**To: JSU Undergraduate Students**

**From: Office of Academic Affairs**

**RE: Undergraduate Alternative Grading Policy for Spring 2020**

**Date: April 21, 2020**

## Alternative grading options in response to the COVID-19 crisis

After conferring with a wide range of stakeholders including the faculty, students, the Faculty Senate, and administrators in all colleges, the Jackson State University Office of Academic Affairs is introducing a special grading option for students in response to the COVID-19 events. This policy on the Spring 2020 grades applies to all undergraduate courses. The policy and FAQs on special situations are discussed below.

### Policy for Undergraduate Course Grades for Spring 2020

Students enrolled in undergraduate courses at Jackson State can choose either to retain the letter grade assigned by the instructor or to select an alternative grade. The alternative grades are P- Pass and NC-No Credit. The alternative grades will have no impact on the student's GPA.

  - Students who receive an A grade in a course will not have the option to change that grade.
  - Students who receive a B, C, or D grade have the option to choose the P grade (Pass) instead of the B, C, or D letter grade. The P will appear on the student's transcript and will count for course credit but will not be used in GPA calculations.
  - Students who receive a F grade have the option to choose the NC grade (No Credit). The NC grade will appear on the student's transcript but will not count for course credit and will not be used in GPA calculations.
- Undergraduate students may choose to retain all traditional letter grades or choose to change to the alternative grade for one or more classes while still retaining traditional letter grades in other courses (examples provided below).
- Undergraduate students will have access in PAWS to view grades and make their choices between May 6, 2020 and May 15, 2020.
- Undergraduate students who do not select optional grades will receive the letter grade assigned by the instructor.

| **Undergraduate Grade Conversion Table** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Letter Grade | Alternative Grade | Credit Awarded | Impact on GPA |
| A | A | Yes | Yes |
| B | P | Yes | No |
| C | P | Yes | No |
| D | P | Yes | No |
| F | NC | No | No |

**Alternative Grading Scenarios**

**Scenario 1:** A student who is enrolled in 15 hours (five 3-hour courses) and has a 3.4 GPA has earned the following grades: A, A, B, C, D. How can the alternative grading options benefit this student?

| Scenario 1: 15 credit hours (5 courses) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Using only traditional grades | | | | Using alternative and traditional grades | | | |
| Letter Grade | Standard Grade GPA | Credit Awarded | Impact on GPA | Alternative Grade Choices | Alternative or Standard Grade GPA | Credit Awarded | Impact on GPA |
| A | 4.0 | Yes | Yes | A | 4.0 | Yes | Yes |
| A | 4.0 | Yes | Yes | A | 4.0 | Yes | Yes |
| B | 3.0 | Yes | Yes | B | 3.0 | Yes | Yes |
| C | 2.0 | Yes | Yes | P | None | Yes | No |
| D | 1.0 | Yes | Yes | P | None | Yes | No |
| | 2.8 GPA for the semester | | | | 3.6 GPA for the semester | | |
| | 15 credit hours earned | | | | 15 credit hours earned | | |

**Scenario 2:** A student who is enrolled in 18 hours (six 3-hour courses) and has a 2.6 GPA has earned the following grades: C, A, D, B, C, F. How can the alternative grading options benefit this student?

| Scenario 2: 18 credit hours (6 courses) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Using only traditional grades | | | | Using alternative and traditional grades | | | |
| Letter Grade | Standard Grade GPA | Credit Awarded | Impact on GPA | Alternative Grade Choices | Alternative or Standard Grade GPA | Credit Awarded | Impact on GPA |
| C | 2.0 | Yes | Yes | P | None | Yes | No |
| A | 4.0 | Yes | Yes | A | 4.0 | Yes | Yes |
| D | 1.0 | Yes | Yes | P | None | Yes | No |
| B | 3.0 | Yes | Yes | B | 3.0 | Yes | Yes |
| C | 2.0 | Yes | Yes | P | None | Yes | No |
| F | 0.0 | No | Yes | NC | None | No | No |
| | 2.0 GPA for the semester | | | | 3.5 GPA for the semester | | |
| | 15 credit hours earned | | | | 15 credit hours earned | | |

# Spring 2020 Alternative Grading Option FAQs

### If I choose to have my B, C, or D grade changed to P, will that course still fulfill my requirements?

The P will count for all general education, degree/major, and certificate requirements.

### How does a P or NC grade impact my GPA?

The new P and NC grades will not impact your GPA in any way, positively or negatively.

### How does the NC grade work?

The NC grade does not satisfy any requirements, it does not count for credit, it does not impact a GPA, and it cannot be used to fulfill a prerequisite on a course. Students may retake a course with a NC grade in a subsequent semester and receive credit in that semester. Both courses will remain on the record.

### If I choose to convert my grades to P or NC, how will standard letter grades convert to P or NC?

If an undergraduate student earns a B, C, or D in a course and chooses the COVID-19 grading option, the student's grade will be converted to a P. If a student earns a F in a course and opts into the COVID-19 grading option, the student's grade will be converted to a NC. Spring 2020 grades can only be converted between May 6, 2020, and May 15, 2020, after course grades have been posted in PAWS.

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|---|---|---|---|
| Letter Grade | Alternative Grade | Credit Awarded | Impact on GPA |
| A | A | Yes | Yes |
| B | P | Yes | No |
| C | P | Yes | No |
| D | P | Yes | No |
| F | NC | No | No |

### How does a P or NC grade impact enrollment for future courses? How does a P or NC grade affect prerequisite courses?

A P grade in a prerequisite course will allow a student to enroll in the next course. A NC grade in a prerequisite course will not allow a student to enroll in the next course since the NC grade does not grant credit for the course.

### Why aren't all classes automatically being changed to the new P/NC grades?

We know our students are still working diligently on their coursework and our faculty and instructors are still delivering a rigorous learning experience. We expect that most of our students will still want their transcript to reflect the caliber of performance and maintain the letter grade they've worked hard to earn.

### How will I indicate I want a P or NC grade for my courses?

The process is still being developed and all students will be notified about what steps to take. The window to elect the COVID-19 grading option will begin on May 6, 2020, and will conclude on May 15, 2020, giving you the benefit of seeing the official grade in PAWS before you decide.

### Is there a limit on how many courses I can convert to the P or NC grade this semester?

No, you can choose to convert all of your courses, some of your courses, or none of your courses.

### Do I need to be in good academic standing to convert my grades to a P or NC grade?

No. Any student enrolled in undergraduate courses may take advantage of the alternative grades. Students not in good academic standing are particularly encouraged to consult their academic advisors or speak with the department chair over their degree program as they review their options.

### How will the P or NC grades appear on my transcript?

If the new COVID-19 grading option is elected, only the new grades (P or NC) will appear on the transcript. These grades will be explained on the transcript.

### Will the P/NC option be available in other semesters?

No, the P/NC option is being offered only this semester in response to the COVID-19 pandemic disruption.

### I am an undergraduate student taking a graduate-level class. What will happen to my grade in that course?

Graduate level courses are not included in the optional P/NC grading for Spring 2020. Please refer to the Policy for Graduate Course Grades for Spring 2020 for details on the optional grading policy for graduate-level courses.

### How will employers, graduate schools, and professional schools evaluate P/NC grades? Will I be at a disadvantage if I select to convert my grades to P or NC?

Almost every university in the country is changing the grading basis for this semester. While we can't predict exactly what will happen in the future, most students nationwide will have similar COVID-19 related alternative grades on their transcripts for Spring 2020. If you are concerned about these issues, please work with your advisor or speak with the department chair over your degree program.

### What if my final grade for a class is not posted by May 6, 2020?

If you have an “NR” (No Record) grade because an instructor did not submit their grades by the grading deadline, you will be able to work with your academic dean’s office for an extension of the May 15th deadline to elect P or NC.

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| C | P | Yes | No |
| D | P | Yes | No |
| F | NC | No | No |