

## Winter 2021 Graduate Student Grading Policy

In view of the global pandemic, its many effects on our students, faculty and community, and after extensive consultation and deliberation, a **grade/no pass** option for graduate classes will be provided during the Winter 2021 term for educational programs who choose to exercise this option. This option is meant to accommodate the diverse academic and career trajectories among graduate students, as well as the needs of programs who are subject to varied accrediting and regulatory bodies, licensure requirements, and/or other professional benchmarks.

Current policy regarding graduate grades is outlined in the Graduate Bulletin as follows: “To be awarded a graduate degree, a student must have achieved at least a 'B' (3.0) overall grade point average. Grades of 'B-minus' and below are unsatisfactory for graduate level work. A limited number of 'B-minus', 'C-plus,' or 'C', though unsatisfactory, may be applied toward a graduate degree provided they are offset by a sufficient number of higher grades to maintain a grade point average of 3.0.” <https://bulletins.wayne.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-regulations/>

The grade/no pass option will work as follows: Classes will be graded normally at the end of the term and the instructor will enter the letter grade (ABCF) earned by the student. Then, if the student's program opts into the grade/no pass option, students receiving a grade of B- or lower may request that the instructor submit a grade change to “N”.

Student requests must be made by email to the instructor and copied to the director of graduate studies of the student's home program. For students taking courses outside their home program, the availability of the grade/no pass option shall be determined by the home program, NOT the program offering the course.

The objective of this policy is to have the maximum possible benefit to our students within regulatory and related constraints. This policy does not relax the standard for a passing grade. Our current policies already allow some flexibility in the sense that earned grades of B-, C+, C can be counted for graduation if they are offset by higher grades in other classes, to allow graduate students to graduate as long as they have an overall GPA of 3.0 or better.

This policy is designed to help mitigate harm to students who are in crisis as a result of the current situation and cannot complete a class. While a grade of N does not give a student credit for a course, unlike an unsatisfactory or failing grade, it will not pull down a student's GPA. Also, for graduate students who are funded with tuition benefits from graduate assistantships, graduate scholarships or fellowships, the option to take an N provides a needed alternative to a withdrawal. A grade of N allows a student to finish the course, whereas if they withdraw, they become responsible for the tuition (tuition benefits cannot be paid for courses not completed). Students receiving tuition benefits from their employer, including Wayne State employees receiving tuition benefits, should consult employer policies before selecting the N option. A transcript notation will indicate that N grades in the Winter 2021 term resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Letter Grade	Alternate Grade option	Notes
A A- B+ B		After the end of the normal grading period, students who receive a grade that is normally considered a passing grade by graduate standards will receive their earned letter grade.
B- C+ C F	N	If the program opts into the grade/no pass option, any student who receives these grades may request that the instructor change the grade to an N. Instructors must accommodate any such request.

This policy change allows for, but does not require, any relaxation in school/college/program requirements.

If, for any reason, changing circumstances dictate that switching a grade from one mode to the other is advantageous to the student, such a grade mode change is allowed under this policy. Please note, these options may only be exercised before graduation — once a student graduates, the transcript is locked and grades may not be changed. Graduate students will be able to elect grade/no pass for courses taken during Winter 2021 until the time of their graduation. Students graduating in Winter 2021 will have a deadline for grade/no pass grading selection, as transcripts cannot be changed after graduation. That deadline is May 12, 2021.

**Some factors to consider if programs opt into the grade/N option, and for advising students about whether to keep the letter grade or choose the N option:**

- Effect on student GPA: How will the student's cumulative GPA be affected? The Graduate School requires that students maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA
- How will student progress towards credit hour requirements be affected?
- How will student completion of prerequisite courses be affected? Does a student intend to take the next course in the sequence?
- For master's students: what grade is required as a minimum should you wish to apply your master's coursework towards a future PhD?
- Employer reimbursement, etc.: Will the course be eligible for reimbursement with an "N"?