

Pass/Fail Grading Policy for Undergraduate Students

Spring 2020 Semester Only

Nancy Brickhouse, Provost
Wes Null, Vice Provost
Brian Raines, Chair, Faculty Senate

Revised March 24, 2020

Proposal: Given the unprecedented circumstances that have arisen during the spring 2020 semester as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, Baylor University will allow undergraduate students to elect to convert any of their course grades for the spring 2020 semester to Pass/Fail at the end of the spring semester after their final grades have been submitted. May 2020 degree candidates will be given three calendar days to elect for conversion of their assigned grades, and all other undergraduate students will be given seven calendar days.

Additional Details:

1. At the end of the spring 2020 semester, faculty will submit course grades based upon the grading scale in their syllabi as they would do at the end of any other semester.
2. Any course in which a student has earned a C- or above is eligible to be converted to “Pass” based on student election.
3. Courses for which “Pass” or “Fail” is elected by the student will not count toward GPA calculations. Some course prerequisites and degree progression standards require a specific grade—for example a “B”—for progression. We will allow a grade of “Pass” to satisfy these requirements. However, even though a grade of “Pass” at the end of the spring 2020 semester will allow a student to progress forward within the University’s system, electing a grade of “Pass” does not mean that students—especially those within professional schools that lead to professional licensure/certification—should elect the “Pass” option and move forward within their major. We strongly encourage students to have robust conversations with their dean’s office, academic advisor(s), and/or department faculty regarding their preparedness to proceed to subsequent courses.
4. A course that is repeated and results in a grade of “Pass” will qualify for use toward academic forgiveness. The effect will be that the then-excluded grade will be removed from the GPA calculation without a subsequent grade for the course being included in the GPA calculation.
5. Students who receive a grade of D+, D, D-, or F will have the option to convert their grading to Pass/Fail. In these circumstances, students who elect to convert their assigned grade to Pass/Fail will not receive credit for the course, but the elected grade of “Fail” will have no effect on their GPA. If a student elects to retain the grade of D+, D, or D-, s/he will receive credit for the course, but the retained grade will be calculated in his/her GPA.
6. Before deciding whether or not to convert a grade to Pass/Fail, students should seek guidance from their Financial Aid counselor, their Academic Advisor, and any other related office on campus with whom they work regularly to make course decisions. In doing so, students must make sure that they are fully aware of the implications of their decision to convert a grade to Pass/Fail, especially with regard to scholarships (athletics or other),

veterans benefits, licensure, graduate/professional school admission, and/or other professional goals.

7. In order for students to earn a grade of C-, they need to remain engaged with all course assignments throughout the spring 2020 semester. In general, students should be expected to complete all course assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and other assignments required by the instructor.

After final course grades have been submitted by instructors, students will have a period of time during which they will be able to decide which, if any, of their assigned grades they would like to convert to Pass/Fail. The timeline for students to make these decisions will be as follows:

- Degree candidates intending to graduate in May 2020 will have *between May 12, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. and May 15, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.* to identify those courses for which they would like to convert their assigned grade to a Pass/Fail basis.
- All other undergraduate students will have *between May 13, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. and May 20, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.* to identify those courses for which they would like to convert their assigned grade to a Pass/Fail basis.

A detailed set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is being developed that will address the following points (and others to be determined):

- Units should advise their students on the decision whether or not to convert their grades to Pass/Fail. In some cases, a student, by electing to change to a grade of "Pass" may adversely affect his/her ability to be admitted to graduate school or to be licensed. Unit advisors and faculty should ensure that students are adequately informed of the ramifications of their decisions.
- If a student passes a prerequisite course, s/he will be considered to have satisfied the prerequisite for the purposes of course registration. For cases in which certain grades (for example a "B") are normally required in the prerequisite course, a grade of "Pass" will suffice for students to proceed to the subsequent course. Advisors should discuss prerequisite benchmarks in detail with students. In some cases, students may choose to proceed forward to the subsequent course at their own risk.
- A course that is being repeated in which a student earns "Pass" will be eligible for academic forgiveness. Student election to convert the assigned grade to a grade of "Pass," however, will remove the course from GPA calculation.
- Implementing a three-day window during which graduating seniors will have the option to convert their courses to Pass/Fail will result in an approximately three-day delay (compared to previous spring semesters) in the conferral of May 2020 degrees.
- Grades of Incomplete for the spring 2020 semester will not be eligible for conversion to Pass/Fail. If additional time is needed to satisfy an Incomplete grade (beyond the one semester stated in the current Incomplete policy), students can work with their instructor(s) to request an extension to the Incomplete.