Student FAQs about the Pass-Fail Option

Due to the academic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, MTSU has adopted a Pass-Fail option for Spring 2020 courses. Here are answers to some likely questions from students.

Q: Is the Pass-Fail (P-F) option available for all courses?

A: Yes, with the following exceptions:
• courses already using the P-F or S-U grade scale
• courses for which a letter grade is required by specialized accreditation, certification, licensure, or university policy
• courses that were completed prior to Spring Break in the A1 term (Accelerated 1)

Q: Am I required to choose the P-F option?

A: No. The default grading scale is A-F. You will only get a P-F grade if you choose it. You should carefully consider the potential impact of changing to the P-F option as it may have unintended impacts. For example, students planning to apply to graduate and professional school should understand that some programs require letter grades for specific courses.

Q: Can I change to P-F for some of my courses but not all, or do I have to switch for all my courses?

A: You do not have to change all courses to pass-fail. You can choose the specific courses you wish to change.

Q: How will Spring 2020 classes be graded?

A: Faculty members will continue to record letter grades. If you do not change to the P-F scale, you will receive the letter grade awarded. If you elect to change to the P-F scale for one or more of your courses, the grades for those courses will be converted to P-F by the Records Office after the final grade for the course(s) has been submitted.
• For undergraduate courses, an A, F, or N will remain on your transcript. Grades of B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and D- will be converted to Pass.
• For graduate courses, an A, A-, F, will remain on your transcript. Grades of B+, B, B-, C+, C, C- will convert to Pass and grades of D+, D, and D- will convert to Fail.
Q: If I select P-F grading for a class during the Spring 2020 semester, will I be able to repeat the course for a letter grade in a future semester?

A: Yes. As long as you meet all other requirements for repeating a course, you may repeat a course in a future term for which you select the pass-fail grading option during the Spring 2020 semester.

Q: How does a grade of P affect my GPA?

A: A grade of P is not calculated into your semester or overall GPAs, but the credit hours do count toward requirements for your major and minor requirements and toward graduation requirements.

Q: When will I be able to opt-in?

A: You will be able to opt-in between April 19 and April 29 using PipelineMT.

Q: Is there a deadline to choose the P-F option?

A: The deadline to opt-in is 11:59 p.m. on April 29. You can change your selections during that window, but what you have submitted at the deadline is final.

Q: How do I choose the P-F option?

A: You will use a web-based portal being developed by ITD to opt-in. You do not go through your instructor to opt-in. We will let you know when the portal is ready and provide instructions for its use before April 19.

Q: How will I know which of my Spring 2020 courses may be changed to pass-fail?

A: You will see your Spring 2020 courses when you access the Pass-Fail portal mentioned above. Your courses that are eligible for the P-F option will be indicated.

Q: Why was I not given the P-F option for some of my courses?

A: Some courses leading to degrees with specialized accreditation, licensure, or certifications require a letter grade. Consult your academic advisor if you have questions.
Q: What if I change my mind after I submit my change?

A: You may change your mind and change your choices in the web-based portal at any time during the 10-day submission period until 11:59 p.m. on April 29. After April 29, your decision is final and may not be changed.

Q: Will my instructor know that I have chosen the P-F option?

A: No. Your instructor will assign final grades according to the established grade scale for your course and noted on the course syllabus. Conversion to the P-F scale will occur after final grades for the course are submitted to the Records Office.

Q: Will a P grade fulfill the grade requirement for a prerequisite or candidacy?

A: Yes, including courses for which a specific minimum grade is required.

Q: Will a P grade count toward my major, minor, and degree requirements?

A: Yes, including courses in your major or minor that require a specific minimum grade.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of courses that I can switch to the P-F option in Spring 2020?

A: No. During Spring 2020, no limits will be placed on the number of P-F hours you may take.

Q: What if I am on academic probation?

A: We will suspend academic dismissals during Spring 2020. Because letter grades (A-F) calculate into your GPA and a P does not, you should consult with your academic advisor before deciding which grade scale to select for each of your courses.

Q: How will the inclusion of the P-F option affect the Dean’s List for Spring 2020?

A: Because of the disruption to instruction and the extraordinary steps required of faculty and students to complete the semester, we will suspend Dean’s List for Spring 2020.
Q: What is the deadline to withdraw from courses?

A: The deadline has been extended to April 10.

Q: I am an athlete. Will this affect my athletic eligibility?

A: Athletes should contact their academic advisor and head coach before considering the P-F option. Any changes to the traditional grading scale could impact eligibility.

Q: I am a veteran. Will this affect my veteran’s benefits?

A: Veterans should contact the Transition Manager in the Daniels Center (Jessica.Pierson@mtsu.edu) before choosing this option as P-F grades may affect benefits.

Q: Will my transcript have an explanation of why I have P-F grades instead of the traditional A-F grades this semester?

A: Yes, all student transcripts will include information on the implementation of the university-wide P-F option in Spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Spring 2020 P grades will post as “PCV” on student transcripts.

Q: What is the best grading option in order to continue my eligibility for federal, state, or institutional aid?

A: Federal and state agencies are still in the process of considering waivers or exceptions that can be used when determining continuing eligibility requirements. The University is monitoring all communications from these agencies and will use the best option available to assess your continued eligibility for financial aid when we receive final guidance.

Q: If I drop or withdraw from a course as a result of the shift in instruction methods in response to COVID-19, will my aid be affected?

A: It may. For financial aid purposes, choosing a P grade is always better than withdrawing from a course. You should contact your academic advisor regarding academic consequences related to your choice of grading. And always contact the MT One Stop at MTOneStop@mtsu.edu before dropping/withdrawing from any class if you are receiving financial aid. Changes to enrollment can affect your eligibility and may result in a required return of funds.
Q: I’m on Financial Aid SAP Warning or Probation. Are any special accommodations being made for students in my situation?

A: You will be notified directly when information is available regarding your specific SAP status.

Q: What if I plan to apply to graduate school?

A: Students planning to pursue advanced degrees should be aware that some institutions might require letter grades (A-F) for specific courses and will not accept a grade of P.

Q: I am an international student. Will changing my classes to P-F grading for the Spring 2020 impact my visa status?

A: As long as you remain enrolled as a full-time student, changing your grading to the P-F option for Spring 2020 will not impact your status.

Q: Are these changes to the P-F rules permanent?

A: No, these changes are for the Spring 2020 semester only, due to the impact of COVID-19.

Q: How will this change affect Latin honors?

A: Any course for which you select P-F grading during the Spring 2020 semester will not be factored into your GPA calculations for Latin honors unless you earn an A or an F. Please note that Latin honors are awarded based on the inclusive GPA at the time of degree posting.

Q: How will the changes to P-F affect repeated credit?

A: If you are repeating a course for the first time in Spring 2020 and select the P-F option for your repeated course, the grade for your first attempt will no longer be factored into your GPA, and any credits earned will be removed. If you earn a grade of F under the P-F option in Spring 2020, the F will be factored into your GPA.

Q: Is there a tool to help me calculate my GPA?

A: Yes, you can estimate your current semester or overall GPA at: https://www.mtsu.edu/resources/students/gpa.php. You can also contact your academic advisor for assistance with estimating your major and/or minor GPA.
Q: Whom do I contact if I have further questions about changing to P-F options for Spring 2020?

A: You should contact your academic advisor to discuss the possible impacts of the P-F option before making any changes to your courses. If you have questions about the financial aid implications, please email MTOneStop@mtsu.edu for assistance with those questions.