

COVID-19 Graduate Faculty Governance Council (GFGC) Interim Graduate Grading Policy for Graduate Courses

Version 3: In effect starting Fall 2020

This temporary policy has no bearing on 690 Thesis and 691 Field Project credits, courses graded S/U, noncredit bearing program-specific graduation requirements, or on grading in the Fairhaven College, which has its own grading policy. A summary of the grading policy is included here along with a more complete description of how other Graduate School policies are affected by this temporary policy and faculty control over curricular decisions while this policy is in place (Appendix).

Requesting P/NP grades for Graduate Courses: Graduate students may designate a graduate course as Pass/No Pass by submitting a request to the Registrar's Office at any time through the seventh week of a quarter following registration. For short-format courses offered through Western's Outreach and Continuing Education programs, graduate students may elect pass/no pass grading designation prior to the third class meeting. Students may be advised to elect letter grading if required for reasons such as veteran status or benefits, overall GPA, or program-specific accreditation or other requirements.

Requesting P/NP grades for Undergraduate Courses: Graduate students will follow the temporary policy for undergraduates.

P/NP grades: Graduate students opting for P/NP (EP/NP*) grading[†] in Fall Quarter 2020 will receive an EP for grades of C- and above. A grade of D+ or lower will be recorded as an NP*, which will not earn credits or be reflected in the GPA. By choosing not to opt for EP/NP grading, a student may have a D+, D or D- reported to their transcript, which will be reflected in the GPA. Programs requesting a different minimum grade for credit may petition their Dean and, if approved, will announce the course grade rubric before the start of classes.

Credit: For graduate students a grade of EP will count towards continuation requirements, but the total number of EP credits received beginning summer 2020 and thereafter that will count toward the degree is limited to a maximum of 6. EP grades received during spring 2020 do not count toward the 6 credit limit. Under special circumstances, a student can petition the Graduate School to count additional EP graded credits towards the degree.

Rationale: This policy is intended to assist graduate programs in determining how to meet existing Graduate School policies during the University's COVID-19 response. The Coronavirus pandemic has led the university to shift to remote learning, a modality that is new for many faculty and students. These uncharted learning conditions, coupled with the current social and economic instability our students are currently experiencing, will create challenging quarters. Out of an abundance of care, a final recommendation from the Graduate Faculty Governance Council (GFGC) is for faculty to consider these exogenous factors when designing courses, assignments, and other methods of assessment to ameliorate student anxiety and encourage a focus on learning.

[†] EP (Pass – Exceptional Circumstance) is to be used as the P grade in grade submission, and NP* is to be used as the NP grade. This is necessary to facilitate the appropriate qualification of the P grade in Banner and Degree Works during the period of the temporary grading policy

Appendix: COVID-19 Graduate Faculty Governance Council (GFGC) Interim Graduate Grading Policy for Graduate Courses

In effect starting Summer 2020

Scholarship Standards

Current Policy:

Pass/No Pass grades are not applicable toward a graduate degree.

Interim Policy:

Superseded by this Interim Policy.

Current Policy:

To remain a candidate for the degree, a student must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA in courses listed on the plan of study.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy. EP/NP* grades will not be calculated in the GPA.

Current Policy:

A maximum of 10 credits of C grades (C+, C, C-) is allowed towards completion of a graduate program.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy; however, EP grades will not be calculated into the maximum number of C grades allowed in current policy.

Current Policy:

Courses in which a D+ or lower is earned may not be applied towards completion of a graduate program.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy; however, credits from a course where an NP* grade was received will not be applied towards completion of a graduate program.

Current Policy:

There are certain courses that must be passed with a grade of B or better; program descriptions note such requirements.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy; however, programs can decide to revise or waive this program-specific requirement while this policy is in effect and communicate this to students no later than one week before the start of the term.

Current Policy:

An incomplete (K) grade may be assigned in accordance with the regulations outlined in the Academic Policies section of this catalog.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy.

Awarding of the Master's Degree

Current Policy:

A student must be enrolled for at least two regular credits or GRAD 699 during the quarter in which the degree is awarded.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

Current Policy: Graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment from their first quarter of registration until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for at least one credit in all academic quarters (excluding summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated.

- Students who have not completed all degree requirements and are not currently registered for any credits will be required to register for GRAD 699, Continuous Enrollment, every quarter (excluding summers) until all degree requirements are completed. GRAD 699 is non-graded.
- Students who maintain Continuous Enrollment will be allowed to complete their degree under the policies and requirements in place at their date of matriculation.
- Registration for GRAD 699 maintains many privileges associated with full or part time university enrollment, such as access to Western Libraries, technology, and research facilities.
- Registration for GRAD 699 does not meet minimum enrollment requirements for Financial Aid, student employment, or status as a Teaching Assistant.
- Western Washington University employees receiving state waivers in pursuit of their graduate degree are exempt from the Continuous Enrollment requirement.

Interim Policy:

No change to current policy.