

January 222

Proposal: Create a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading Basis to Replace Pass-Fail Only

Effective: Fall 2022 Semester

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Background/Rationale:

In spring 2020, CU campuses added a Pass Plus (P+) grade to the **Pass/Fail Student Option (PF4)** grading basis. Both the P+ grade and the expansion of Pass/Fail grading were a response to pressures placed on students during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this same time, CDHE issued a requirement for campuses to verify that passing grades (P, S or the equivalent) were equal to grades of C- or greater for purposes of GT Pathways and transfer. Since D- was the threshold for P grades at the CU campuses, a P+ grade was created to ensure swift compliance with CDHE policy. In this modified grading basis, an underlying grade of C- or greater converts to a P+ and underlying grades of D+, D and D- convert to a P. Failing (F) grades remain unchanged.

In addition to the Student Option grading basis, CU also has a **Pass/Fail Only (PF1)** grading basis. PF1 is currently assigned to approximately 200 courses in the Boulder catalog that are predominantly experiential, field-based, practicum, seminar and candidacy for degree based. P or F grades are assigned directly by instructors based on whether course requirements are satisfied or expectations met.

Because P grades now earned in the student option (PF4) basis are equivalent to D+, D or D-, assigning P grades to these experiential or practical classes is no longer appropriate and may cause confusion and misinterpretation of student performance.

A new **Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U)** basis to replace Pass/Fail Only basis will distinguish these courses from those with the Student Option basis. Satisfactory (S) grades still earn credits, and like the P, do not carry quality points to calculate in a GPA. Unsatisfactory (U) grades, on the other hand, are treated differently from Failing (F) grades in that they carry neither quality points nor credits. U grades seem appropriate for experiential-based courses when requirements are not satisfied or expectations met since they typically do not involve traditionally-graded work.

If approved, the Office of the Registrar will work with each department that owns courses assigned a P/F Only (PF1) basis to ensure the new S/U grading basis will meet their needs. They will have the option to switch to a different grading basis if another one is more appropriate (See Grading Basis Guidelines).

Grading Basis Guidelines:

Each course in the CU Boulder catalog is assigned a grading basis which reflects how it was approved by its college/school curriculum committee or the Graduate School. This grading basis is the default for each section of the course that is scheduled in a given term.

Letter Grade w/ In Progress (GIP) – IP grade assigned to master’s thesis, doctoral dissertation, music dissertation/recital project, and other graduate research or project courses. *No credits or quality points are earned.* The grade of IP is changed to a letter grade when the defense and thesis (or project, dissertation, etc.) is successfully completed. The final grade is submitted to the Graduate School and the Office of the Registrar.

Letter Graded (LTR) – Assigned to courses that may only be taken for standard letter grades only (A-F). *Quality points and credits are earned (except for F grades).* The Pass/Fail and No Credit option is not available to students enrolled in courses with the LTR grading basis. This is assigned to courses that require a letter grade for purposes of accreditation, licensure or other professional standards or courses restricted to majors and required for degrees.

Non-graded (NON) – Assigned to select non-credit courses, recitations, labs and other non-graded sections of a multiple component class, or to administrative place holder courses for purposes of conversion, transfer and special enrollment programs. *No credits or quality points are earned.*

Student Option (OPT or PF4) – Assigned to courses taken for standard letter grades, but in which students may select the Pass/Fail (PF4) option. Student Option is the most commonly assigned and flexible grading basis. Standard letter grades (A-F) are the default for courses assigned this grading basis. Students who choose this option must initiate this grading basis change by the published grading basis change deadline for a given term or session within a term. They should be advised on the restrictions and eligibility of pass/fail grades for degree requirements.

The Pass/Fail grading basis for students who select this option is not identified on class/grade rosters. Rather, instructors assign a letter grade to all students. Underlying grades convert to a P+ (if C- or greater), P (if D+, D or D-) or remain an F (if failed). *For P and P+ grades, credits are earned, but not quality points; For F grades, quality points are calculated as zero, but no credits are earned.* Students also have the option to select a No Credit (audit) option through submission of a No Credit form to the Office of the Registrar by the published deadline. *No credits or quality points are earned.*

(CURRENT) Pass/Fail Only (PF1) – Assigned to courses that may only be taken for Pass or Fail grades (P+ is not available in this basis). Typically reserved for experiential, field-based, practicum or seminar-type courses, as well as for candidacy for degree placeholder enrollments. *For P grades, credits are earned, but not quality points; For F grades, quality points are calculated as zero, but no credits are earned.*

(PROPOSED to replace PF1) Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (SUS) – Assigned to courses that may only be taken for Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grades. Typically reserved for experiential, field-based, practical or seminar-type courses, as well as for candidacy for degree placeholder enrollments. S/U grades are based on satisfactory completion of course requirements and/or expectations. *For S grades, credits are earned, but not quality points; no credits or quality points are earned for U grades.*