

Update on Grading Options for Spring 2020

The following guidance relates specifically to the Spring 2020 academic term.

Lake Superior College will be determining at a later date whether these or other options will be used in the Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 Semesters.

PASS/NO CREDIT GRADING OPTION

What Is It?

Most classes at Lake Superior College are typically graded with a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F. For the Spring 2020 term, we are giving students the option of choosing to be graded instead using the grades of either P for “Pass” or NC for “No Credit.”

How Does It Work?

Faculty in A-F graded courses will continue to grade you on an A-F scale, but if you choose the P/NC option, your A-F grade will be converted to a corresponding “Pass” or “No Credit” grade after you decide to make this change. When you receive a P grade, this means that you have achieved enough of the essential learning outcomes of the course to have passed the course (comparable to grade C level work). You can make these decisions on a course-by-course basis. You will have until **June 23** to decide and submit this decision for each of your courses. Note: All students currently being graded on a Pass/Fail scale who are eligible for the P/NC grading method will be converted to a Pass/No Credit scale – any D’s or F’s will be converted to NC’s.

Students MUST connect with a program or professional advisor to determine if this is an appropriate option for the program and the individual student and submit a form. This option is not available to all students depending on program or other requirements (international student, transfer, etc.).

Potential Benefits

1. With all of the time and effort you have invested in your courses, this grading option will provide a low-risk way for you to finish the course and continue to make progress toward your ultimate goal of graduation or transfer.
2. P and NC grades are not included in the calculation of your grade point average (GPA). Thus, if challenging personal circumstances or the unexpected learning environment of remote learning make it harder this semester to get as high a grade as you would otherwise, this will protect your cumulative GPA.
3. Because P and NC grades don’t impact GPA, the P/NC grade method will offer students protection against being suspended as part of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

process. NC grades typically reduce a student's completion rate (the number of credits you earn vs. attempt).

Potential Drawbacks

1. Although a P/NC grade can't hurt your GPA, it also can't help your GPA. If students determine their GPA will increase by sticking with the A-F grading method, they should do so.
2. Under normal circumstances, many transfer institutions and graduate schools do not accept courses that were graded on a P/NC scale. However, all Minnesota State institutions will accept spring 2020 grades of "P" in undergraduate transfer. This includes counting those courses toward major requirements, as well as toward graduation requirements and any other purposes that impact a student's academic standing or progression. Students who plan to transfer to institutions outside the Minnesota State system are strongly advised to consult the transfer program before pursuing the P/NC grading option.
3. Some students may not be eligible for P/NC grading. These may include veterans on GI benefits, some international students, and students in some programs with external licensure. Both the federal government and licensing bodies may change these rules during semesters impacted by COVID-19.

*The good thing is – **You don't have to decide right now. In fact, we encourage you to wait.** You will have until June 23, 2020, to decide and submit if you wish to opt for P/NC grading. By this time, you will know how well you did in the course, and by then we will know more about what the implications are for transfer, graduate schools, veterans, Nursing students, etc.*

EXTENSION OF DEADLINE TO WITHDRAW

What Is It?

The Minnesota State system typically sets a deadline for students to withdraw that is set at the point when 80 percent of the term has been completed. The system had extended that point to 90 percent of the term, which means Lake Superior College students in full-term courses will have until **May 4, 2020**, to decide whether to withdraw.

How Does It Work?

Students in *full-term courses* can withdraw (and get a grade of W) at any point between now and May 4, 2020. If you are in a shorter-term course, please contact your advisor to determine what the new withdraw deadline is.

Potential Benefits

1. Compared with the earlier withdrawal deadline, this will give students time to determine whether their new learning environment and personal circumstances provide an environment in which they can academically succeed in the current term.

Potential Drawbacks

1. A Withdrawal (W) grade will have the same impact on GPA, completion rate, and Satisfactory Academic Progress as does a No Credit (NC) grade. However, the Withdrawal deadline is earlier than the deadline to make a decision than with the Pass/No Credit grading option, and an NC may be viewed more favorably on a student's transcript than a W.

"COVID-19" NOTATION ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT

What Is It?

The Minnesota State system (like many other colleges and universities throughout the country) will be developing a mechanism for making it clear on your transcript which grades were in terms impacted by COVID-19.

How Does It Work?

We are still figuring out the details of how this will work at Lake Superior College. We will be working to make sure it is in step with and recognizable by other higher education institutions in Minnesota and across the country.

Potential Benefits

1. It is expected that transfer institutions and others will make allowances for grades impacted by the unprecedented disruptions of COVID-19 on students and institutions.

Potential Drawbacks

1. There are no known drawbacks to this approach at this time.
 - Faculty in A-F graded courses will continue to grade you on an A-F scale, but if a student chooses the P/NC option, the student's A-F grade will be converted to a corresponding "Pass" or "No Credit" grade after the student decides to make this change.
 - When a student receives a P grade, this means that the student has achieved enough of the essential learning outcomes of the course to have passed the course ("C" minimum if graded on a letter grade).
 - Students can make these decisions on a course-by-course basis.

- Students will have until after the spring semester to decide and submit this decision for each of their courses. (Lake Superior College gives until **June 23**, and that seemed to be fine with us.)
- **Students MUST connect with a program or professional advisor** to determine if this is an appropriate option for the program and the individual student and submit a form. This option is not available to all students depending on program or other requirements (international student, transfer, etc.).
- **This is only for Spring 2020 term.**

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