

Temporary P/NP Policy Changes Proposal/Discussion for Fall 2020

Current Situation for Spring/Summer 2020: In April the Faculty Senate approved a temporary change to various P/NP grading policies, in response to the COVID pandemic and the resulting transition to fully remote course delivery in spring and summer terms. At the time, they also extended the changes to fall 2020, should we remain fully remote.

The full policy can be found here: [Spring/Summer 2020 Temporary P/NP Policy Changes](#)

The key elements of the policy are summarized as follows:

1. **Graded Only Courses** - Allows colleges/departments to offer Graded Only courses as P/NP Optional. (Some colleges made college-wide decisions to offer all Graded Only courses with the P/NP Option.)
2. **Relaxation of Academic Restrictions** -
 - a. Allows any Pass grades earned in spring/summer to be used without restriction towards major/program requirements,
 - b. Pass grades earned spring/summer will not count against degree limitations,
 - c. Allows Pass grades earned in spring/summer in prerequisite courses to be used for entry into the subsequent courses.
3. **Extended Deadline for Students to Change their Grading Option** - To give students more time to evaluate how they are managing in the remote environment, the Grade Option change deadline was moved from Week 7 to Week 10.
4. **Transcript Notation** - To help downstream consumers of the transcript (i.e. medical and graduate schools, employers, etc.) understand the context for the use of P/NP grading during this period, a transcript notation will be added that says: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic PSU allowed increased use of the Pass/No-Pass grading option.

Fall 2020 Instructional Planning Scenarios

There is a good chance that fall instructional delivery will not be fully Remote, but will include some measure of return to in-person, face-to-face courses, along with continued Remote offerings. The two planning scenarios under consideration include:

- Scenario #1: Primarily Remote w/Limited F2F is a continuation of Remote, with very restricted/limited F2F for labs/studio-type courses where hands on activity and access to specialized equipment and space is required.
- Scenario #2: Variety of Delivery Types would provide a more balanced combination/variety, with a significant number of F2F courses and a significant number of Remote courses.

P/NP Policy Question for Fall 2020:

If PSU is able to move from Fully Remote in fall 2020, to either Scenario 1 or 2 described above, do we want to extend the Temporary P/NP Policy to fall or revert back to the standard policy?

Options to consider:

- A. Revert back to the standard, pre-COVID P/NP Policy if either Scenario 1 or 2 is adopted.
- B. Maintain the current Temporary P/NP Policy during fall term, under both Scenario 1 and 2.

Competing Rationale to consider in weighing decision:

- **Remote No Longer a Surprise:** Either way, students should be expecting remote learning in fall and it is no longer a 'surprise' that needs to be mitigated by the policy exception.
- **COVID Stress & Disruption Continues** - the pandemic will still be generating stress and disruption for students beyond the novelty of remote learning (i.e. child care, tending to impacted family members, etc.). The continuation of the policy will mitigate the stressors in some measure.
- **UG and GR Policies Should Align** - having separate policies will be messy and introduce confusion. The Temporary P/NP Policy already allows colleges/units to decide whether they want to offer a Graded Only course as P/NP Optional. This should provide sufficient flexibility for GR programs that do not want to expand the P/NP Option.

By the Numbers:

Spring 2019: End of term

786 sections offered optional grading (695 UG and 91 GR)

858 = The number of individual course registrations where students selected the P/NP Option (excludes P/NP Only courses)

Spring 2020:

1,742 sections offered optional grading (1,261 UG and 481 GR)

April 16th snapshot = 1,039 course registrations taken P/NP (excluding P/NP Only)

June 2nd snapshot = 7,254 course registrations taken P/NP (excluding P/NP Only)

** There was a steady increase each week, with a surge in Weeks 8 & 9, as students took advantage of the 2 week deadline extension.

Those 7,254 courses were taken by 4,148 individual students broken down as follows:

UG - 3,556 students

GR - 455 students

PB - 111 students

NA - 26 students

How many GR courses that were Graded Only by design chose to offer P/NP Option in Spring?

While we do not have an accurate accounting of this, a gross estimate is that 60-70% converted to P/NP Optional.

Some colleges/academic units made a college wide decision to change ALL GR & UG Graded Only to P/NP Optional.

Others chose to keep GR Graded Only courses as Graded Only.