

Faculty FAQ on Credit/No Credit Grading Policy (Spring 2020)

Version: 3/25/20

Throughout the United States, COVID-19 has presented Colleges and Universities with unprecedented, but necessary modifications to academic activities in the spring 2020 semester. Here at Cedar Crest, instruction was officially moved to completely online delivery as of March 18, 2020. We are extremely grateful for the quick response and commitment of the faculty and IT to enact this change. Our students have also been confronted with the stress of this dramatic change and loss of face-to-face contact with their instructors.

Now, we look ahead to what the close of the semester will look like. We have been researching decisions which have been rendered at other institutions across the nation. Here are links to two articles in particular that addressed a shift to pass/fail or credit/non-credit grading policies for the spring 2020 semester.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/03/19/colleges-go-passfail-address-coronavirus>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/make-all-courses-pass-fail-now/248281?cid=cp275>

This information update will focus on our spring 2020 temporary grading policy allowing students to elect to receive their final course grade as a letter grade (A-F) or a Credit/Non-Credit grade. This temporary grading policy applies to both undergraduate and graduate students. Students will be receiving a similar document of FAQs related to opting which type of grade to receive, the implications of the choice, and how to notify the Registrar's Office of their selection. Transcripts will indicate that this semester was the pandemic semester (this will be shared when the language is finalized).

We continue to be encouraged by the dedication of the faculty, staff, and students in response to this unique set of circumstances. Continue to support and encourage your students, practice self-care, and most of all—be well!

Credit Grades Will:

- Count for credit.
- Count toward student academic progress.
- Count toward degree completion.
- Count toward a major/minor.
- Count toward a Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) course requirement.
- Appear on their transcript as credit.
- Fulfill a prerequisite course requirement for a future course, even if there was a minimum letter grade requirement previously.
- Fulfill financial aid requirements.

Credit Grades Will NOT:

- Be calculated in a student's GPA.
- Count toward Dean's List recognition. For Dean's List recognition a student would need to complete at least 12 credits with a letter grade and quality points.

- Count toward graduation with honors. For graduation with honors, 60 letter grade credits are required.
- Count toward induction into the College's Honor Society, Delphi.
- Be guaranteed to satisfy regulatory or accreditation requirements for external pre-professional certification agencies (such as State Boards of Nursing).

Non-Credit Grades WILL:

- Appear on student's transcript.

Non-Credit Grades Will NOT:

- Count for credit.
- Count toward student academic progress.
- Count toward degree completion.
- Count toward major/minor.
- Count toward the Liberal Arts Curriculum
- Fulfill a pre-requisite requirement for a future course.
- Fulfill financial aid requirements.
- Be calculated in a student's GPA.
- Satisfy regulatory or accreditation requirements for external pre-professional certification agencies (such as State Boards of Nursing).

How will students declare their grading option?

Students will complete a grading decision form which will go directly to the Registrar's Office. Students will have one week (7 days) after they receive their grades to submit the form.

What is my role in students' decision process?

As an academic advisor to your students, you will be responsible for meeting with students virtually or communicating with them by email to aid them in weighing their options.

How will credit/non-credit grades be viewed by professional programs or graduate school reviewing my transcripts?

Since this move is unprecedented, as an advisor you could recommend that students check with professional organizations or other contacts at these schools. Cedar Crest is not making a novel decision in this regard. Other Colleges and Universities will be awarding credit/no credit grades for this semester. As mentioned above, there will be a notation on all transcripts for the spring 2020 semester indicating that this was an atypical semester.

How will credit/non-credit grades be viewed by any regulatory or accreditation agency in accredited programs that provide pre-professional certification (such as Nursing)?

Since this may vary depending on the program, students should consult their academic advisor for specifics prior to selecting the credit/no-credit option. CR designations may not satisfy regulatory agency or accreditation organization requirements for academic programs.

Will faculty know if a student changes their grade to Credit/No Credit?

Only those who have access to student transcripts (advisor, administrators) will be able to view final grades.

If a student makes a grading decision and changes his/her mind, how will this grade change be handled?

Once a student converts to Credit/No Credit, they will have seven days to retract that decision and have the grade awarded reflected on the transcript permanently. For students who do elect to have the Credit/No Credit designation for their course work, that decision will be final on May 26, 2020 and cannot be retracted.

If a student receives a final grade of F due to academic misconduct, will the F stand?

Yes, a final grade of F for academic misconduct cannot be converted to no credit.

Will students be prepared academically with the prerequisite knowledge in subsequent coursework?

The spring 2020 semester has brought unprecedented challenges for both faculty and students. The repercussions of this semester will not be fully known for some time. We as faculty, need to remember that students may not have mastered all the content of a prerequisite course. We will need to offer support and be prepared to direct them to appropriate campus resources to reinforce prior material. Academic Services will play a vital role in supporting students, but faculty will need to be cognizant of the reality that the second half of the semester may not have been an optimal learning experience for some students. Faculty support for students, as well as Finish Line, One-on-One Appointments, Peer Tutors, Study Guides, and Study Groups will be critical learning tools for students next academic year.

Does a student need to repeat a course in which they received a grade of non-credit?

This will depend on how the course was being utilized in the student's degree completion plan. If it was a major/minor requirement, then yes, the course must be repeated. If it was a LAC requirement, then the student will need to take a course with the same LAC designation, but not necessarily repeat the same course. If the course was strictly an elective, then no, the course does not have to be repeated. If the course was needed to reach the 120-credit requirement for graduation, then a course (not necessarily the same course) will be needed to be completed.

Commented [JK1]: I am fine with adding this as a safeguard, but I do think that accreditors will lighten restrictions given the number of institutions which are going to this grading system.