

## Graduate Student FAQs for Pass/Fail Grading Option, Spring 2020

### Grading Policy for the Spring 2020 Semester

By Tuesday, May 12 at 11:59 pm EDT, all undergraduate and graduate students must submit a decision regarding their course grades for the Spring 2020 semester. Students will be able to choose from the following two options:

Option A: Students can choose to keep their letter grades for **all** of their courses this semester.

Option B: Students can choose to have **all** of their letter grades converted to Pass/Fail this semester (i.e., students will **not** be able to choose individual courses to be converted to Pass/Fail).

If **graduate** students choose to have their letter grades converted to Pass/Fail, **letter grades of A through C+ will be converted to "Pass"** by the Registrar's Office. For the spring 2020 semester only, a grade of C+ (2.3) will be considered a passing grade for a course. Typically, a B- (2.7) is considered a passing grade for graduate courses. <https://catalog.bentley.edu/graduate/academic-policies-procedures/>. For all **undergraduate and graduate** students, **letter grades of F will remain F.**

- The option to replace an F by repeating a course in a future semester will remain in place.
- Students taking both graduate and undergraduate courses in the same term may opt for one of the four combinations:
  1. All undergraduate and graduate grades pass/fail
  2. All undergraduate and graduate grades as letter grades
  3. Undergraduate grades as pass/fail and graduate grades as letter grades
  4. Undergraduate grades as letter grades and graduate grades as pass/fail

**If students do not select one of these options by May 12 at 11:59 pm EDT, they will receive the letter grades submitted by their professors for all of their courses.**

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*The last date to withdraw from a spring 2020 course has been extended to Friday, April 10, 2020.*

1. Will I be able to choose which classes I want to take pass/fail vs. getting a letter grade?

No, you will have the option after finals to convert your entire semester to pass/fail or keep the grades that you earned. See the policy statement above if you are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses in the same term.

2. What is the lowest grade I can get to pass a class?

The lowest grade to pass a graduate course is a C+.

3. How will the GPA work for the spring semester if I elect the pass/fail option?

The pass/fail option will be GPA neutral. That means if you pass everything, you will have the same GPA you had at the beginning of the spring semester.

4. I am retaking a course this semester since I previously failed it. How will selecting the pass/fail option affect my GPA?

If you choose the pass/fail option and pass the course, the “pass” will replace the F you previously earned in the course.

5. I am considering continuing on to graduate study at Bentley after I finish my Bentley undergraduate degree. What are the implications for undergraduate students who are taking undergraduate courses that are waivers and substitutes in the graduate school?

Graduate Admissions will be reviewing these on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Program Director as needed. In general, pass will be considered to meet the minimum grade for waiver provided the student has a general pattern of qualifying grades in prior terms.

If there are other indicators that you do not have a thorough grasp of the content, then a waiver may be denied. If denied, you could request a letter of support from the faculty member speaking to your mastery of course competencies to submit with an appeal (we anticipate this will rarely be necessary). This applies to all students graduating in May, not just Bentley Falcon Fast Track participants.

6. How will taking courses pass/fail affect my scholarships and other financial aid?

If you have a graduate academic scholarship, a cumulative 3.0 GPA is required for renewal. The Pass/Fail option will be GPA neutral. That means if you pass everything, you will have the same GPA you had in the fall semester, which will be used to assess your eligibility for scholarship renewal. If you started in Fall 19 and fell short of the 3.0 GPA requirement to maintain your merit award, be advised that the 3.0 requirement will be suspended for the fall 2020 term.

If you have an academic scholarship with a GPA requirement for renewal, the pass/fail option will be GPA neutral. That means if you pass everything, you will have the same GPA you had in the fall semester, which will be used to assess your eligibility for scholarship renewal. Academic scholarships have differing cumulative GPA requirements. Please refer to your initial acceptance letter for GPA renewal criteria. If you are unable to locate this information, you can contact the Office of Financial Assistance at [finaid@bentley.edu](mailto:finaid@bentley.edu). If you are currently on probation for your academic scholarship this spring, you will be given another semester to bring your GPA to the required cumulative level.

Similarly, students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to receive Bentley need-based grant and federal student loan assistance. This includes having a cumulative GPA of 2.7 and passing two-thirds of all attempted courses. The Pass/Fail option will be GPA neutral. However, if you receive a “Fail” this will count toward the calculation of pass rate for attempted courses. The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy can be found in the Graduate Financial Aid Guide <https://www.bentley.edu/offices/financial-assistance/graduate-aid>. If you are currently on SAP warning for spring, your probation will be automatically extended for an additional term. For all additional questions, please contact your Financial Assistance Counselor in the Office of Student Financial Assistance directly by referring to: <https://www.bentley.edu/offices/financial-assistance/meet-the-team>.

7. I am on Academic Probation this semester, what happens to my academic status if I choose the pass/fail option this semester?

If you currently have an academic sanction of Academic Warning or Academic Probation and choose the pass/fail grading option, you will retain the same academic status for your next semester at Bentley. This means that if you are currently on Academic Probation and choose to take your classes pass/fail this spring and pass all of your classes, you will remain on Academic Probation for the fall 2020 semester.

If you receive an F either through letter grades or the pass/fail option you will be reviewed by the Graduate Academic Performance Committee in late May.

8. If I select pass/fail, can I obtain a letter grade? My employer requires a grade for reimbursement.

If you need the grade for reimbursement, you should consider keeping all their grades rather than opting for pass/fail. We do not control the employer reimbursement policies. However, if you need to use pass/fail, you can ask individual instructors for a letter with info on the letter grade in a specific course. The employer will decide if that is enough documentation. You should confer with your company NOW regarding this question.

9. If I become ill in the next few weeks with COVID19, is my only option to take advantage of the extended withdrawal period or can I request an incomplete grade?

Incomplete grades are only issued to students at the end of the semester when a sudden illness or personal emergency comes up. You cannot request an incomplete grade in the middle of a semester. However, you should work with your faculty members if you become ill to request flexibility in due dates for projects and assignments and/or the ability to postpone an exam. If you remain ill until the end of the semester, then you may ask for an incomplete grade. <https://catalog.bentley.edu/graduate/academic-policies-procedures/>

10. How will my grades be changed to pass/fail? Do I do it myself in Workday?

The Registrar's office is working on the technical side of how letter grades will be converted to pass/fail grades. More information about what you might need to do will be sent out later this semester by an email from the Registrar's Office.

11. If I were to choose the pass/fail option for all of my courses and I fail one class, does that change my cumulative GPA?

The F would affect your GPA. However, by repeating the course you can repair your GPA, but the F will remain on your official transcript.

12. I was told I need to raise my GPA this term to qualify for a program change. If I choose pass/fail will I still not qualify to apply for a program change.

Electing Pass/Fail has no direct impact on your request for a program change. All program change applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the student's ability to succeed in the new program based on prior coursework and experience. Prior to requesting a change, you should consult with the Program Director of the new program to determine that your choice is the best fit for your academic and career goals. In the essay that accompanies

your change request, you should speak to your motivation and preparation for the desired program, and specifically address any academic difficulties in your current program.

**13. How will taking my spring courses pass/fail affect my eligibility for honors at graduation?**

Students graduating in May 2020 will be considered for graduation honors based upon their most recent overall grade point average. Students who elect pass/fail in the spring 2020 semester will have graduation honors calculated based upon their cumulative GPA after the fall 2019 semester. Students who elect grades for their courses in the spring 2020 semester will have graduation honors calculated based upon their cumulative GPA after the spring 2020 semester.

**14. Will employers look at my transcript differently if I take my classes pass/fail this semester?**

Many colleges and universities have moved to some type of pass/fail option for their students this semester. Bentley students will not be alone in dealing with this situation.

The staff of the Pulsifer Graduate Career Development Center has conducted outreach with key corporate partners and overall taking courses pass/fail in spring 2020 this will not be perceived negatively by companies. This is a unique semester and some institutions are not allowing students any option but pass/fail. However, Graduate Career Develop recommends that you if you do receive good grades this spring you should allow the courses to remain graded.

For individual questions please contact [GCS@bentley.edu](mailto:GCS@bentley.edu)