

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the new Spring 2020 Grading Scale

What is the new policy? The new policy, adopted by the University Faculty Council on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, in response to student desires for a more flexible grading scale given COVID-19's disruption to the semester, establishes an alternative to the A-F letter grades which will have no impact on your GPA:

- Credit (CRT): for grades of C or higher. This grade satisfies General Education, major requirements, and prerequisites of C or higher.
- Pass-19 (P-19): for grades of C-, D+ or D. This grade will satisfy General Education, **most** major requirements and **some** prerequisites.
- No Credit (NCRT): for failing grades which will award no credit.

How do I switch to the new grading scale? Students will log into the student information system (Banner) and make the adjustment. Step-by-step instructions to switch to the new grading scale can be found at the Registrar's webpage (<https://academics.umw.edu/registrar/spring-2020-alternative-grading-scale-options/>)

Is this grading scale available to graduate students? The decision to offer the alternate grading scale to graduate students is a college decision made by the faculty of each college. It is not uniform across all graduate programs and continuation requirements are different in each of the programs. The College of Arts and Sciences (i.e. Geography) will only utilize letter grades while the College of Education and the College of Business will accept a student's choice of the new grading scale, however only grades of Credit will count toward the degree. Pass-19 and No Credit grades could impact eligibility for continuation. Students should consult their graduate advisor for more information.

Must I switch to the new grading scale? No, it is entirely up to you. You have the choice in Spring 2020 to be graded using the traditional A-F letter grade scale or the new alternate scale.

May I still take a class Pass/Fail? Yes. You can make the switch to pass/fail by logging into the student information system. Step-by-step instructions to switching to pass/fail, can be found at the Registrar's webpage (<https://academics.umw.edu/registrar/spring-2020-alternative-grading-scale-options/>)

If I do nothing, what will happen? If you do nothing, you will receive letter grades in all of your courses (except for those in which Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory is the default scale or for those you have requested by April 24, 2020 that you be graded using the traditional Pass/Fail grading scale).

Is switching an all-or-nothing choice (i.e., does it apply to all of my courses)? No, you have the opportunity to select which courses you want to have graded according to the new grading scale (but please be aware that not all departments will accept all grades from the new grading scale-- see below).

Can I pick and choose among the options in the new grading scale? No. When you choose the alternate grading scale, you choose the scale, not the grade. Faculty assign the grades and they will assign grades using either the A-F grading scale or the alternate grading scale which has 3 grades (CRT, P-19 or NCRT).

By when must I switch to the alternate grading scale for my courses? You do not need to decide immediately. You have until Friday, April 24 (the last day of classes), to elect to be graded using the alternate grading scale. This choice is available through Banner Self-Service. If you switch to the alternate grading scale for a course (or courses), you will still have until April 24th to change back to the letter grade scale should you change your mind.

Should I switch to the new grading scale? It depends. One possible advantage of this new scale is that it will not impact your GPA. Another is that, in this new scale, courses that receive credit (with grades of either CRT or P-19) will still satisfy General Education requirements and many major requirements (there are exceptions, as listed below). However, you may not want to switch to the new scale if you are satisfied with the letter grade you anticipate receiving and/or if those letter grades will boost your GPA. You may also want to make a course-by-course decision.

How will the alternate grading scale impact my GPA? The grade of Credit (CRT), Pass-19 (P-19), and No Credit (NCRT) will not be factored into either your overall GPA or your major GPA, however, it will be included in attempted hours (which can have implications such as with Financial Aid). Unlike an “F” in a Pass/Fail course, which does factor into your GPA, the grade of “No Credit” will not be included in the calculation of your GPA.

What is the difference between the new grading scale and the traditional Pass/Fail? Courses graded under the traditional Pass/Fail scale will not count toward General Education or your major, and failing grades will factor into your GPA.

Will Pass-19 count in my major? It depends. Pass-19 (P-19) denotes a C-, D+, or D. In some majors (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Psychology) and in the College of Business, you must earn a C or higher in certain courses for them to count in the major. The list below provides specific information about these majors, and you should consult your major advisor or the Department Chair if you have questions. The grade of Pass-19 **will not** satisfy the necessary prerequisite grade in the following majors/courses:

- BIOL (all courses requiring C- or better)
- CHEM 111
- CHEM 112
- CHEM 212
- CPSC 220
- CPSC 240 (P-19 accepted in the CPSC minor)
- PSYC 261 (please consult with your instructor for additional information)

Students majoring in the College of Business will only be permitted one P-19 grade in their business core courses (MIST 201, MKTG 301, MGMT 301, DSCI 352, DSCI 353, FINC 301, BUAD 350, MGMT 490). This limitation does not apply to the minor.

What will show up on my transcript if I elect the new grading scale? There will be a transcript notation for Spring 2020 for the alternate grading scale appropriately indicating that this was in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

What about graduate and professional school admissions? Will they frown upon Pass/Fail? It is difficult to say. Schools across the country, beginning with many of the Ivy League institutions, have adopted similar approaches to grading for Spring 2020. However, graduate

and professional programs (e.g. medical schools) have not been clear about how they will interpret alternate grades resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. You should consult with your advisor and/or your pre-professional advisor before making a final decision.

What about repeats? Under existing UMW policy, all students are entitled to retake a course in which they have received a C- or lower. Consequently, if you receive a P-19 or a NCRT grade, you will be eligible for a second attempt. However, if you are already in your second attempt of a course and receive a P-19 or a NCRT, you will not automatically be eligible for a third attempt. You should instead consult with your advisor and/or Academic Services to explore your options. Finally, if you utilized the traditional Pass/Fail grading scale and received a grade of Pass, you will not be eligible to retake that course.

If I am repeating a course and making use of the new grading scale, how will that impact my GPA? If you are in your second attempt of a course and receive CRT/P-19/NCRT, your grade will replace the original grade. This means that the original grade will be excluded from your GPA. Your grade of CRT/P-19/NCRT Spring 2020 will not factor into your GPA.

How does the new grading scale impact my eligibility for academic honors? A move to the new grading scale will not negatively impact your GPA. However, eligibility for academic honors still requires a minimum number of credits earned upon which the GPA can be calculated. For example, to be eligible for "Academic Distinction," one needs to complete 60 credits upon which the GPA can be calculated. To be eligible for the Colgate W. Darden award, which goes to the senior with the highest GPA, you must complete 94 credits upon which the GPA can be calculated. And, to be eligible for the Dean's List or the President's List in Spring 2020, you must complete 12 credits upon which this semester's GPA can be computed.

How does the new grading scale impact existing College of Business admission requirements? Traditional students must have a 2.5 between at least three of the five pre-admission courses. Credit and/or P-19 will be accepted for no more than two of the five required classes. Transfer students currently at UMW must earn a 2.5 between their first three business classes. If the average of at least two of these classes is 2.5, the other can earn either Credit or P-19 under the Alternate Grading Scale.

Will students who already switched to Pass/Fail be able to switch to the new grading scale? Yes.

Can I opt for the new grading scale and stop participating in my classes? This would not be wise. If you do not believe that you will be able to successfully complete your courses this semester, a full-semester withdrawal would be preferable. Please contact the Office of Academic Services to discuss.

What if I am in an interdisciplinary major and some majors accept P-19 and others do not? Please consult the program director of your interdisciplinary major in this instance.

If I am a student who is using VA Education Benefits, and I choose to switch to the new grading scale, how will it affect me? Students using VA educational benefits should review the latest updated information on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts GI Bill benefits by going to <https://benefits.va.gov/qibill/covid19faqs.asp>. If you choose the new Credit/Pass-19/No Credit grading scale, any of these grades will be covered by the VA. Although the VA does not typically make payments for classes resulting in a nonpunitive grade such as No Credit, the VA is

allowing School Certifying Officials to report COVID 19 as a mitigating circumstance for students that earn this nonpunitive grade. Should you have any specific concerns or questions, please contact your UMW VA representative before making your decision to change your grading scale.

What about courses that use the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading criteria, can they move to the new grading scale? No.

If I am on Academic Warning, Academic Probation or Reinstated from Suspension, how will the alternative grading scale impact my academic recovery plan?

Students with a GPA below 2.0 should consider how a switch to the alternative grading scale may impact their academic recovery plan since grades of P-19 and CRT will not impact the student's GPA. Students with a GPA of less than 2.0 should consult with their academic advisor to discuss whether or not a letter grade is necessary for the academic recovery plan.

NOTE: This FAQ was last updated on Friday, April 3, 2020.

Revision History

Revised, 4-3-2020 to uniformly use "grading scale" and to clarify that students select the scale, not the individual grades in the new grading scale (version 2).