Pass/D/Fail Opt-In Information and FAQs

Information
Stevenson University is deeply committed to student success. Stevenson recognizes that students may be experiencing difficulty transitioning to an online learning environment and/or encountering unexpected challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, Stevenson University is implementing a temporary opt-in change to the grading system for undergraduate students in the Spring 2020 semester and Spring 8-week-2 term. This option is available only to undergraduate students.

The University's standard A—F grading system remains the default for all students, and faculty will enter the earned letter grade for all students at the end of the semester. This temporary policy permits our undergraduate students to opt-in to an alternative Pass/D/Fail grading system on a course-by-course basis this semester. In this temporary system, you will be able to see the grade you earned in a course and then make a decision whether to leave the letter grade on your transcript or convert it to a Pass/D/Fail. The deadline for you to opt-in to the Pass/D/Fail grading system for one or more courses is Monday, 01 June 2020, which is one week after final grades are posted.

It is important to recognize that the Pass/D/Fail option is not appropriate in all situations and therefore, is not a decision to make lightly. There are many reasons why earning a letter grade is important, and students must be fully informed. Therefore, students should consult with their Success Coach or Academic Advisor prior to making their final decision.

FAQs

What are the grades for the Pass/D/Fail system?
Grades in the optional Pass/D/Fail system will be represented on the transcript as follows:

- Grades in the A to C range (100-70) will be recorded as a “P” for “Pass” (credits awarded; no effect on GPA).
- Grades in the D range (60-69) will be recorded as a “D” (credits awarded; calculated into GPA as 1.00 quality point).
- Grades in the F range (0-59) will be recorded as an “F” for “Fail” (no credits awarded; calculated into GPA as 0.00 quality points).

What are possible reasons why a student may choose to change to Pass/D/Fail grading?
There are a variety of reasons why a student may want to Opt-In. A student may Opt-in to reduce their stress level associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. A student may choose this option if they have been ill or need to care for their loved one(s) during the crisis and therefore, have not been able to give their full attention to their studies. Other reasons may include: the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning has been difficult or a student wishes to focus more on another course. The Pass/D/Fail option provides flexibility for the student.

What are possible reasons why a student might NOT choose to Opt-in to Pass/D/Fail grades?
There are also a variety of reasons why a student may not Opt-In. These include considerations such as academic standing, programs that have GPA-specific requirements, and graduate/professional school GPA requirements. You may need a specific GPA to maintain a scholarship or eligibility for financial aid. You may be trying to make the Dean’s List or may be a student in the Honors Program. Your employer may not reimburse a student for a Pass grade. These are just a sampling of things to consider and more details can be found below in the remaining FAQs.

How many classes can I change to the Pass/D/Fail grading scale?
You can select none, one, or as many as you would like to choose.

How can I change a course(s) to the Pass/D/Fail grading scale?
The Registrar will send an email with a link to the online form. The form will also be available on the portal.
What happens if I do not complete the form indicating my wish to change the course to the Pass/D/Fail grading scale?
If you do not complete the online form, all courses will remain on the standard SU grading scale.

When can I make this change?
The Opt-in period opens on April 13 and is available through June 1st (after grades are posted). After June 1st, the Opt-In will no longer be available and selections made to the Opt-In will be irrevocable.

Can I wait and see my grade at the end of the semester and then select the Opt-In option?
Yes, you can wait and see your final grade and then Opt-In, but the deadline for any changes is June 1st. Please note that if you were granted an “incomplete” grade at the end of the semester due to extenuating circumstances, you would still need to Opt-in by June 1st, which may be prior to the assignment of your final grade.

Am I required to speak with my advisor?
It is critical that you speak with your Success Coach or Academic Advisor as there are considerations that will affect this decision. Changing to the Opt-In Pass/D/Fail will not be a good choice for all students.

Will a “P” – Pass raise my cumulative GPA?
In most cases, it will not raise your GPA. If you are repeating a prior course where you received a grade of “D” or “F”, you may see a minimal change in your GPA.

As a graduating senior, will I still be eligible for honors for graduation (cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude)?
Yes, you are still eligible for graduation honors which is based on your “cumulative” GPA, which includes Spring 2020 grades. A grade of “P” will not raise your GPA unless you are repeating a course in which you previously earned a D or F. The increase would be minimal.

I am in the Honors Program. How does choosing to take a Pass/D/Fail affect my overall standing in the Honors Program?
Students must earn letter grades (B- or higher) in SEE-H courses in order to count the course toward the required SEE-H Honors program requirement. Students must also continue to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above. Students can take a Pass/D/Fail in some courses, as long as they have at least 12 full-time credits of GRADED courses. Any courses in which students want to receive Honors credit must be graded (i.e. SEE-H courses, contract courses).

I require a certain GPA for an honor society or other organization. Will a Pass/D/F affect my eligibility?
Eligibility would be determined by the organization. Consult with your group’s sponsor.

I am currently on academic probation. Would a “P”- Pass - raise my cumulative GPA?
No. It would not raise your GPA unless you are repeating a course in which you previously earned a D or F. The increase would be minimal.

If I am a student in nursing, education or another program that has progression standards or requires a minimum cumulative GPA, will a “P”- Pass raise my GPA?
No, unless you are repeating a course in which you previously earned a D or F. The increase would be minimal.

What if I am planning to apply to medical school, law school, or other professional or graduate programs that require a letter grade?
If so, this is a not an option that you should consider. You should speak to your Academic Advisor or the Director of Academic & Health Careers Advising.
Will changing to the Opt-In grading scale raise my GPA for financial aid/scholarship reasons?
No, unless you are repeating a course in which you previously earned a D or F. The increase would be minimal.

What if I am trying to make the Dean’s List?
The Dean’s List would be based on the Spring 2020 GPA. You must take at least 12 credits that are graded on the university’s standard grade scale and achieve the minimum GPA for the semester.

What if my employer ONLY reimburses me for letter grades?
If so, you should not opt-in to the Pass/D/Fail option.

What if I am a member of an athletic team?
If so, choosing to Opt-In to a Pass/D/Fail should not impact your eligibility unless you need to raise your GPA. If you need further guidance, please contact your athletic coach and/or Academic Advisor.

What if I am still unsure of the best option for me?
You should speak to your Success Coach or Academic Advisor. You should reach out to your Academic Advisor well before the deadline to ensure you have enough time to make an informed decision regarding whether or not to choose the Pass/D/Fail grading option.