


MEMORANDUM

October 16, 2020

TO: UAH Students, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Christine W. Curtis 
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Pass/Withdraw Grading Option Available for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

In response to recent surveys, faculty and students expressed concerns over outcomes and successful completion of the Fall 2020 semester. In recognition of the continuing hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on students and faculty and the resulting changes in course delivery, UAH is extending the Pass/Withdraw grading option that was followed in Spring 2020 to the entire 2020-2021 academic year. A Pass, Withdraw, or Incomplete may not be the best option for all students, but may be appropriate in some circumstances. Students are strongly advised to consult with academic advisors concerning their specific situations.

Details are set forth below. Please be sure to read the entire document. In addition, frequently asked questions (FAQs) are attached.

Pass/Withdraw Grade Option

For each course, students have two grading options: keeping the traditional letter grade or choosing Pass/Withdraw. The Pass/Withdraw option is being offered to relieve some of the understandable anxiety that some of our students and faculty are experiencing. This change is also made in recognition of our core principle that the mental and physical health and safety of students, faculty, and staff must remain paramount as we cope with the COVID-19 crisis. Students who wish to keep their assigned letter grade may do so.

Considerations

- Students must understand that a decision to switch to Pass/Withdraw for a given course or for all of their courses may have an impact on scholarship retention, financial aid, academic standing, eligibility for Dean's List and other academic achievement designations based solely on performance during the Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 semesters.
- Students must earn at least a 3.0 GPA in order to maintain their scholarships. So, at least one course must remain in the traditional letter grade format with a B or higher.
- If a course is a prerequisite for a subsequent course, students must earn a high enough grade in order to advance to the next course, even though they switch to Pass grading. For example, Calculus B requires at least a C- in Calculus A. A student currently taking

Calculus A who earns a C is allowed to switch to Pass grading, and move on to Calculus B; a student who earns a D in Calculus A is allowed to switch to Pass grading but will not be allowed to move on to Calculus B.

- Students must understand that Pass/Withdraw grades might not be considered by graduate or professional schools during the application process. Students should consult with advisors concerning their specific situations to discuss the effect of selecting the Pass/Withdraw option for given courses on their major, progress toward graduation, scholarship, athletics eligibility, etc.
- Some courses and programs do not allow the use of Pass grading (see below)

Eligibility

The Pass/Withdraw option applies for all Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 terms (full and partial). Students can select the Pass/Withdraw option on a course-by-course basis. Instructions will be provided in a subsequent message. The opportunity to use the Pass/Withdraw option applies to all levels of courses (Charger Foundations, major courses, minor courses, electives, and graduate courses).

In some circumstances, students or programs may not be able to use the Pass/Withdraw option. Admission to some programs (e.g., nursing) and external accrediting/certifying agencies (e.g., teacher education) may require that students take courses in a traditional grading format. Students in the College of **Nursing** and in the bachelor's and master's degree programs in **Teacher Education** will not be able to use Pass grading and are advised to speak with their advisors for clarification. Those students would still be able to request a Withdraw in order to retake the course. However, students who choose the Withdraw option may not have sufficient hours for financial aid purposes.

Academic Progress and GPA

A grade of Pass can be awarded for grades of D- or higher for undergraduate courses or a C- or higher for graduate courses.

A Pass grade will not count toward students' grade point averages (for purposes of scholarships and otherwise), but all hours earned in courses with a Pass grade will count towards curricular, major, continuation, semester hours, and graduation requirements.

A grade of Pass will NOT NECESSARILY satisfy prerequisites for subsequent courses. Students must earn the required grade in a prerequisite course in order to move to higher-level courses, even if they elect to switch to Pass grading. The earned grade will be maintained within the records system in order to certify prerequisite satisfaction, but will not be revealed to anyone outside of UAH and will not appear on the transcript.

Process

For the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters, students will complete all assignments and exams through the remainder of the semester. Faculty will submit grades as usual after the final exam

period. Students will log in to their Banner account to view their grades, then elect to keep the grade assigned or request the grade be switched to a Pass or a Withdraw.

The default option is for students to receive a letter grade. It is vital that you consult with your advisor about the implications of keeping your grades as they are posted at the end of term or changing one or more of them to Pass/Withdraw. Your academic advisor will help you make the best informed decision based on your current academic standing, your current GPA, your current course work, and your plans after graduation.

Students wishing to exercise the Pass/Withdraw option for one or more courses will follow a process currently being finalized. You will receive a separate communication with instructions on how to make any desired changes to Pass/Withdraw grading for your class schedule.

Faculty will not be notified of a student's choice. The decision by a student to use the Pass/Withdraw option is treated with strict confidentiality.

After selected, Pass/Withdraw grades cannot later be changed to letter grades.

Cc: Darren Dawson, President
Brent Wren, Associate Provost
Academic Deans