

If I am in the Commonwealth Honors Program, will I be able to take Pass grades in my honors classes?

Spring 2020 honors program courses that students elect to take with a Pass/Fail grading scheme will still satisfy honors requirements if the student receives a passing grade. (Ordinarily, students must receive a minimum grade of B (3.0) or higher in an honors course for it to satisfy an honors requirement.) The Massachusetts statewide Commonwealth Honors Council has also approved the transfer of Spring 2020 Pass grades in honors courses between Commonwealth Honors programs at the other public universities.

If I am in the Commonwealth Honors Program, how will Pass grades in all my spring classes impact my standing in the program overall?

If you were in good standing in the Honors Program at the end of the Fall 2019 semester, you will remain in good standing with the Honors program. Students that have had challenges meeting the minimum GPA requirement for the Commonwealth Honors Program in Fall 2019, and any student receiving one or more Fail grades in Spring of 2020, should consult with the Honors Program Coordinator, Professor Paul Bruno.

How will the Pass/Fail option affect my eligibility for other departmental or university-wide honors societies?

Each honors society has different requirements with regard to GPA in both the major and overall. Typically they will look at overall GPAs and not letter grades in specific courses, so Pass graded courses will not have either a positive or negative affect on your eligibility for honors society membership. Specific questions about this should be directed to the coordinator of the honors society. Your academic advisor can help you identify the honors society coordinator in your major department and the Office of the Dean of Students can help you identify the coordinator of a university-wide honor society.

Graduating Senior Questions

Will taking Pass grades in my classes affect my ability to graduate this Spring semester?

It depends on your individual situation. Students expecting to graduate this May and who are struggling to meet minimum GPA standards for your major or overall degree requirements should consult with the Office of the University Registrar in coordination with their department chair and academic advisor. More information and guidance for these students will be forthcoming. The majority of graduating students will be able to take grades of Pass in their Spring 2020 courses with no impact to their graduation status. Grades of Pass may be used (with exceptions noted regarding minimum GPA requirements) for all specific graduation requirements.

How will taking the Pass/Fail option impact my degree honors (e.g., cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude)?

See the honors questions above for more information.

Transfer and Study Abroad Questions

I am planning on transferring next semester to another school or am taking a course as a nondegree student to transfer back to my school. How will Pass grades impact my ability to transfer?

You should consult with the transfer professionals or admissions office at the school you are transferring to for their specific institutional policies in this area. The Office of the University Registrar at Framingham State University can also assist you with documentation regarding the Pass/Fail policy and your original letter grade if necessary. In many cases, it may be to your advantage to choose a letter grade rather than a grade of P.

I am currently completing Study Abroad coursework. Will I be permitted to transfer in courses that are graded as Pass?

Spring 2020 courses transferred in with a grade of Pass will be accepted for credit at FSU. After the Office of the University Registrar at FSU receives the official transcript from your study abroad experience from Spring 2020, you will be contacted regarding the grades on that transcript if they come in as letter grades. The usual policy for transferred grades limits this to grades, or equivalent, of C- (1.7) or higher. However, for any Spring 2020 coursework in which a grade of D, or equivalent, is received, the course will be accepted in transfer.

Athletics Questions

Will taking all Pass grades impact my athletic eligibility for the 2020-2021 academic year?

If you successfully complete at least 24 credits this academic year and were in good academic standing as of the end of the Fall 2019 semester, and were otherwise eligible for the next academic year, you will maintain your athletic eligibility.

If I was on academic probation after Fall 2019 and was unable to play in Spring 2020, how will sticking with the Pass/Fail option impact my future eligibility?

If you were on probation at the end of the Fall 2019 semester, you should consult with Kathleen Lynch (klynch@framingham.edu) in the Department of Athletics for assistance in deciding whether or not to take letter grades in your courses. In order to participate in athletics during the next academic year, you will need to be in good academic standing.

How will taking Pass grades affect my eligibility for academically-based NCAA and conference awards?

Eligibility for academically-based NCAA and conference awards are based on your cumulative GPA. If you take Pass grades for the Spring 2020 semester, your eligibility will be determined based on your overall GPA at the end of the Fall 2019 semester. You may choose to keep your letter grades this semester if you feel that it will improve your overall GPA.

Future Graduate School Plans

I plan to apply or have applied to a graduate program. How will the Pass/Fail policy affect me?

Many institutions of higher education in the United States are going to some version of a Pass/Fail policy for the Spring 2020 semester, so it is likely that graduate admissions officers will need to take the current situation into consideration in future. You should, however, carefully review admissions requirements for any graduate program in which you may be interested. If you need specific course prerequisites for admission, you should consider taking a letter grade in the prerequisite course.

I am not planning to apply to graduate programs in the future, but what if I change my mind later?

There will be a process by which you can request documentation of your original letter grade from the Office of the University Registrar. Your transcript will remain the same but a letter from the University Registrar will provide the letter grades submitted by the faculty for Spring 2020.

Don't see your question answered here? We encourage you to submit your questions and we will work on getting you an answer.