

From: [Mokwa, Robert](#)
Subject: Modified Pass/Fail grading option for Spring 2020
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MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost

Dear MSU Students,

In response to the global health emergency imposed by the COVID-19 outbreak, Montana State University switched from in-person classes to remote delivery modality for all Spring 2020 courses beginning Monday, March 23, 2020. I want to thank you for your understanding of the extensive measures we are taking to protect the health and safety of students and the entire MSU community. The flexibility and resilience you have shown through this situation is remarkable and appreciated highly.

I am writing to inform you that as part of our emergency coursework accommodations, **MSU is implementing an expanded Pass/Fail (P/F) grading option for all undergraduate courses, effective Spring 2020 Semester.**

These unprecedented circumstances necessitate extraordinary measures to accommodate difficulties and challenges faced by students and faculty in managing personal matters during a pandemic, while simultaneously navigating a new course delivery modality. Universities across the country are implementing this measure because it is the right thing to do for students and for faculty who are confronting uncertainty, the likes and scope of which none of us have ever experienced.

These temporary emergency accommodations to the MSU pass/fail policy will allow students the options to transition courses to a P/F grade at the end of the semester. Students not wishing to transition to P/F will still receive the letter grade assigned by their instructor.

Undergraduate students who choose to receive a P/F grade for one or more of their courses can do so by submitting a form available on the University Registrar's website, no later than five calendar days after final grades have been posted by the Registrar. A revised P/F request form and specific guidelines for these emergency accommodations will be available on the Registrar's web page at least two weeks prior to the end of Spring Semester.

The Graduate School will publish specific information about the declaration of P/F grades for students in graduate programs in the 2019-2020 catalog addendum.

Additional details regarding these emergency grading accommodations for undergraduate students will be published in the 2019-2020 catalog addendum and include:

Faculty will grade students as usual per their syllabi grading structure during the semester with an understanding that the transition to remote learning might impact each student differently.

- The default option for students is the traditional A-F letter grade.
Students may choose to receive a P/F grade in place of a letter grade for any number of their courses. The P/F grade option can be requested by a student no later than five calendar days after final grades have been posted by the Registrar.
- For students who request a P/F grade, the MSU Registrar will record the P/F designation using a rubric in which all grades of C- or higher earn a Pass.
- Course grades converted to a Pass grade in this temporary P/F option for Spring 2020 will count towards curricular, major, minor, prerequisite, progress toward degree, graduation requirements, transfer requirements, scholarships, financial aid requirements and application to MSU graduate school programs.
- MSU's regional accreditor, NWCCU, has approved this modified P/F grading system for our use this semester. Discipline-specific accrediting bodies and professional licensing agencies have agreed to approve P/F grading schemes and will accept Pass grades for required courses, prerequisites and elective courses. This includes nursing, engineering, education and others.
- Under the P/F option, neither pass nor fail grades will be factored into students' Grade Point Average (GPA). Pass grades will count towards earned semester hours. An F grade will not count towards earned semester hours in either the A-F or P/F options.
- MSU will include a designation on students' transcripts, indicating the extraordinary circumstances of the global public health emergency during Spring 2020. It appears this will be common practice at most universities in the United States.

Given the extraordinary circumstances we currently face, and after extensive consideration, this amended pass/fail policy will provide a good balance to student and faculty needs in both the short and longer terms. Faculty will continue working closely with you remotely for the remainder of this semester to ensure that they successfully provide you the body of knowledge that you have come to expect in all of your courses at Montana State University.

If you have any questions about how this expanded P/F grading option affects your curricular or extra-curricular situation, please contact your faculty advisor or professional advisor.

In closing, I urge you to stick with your course of study and to work with your faculty and advisor to complete your courses. Like you, I look forward to returning to a sense of normalcy by next fall as we work together and adhere to

best practices to minimize contagion of the novel coronavirus.

The future is full of hope and promise, and I have great faith that we will get through this situation together and enjoy a bright tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Provost Bob Mokwa
Montana State University

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