

Spelman College
Emergency Grading Accommodations
Spring 2020 ONLY

Spelman College faculty in collaboration with the College administration have passed an Emergency Grading Policy in the wake of the College's decision to temporarily transition to online learning for the spring 2020 semester.

All courses will continue to be graded with the standard letter grades (A through F) for the spring semester; however, students can designate their final course grades to be recorded as Pass/Fail (P/F). Students can choose to implement the P/F option for none, some, or all of their spring 2020 courses. This emergency policy does not make the P/F grade mandatory for all students nor for all courses. Rather, the decision to receive a letter grade or a Pass/Fail designation rests with each individual student.

Under this emergency policy, the grade of C- or better is considered a "Pass" for major and minor requirements and First-Year Composition (ENG103). A grade of D or better is considered a "Pass" for core curriculum or general education courses. Students contemplating the P/F grade should consider the following:

- Under this emergency policy, the grade of Pass is applicable to all core curriculum/general education, major, and minor requirements.
- Letter grades (A through F) will be recorded by the faculty, and the grade converted to Pass/Fail if the student chooses the Pass/Fail option. Because grades will be recorded, students may request an official letter from the Office of the Registrar denoting the original grade.
- The grade of P will give the student credit hours toward graduation but will not affect their grade point average; however, a grade of F will be calculated into the student's GPA.
- A note will be added to all academic transcripts indicating the extraordinary circumstances of the global health emergency in spring 2020 and its impact on higher education.
- The last day to request the Pass/Fail option for the spring 2020 term is Wednesday, April 29, 2020, at 4:00 PM (in whatever time zone the student resides).

Students should check with their advisor to determine if there are issues with a P grade in graduate or professional programs. In certain cases, faculty advisors may recommend that students NOT elect the pass/fail option.

Students should think carefully about this decision and discuss the consequences of the decision with their professors and advisors.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does this emergency P/F policy apply to all courses?

Yes, it applies to major, minor, and core curriculum/general education courses.

What is the deadline for declaring a course pass/fail?

Students have until April 29, 2020, at 4:00 PM (in whatever time zone the student reside) to declare a course(s) as P/F.

Does a P/F course affect my GPA?

This depends on what grade you earn. A grade of “P” will not be factored into your GPA, but a grade of “F” will.

If I declare a course P/F, how is my grade determined?

Faculty will grade students as normal and compute the final grade – A through F. Letter grades, A through C- will be converted to “Pass” for major and minor requirements. All grades below C- will be converted to F grades that will factor into your GPA. Letter grades A through D will be converted to “Pass” for core curriculum/general education courses. Grades below D will be converted to F grades that will factor into your GPA.

If I realize I am failing, do I have any options besides an F?

Spelman has extended its course withdrawal date until Wednesday, April 15, 2020. Students can initiate a withdrawal, and a “W” will be noted on their transcript. If this is a required course for graduation, the student will have to retake the course.

I want to switch my course to P/F. What do I do?

First, speak with your advisor and professor before making the decision.

If after communicating with your professor and if you decide the P/F is the best option, complete the Pass/Fail Grading Option Form available during the week of April 13, 2020.

How will I let my professor know I want to take the course as P/F?

There is no need to let your professor know. Faculty will submit grades (A through F) for each student completing the course. The grade will be converted to P/F if the student elects the course as P/F.

I don't want to switch my course to pass/fail. What do I do?

You don't have to do anything. Faculty will enter the earned letter grade at the end of the semester.

I withdrew from a course this semester. Can I be added back in and take it P/F?

This emergency policy does not apply to courses in which the student has already elected to be withdrawn, having already earned a grade of “W.”

If I selected a class as P/F and then learn that I got an “A,” can I change to a letter grade?

No, once a student opts to switch (or not switch) to the Pass/Fail system, the grading type will not be changed.

How will a P/F course appear on my transcript?

For each class you designate as Pass/Fail, a “P” or “F” will show instead of a letter grade. Spelman College will include a transcript note on all academic records, regardless of grading, indicating the extraordinary circumstances of the global public health emergency.

Will designating some classes as P/F affect my standing in the Honors Program?

No. As long as your current GPA fulfills the Program’s GPA requirement, selecting courses as Pass/Fail will not affect your standing in the Honors Program.

Will selecting some courses as P/F affect my Latin honor (e.g., *cum laude*)?

A student’s overall GPA at the end of the fall semester appears in the Commencement program. As long as the student’s overall average meets the threshold for Latin Honors, the student will earn honors. However, it is important to note that earning a “P” in a course this semester will not improve the student’s GPA, but a grade of “F” will lower it.

Will designating some classes as P/F affect my scholarship?

Regarding Spelman College scholarships, as long as your current GPA fulfills your scholarship requirement, selecting courses as Pass/Fail will not affect your scholarship eligibility. However, if you receive a failing grade, you may become ineligible. If you have an external scholarship, you will need to discuss this with the scholarship coordinator.

Will designating some classes as P/F affect my HOPE Scholarship?

You should discuss your situation with the Office of Financial Aid.

If I receive an Incomplete in a course and the grade is not reported until next semester, can I still take advantage of the P/F grade option?

Yes. You will need to complete the P/F Grading Option Form by April 29, 2020.

I have a GPA under a 2.0. Can I designate my classes as P/F?

You should discuss your situation with your Department Chair and/or your Academic Dean.

I am on academic probation. Can I take my courses P/F?

Students on academic probation are strongly encouraged to consult with their academic advisor and/or academic dean before making any decisions about the P/F option. Students do not earn “quality points,” thus a P will not improve a student’s GPA. A grade of F, however, will lower the GPA.

I failed a course before and am now repeating it to improve my GPA. Can I take it P/F?

Students repeating a course for forgiveness in order to achieve a higher grade will need to complete the course on a graded basis; P/F is not an option.

Can a P/F course count toward my major or minor?

The College has temporarily waived its policy prohibiting P/F for major and minor courses. This exemption is only applicable to spring 2020.

Can a P/F course meet the Core Curriculum/General Education requirements?

Yes, the College has temporarily waived its policy prohibiting P/F for core curriculum/general education courses. This exemption is only applicable to spring 2020.

Does the emergency Pass/Fail Policy apply to students who were studying abroad?

Students who completed course work during study abroad will be issued grades by an external institution or provider. These providers have offered the Pass/Fail option. Students may elect pass/fail grades or continue with the graded (A through F) option. The Pass/Fail grades will not be factored into the student's GPA, unless the student receives an F. Graded courses will be factored into the student's GPA.

Is there a limit on how many courses you can declare for P/F for spring 2020—the College limit is one course per semester?

No, there is no limit on how many courses you can declare P/F for the spring 2020 semester.

If I select some courses as P/F, does that mean I have reached the College's limit (no more than 16 credits) of P/F courses I can take?

Courses declared P/F in spring 2020 will not contribute to the total credit hours of P/F credit allowed during a student's undergraduate career.

If I declare a course P/F, can it be used in a future semester as a course prerequisite that requires a minimum grade?

Yes. If you must pass the course, then you can take the next course in the curriculum's sequence.

I am taking a class that requires a letter grade for majors, but I am not in the major yet. If I opt to take it pass/fail and then declare that as my major, what happens?

The requirement is waived for the spring 2020 semester. You will be able to take the next courses in the curriculum's sequence.

Will P/F courses count toward my earned semester hours for satisfactory academic progress?

Yes. Courses that you pass will count toward your earned semester hours. Courses that you fail will not count toward your earned semester hours.

What if I already declared a course P/F this semester?

If you previously elected to take a course pass/fail, it will stay P/F. You do not need to declare that class P/F.

I have an honor code violation in a course. Can I switch it to a P/F?

A student may not designate a course P/F if the final grade is a result of an academic integrity violation.

If I take this course as a P/F, do I have to take the final exam?

Your final grade in the class will include your final exam. In most classes, the final exam is a substantive portion of the grade and not completing it would have a severe negative consequence on the overall grade.

Will there be any note about why I took a class as P/F? I worry that future employers or graduate schools won't know why I took so many P/F classes.

Yes, a note will be added to all transcripts that identifies the circumstances students faced in spring 2020.

Even though a transcript note is being included about P/F grades for spring 2020, could choosing

a grade of P/F affect how my transcript is evaluated, for instance, by a graduate program?

Perhaps. This situation is complicated by the fact that graduate programs vary widely - by discipline and by school - in terms of admissions procedures. One potential risk of selecting P/F applies to graduate programs that evaluate specific courses on a student's transcript and use a minimum threshold for grade received in those courses. Because opting to "P" means you earned a "C- or higher," it may impact the program's ability to evaluate your potential for specific coursework. That being said, the note pertaining to why P/F was offered *may* mitigate concerns to a degree. Additionally, because grades will be recorded, it will be possible for students to request an official letter from the Office of the Registrar denoting the original grade. This issue also reflects why it is crucial to speak with your professor/advisor about your decisions in this regard.

If I have additional questions about declaring a course pass/fail, where should I go?

We encourage you to speak with an academic advisor about your choice and about any impact your choices might have for success in future courses or admissions to future programs. Faculty advisors are available to communicate with students remotely.