



University of California, Merced

Amendment to Emergency Course Continuity (ECC) policy – Pass/No Pass grade options

Summary:

On March 6, 2020, the University of California Merced Divisional Council passed an “Emergency Course Continuity” policy. This policy provides flexibility to students giving them permission to change the course grading option for their course(s) from letter grade to Pass/No Pass. This change is allowed up to the final day of instruction. This policy also provides warnings of potential unintended consequences a student may experience in the event of changing their grade option.

Contact: Jay E. Sharping, Chair, UGC

Email: jsharping@ucmerced.edu and fpaul@ucmerced.edu

I. Context

This policy was drafted by the Undergraduate Council in response to the unusual and challenging circumstances that students and instructors are presently facing, and the additional challenges that may lay ahead due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this policy is to provide **flexibility to students** during Emergency Course Continuity.

Changing the grade option for a course is a big deal! The consequences may follow a student throughout their career as subsequent programs, including those outside of our own institution, may require that coursework to be taken for a letter grade. Students must consider the big picture when making this choice.

- 1) There are 3 grading options for a course (important restrictions below), Letter Graded (A-F), Pass/No Pass (P/NP) for undergraduate students, and Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) for graduate students.
 - a. Many officially approved courses are specified as “letter grade only”
 - b. Many officially approved degree programs specify that prerequisites and major requirements must be taken for a letter grade
 - c. Some general requirements such as transfer credits and the Entry Level Writing Requirement are met by a grade of C or better in relevant coursework which is not differentiated properly in the P/NP framework
- 2) Logistics about non-Letter Graded coursework

- a. Students must specify the grade type at the beginning of the term
- b. Students may enroll in one course each term on a P/NP basis (two courses if they have not elected the P/NP in the preceding term).
- c. Credit for courses taken on a P/NP basis is limited to one-third of the total units taken and passed on the UC Merced campus at the time the degree is awarded

3) P/NP and S/U grades are not figured as part of a student's cumulative GPA

4) Admission to future professional programs may require certain courses to be "letter grade only"

According to the 2019/2020 UC Merced Catalog, the work of all students on the UC Merced campus is reported in terms of the following grades:

A+	(excellent)	4.0
A	(excellent)	4.0
A-	(excellent)	3.7
B+	(good)	3.3
B	(good)	3.0
B-	(good)	2.7
C+	(fair)	2.3
C	(fair)	2.0
C-	(fair)	1.7
D+	(barely passing)	1.3
D	(barely passing)	1.0
D-	(barely passing)	0.7
F	(not passing)	0.0
P	(passed at a minimum level of C- or better by an undergraduate student)	
S	(satisfactory, passed at a minimum level of B or better by a graduate student)	
NP	(not passed, undergraduate only)	
U	(unsatisfactory, graduate only)	

I	(incomplete)
IP	(in progress)
NR	(no report, when an instructor fails to report a grade for a student)

II. Policy text

Students will be permitted to change their course grading option from letter grade to Pass/No Pass under the following provisions.

- 1) During any term in which ECC has been declared, undergraduate students may request P/NP grading in any course (with the exception of WRI 001) through the last day of instruction. Academic standing will not be considered.
 - a. Students who exceed the one-third limit on the total number of P/NP units for completion of a degree shall file a petition of academic policy. Approval shall be granted based on excluding P/NP units taken during ECC.
 - b. During any term in which ECC has been declared, students are not limited in the number of courses graded as P/NP and may, according to existing policy, enroll the following term in as many as two courses with P/NP grading option.
- 2) During any term in which ECC has been declared, UGC recommends that programs consider temporarily waiving requirements that mandate students to take courses for a letter grade.
- 3) During any term in which ECC has been declared, a student may repeat on a P/NP basis a course that was previously taken on a letter-grade basis.
- 4) If a student is being investigated for academic misconduct in a course, the instructor and Dean can disallow a student from electing the P/NP option.

Important Advising and Financial Aid Considerations

In relation to these temporary changes to Pass/No Pass Regulations, units should advise the students of the potential impacts of their decisions that are beyond the control of UCM. Students should also be made aware of the impact of P/NP courses on GPA, as well as potential impacts on "satisfactory academic progress" and financial aid. The Office of Undergraduate Education and the Director of Financial Aid and Scholarship will help guide students and inform them about their options and any ramifications.