

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Fall 2020 Grading Scale

What is the new policy? The alternate grading scale adopted by the University Faculty Council for the Fall 2020 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 may begin viewing final grades 12Noon on Tuesday (12/15). At that time, students will have 48 hours to review grades and elect to move to the alternative grade scale by Thursday (12/17) at 12Noon. Students will request this change through an online form provided to all students by the Office of the Registrar. It is important to note that when the change window closes on 12/17 at 12Noon, no late changes will be approved. Students should plan accordingly to avoid missing this opportunity.

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 Fall 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. However, courses taken pass/fail can be used only for elective credits. The alternate grading scale grants more flexibility in completing coursework. The alternate grading scale satisfies General Education, most major requirements, and some prerequisites can be satisfied. It is likely in your best interest to switch to standard grading so that a grade can be entered by the instructor and then you can make the decision to switch to the alternate scale. The Office of the Registrar reached out to students enrolled in Pass/fail and encouraged them to switch back to standard grading.

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 or Pass/Fail is the default 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 letter grades and you decide whether to use the alternate grading scale in each course (CRT, P-19 or NCRT).

By when must I switch to the alternate grading scale for my courses? You will have two days to make this decision – between noon on Tuesday December 15 through noon on Thursday December 17. There will be no exceptions to this timeframe.

Should I switch to the new grading scale? It depends. One possible advantage of this 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. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you should carefully consider how the alternate grading scale will impact future decisions about graduate school. For example, some medical schools will be looking for you to have letter grades on your transcript.

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.

How does the alternate grade scale impact my major? It depends. Please ask your department if you have any questions.

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)

In addition, departments that have established additional restrictions on the alternate grade scale are:

- **History foundational courses.** Students with the grade P-19 in **HIST 297** will not be eligible to take HIST 298 (for which HIST 297 is a prerequisite). Students with the grade of P-19 in **HIST 298** will not be eligible to take 400-level history courses (for which HIST 298 is a prerequisite). Consequently, students enrolled in HIST 297 or HIST 298 should not switch to the alternate grade scale in those courses if they intend to be a history major.

- **Business core classes.** Only one (1) business core course graded using the alternate scale will be accepted. The business core classes include MIST 201, DSCI 352, DSCI 353, FINC 301, MGMT 301, MKTG 301, BUAD 350 and MGMT 490. If a student selected an alternate grading scale in Spring 2020 or Summer 2020 for a business core course, they cannot select the alternative grading scale option for another core business major course in Fall 2020. If a student has never selected the alternate grading scale option for a core business major course, then the student is eligible to select one (1) business core course to be graded using the alternative scale in Fall 2020.
- **Business major courses and business electives.** The College of Business will not allow CRT, P-19, or NCRT grades for any major or business elective courses taken for BUAD, BUAD-Accounting, BUAD-Marketing, or BUAD-IB majors, or for Business Minors in the Fall 2020 semester. The COB will honor the policy that was in place in Spring and Summer 2020.

How does the new grading scale impact existing College of Business admission requirements? For purposes of admission to the COB, no alternate grading scale grade will be accepted for any of the five preadmission courses in Fall 2020 (ACCT 101, ACCT 102, ECON 201, ECON 202 and STAT 180). Should a student opt into the alternate grading scale for any preadmission course, the alternate grade "CRT" will be viewed as a "C" grade, the "P-20" grade will be viewed as a "D" grade, and "NCRT" grade as an "F" for purposes of calculating the five COB preadmission courses. The COB will honor the policy that was in place in Spring and Summer 2020 regarding the alternate grading scale and admission to the COB.

What will show up on my transcript if I elect the new grading scale? There will be a transcript notation for Fall 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 the alternate grading scale? This has changed somewhat from the spring, although it is still difficult to say. Many schools that provided an alternate scale in Spring 2020 are not doing so in Fall 2020. 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 Fall 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 Fall 2020, you must complete 12 credits upon which this semester’s GPA can be computed.

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? The alternative grading scale is not available until final grades are posted. 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/gibill/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 or Pass/Fail only 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.

Are there any considerations that should be made for students who are in their first semester (first-year or transfer students) at UMW with no established GPA or attempted credit count? Students who are in their first semester at UMW with no GPA or attempted credit hours should NOT move ALL their fall classes to the alternative grade scale. With the close of the fall 2020 semester, any student with attempted/earned credit hours but with no established GPA could encounter challenges with academic standing and long-term implications for financial aid if all classes were graded with the alternative grade scale. For example, if you receive a grade of NCRT/P-19/CRT in all classes, your GPA would read as 0.00, which could change your standing to Academic Warning and have negative implications for scholarships if you don’t have a GPA at the end of this academic year.

As a result, first semester students should make sure that at least one fall course will be traditionally graded. ***Students who are not on track to pass any of their fall courses should consult with their academic advisor about a full semester withdraw from all courses prior to the December 4th, 5pm deadline.*** Questions related to financial aid should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid.

How does this impact Track B Honors Program requirements? Students applying Track B for the Honors Program must have a cumulative UMW GPA of 3.2 for the Fall 2020 semester, with a minimum of 9 credits graded using the traditional A-F letter scale.

How does this impact current Honors Scholars? Honors-designated courses completed in the Fall 2020 semester may fulfill an Honors Program requirement if they are completed using either the traditional letter grading scale or the temporary alternative system of Credit or P-19. Regardless of assessment mechanism, a representative artifact from the class should still be uploaded in the Canvas Workspace for your Honors Portfolio. A limit of 6 credits in HN-designated courses using the alternative Credit/P-19/NC scale may apply to completion of the Honors Program.

Any HN-designated course in which a student receives a No Credit or F grade will not fulfill an Honors Program requirement. The GPA requirements for graduating with University Honors will remain as a 3.2 overall UMW GPA as factored by courses that receive traditional letter grades. Students in Honors who complete the Fall 2020 semester with GPAs lower than the minimum program requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Honors Program staff and committee to determine their Honors Program status.