

May 5, 2020

Dear Students,

Recently the campus communicated temporary modifications of policies on P/NP grading that apply to Spring 2020 undergraduate courses, but decisions regarding the courses for major requirements were left to individual programs.

We write to announce that due to the emergency circumstances in Spring 2020, the CSE department will temporarily **relax some of its policies** for courses taken in Spring quarter 2020. The policies will be modified as follows:

- 1) **Unsuccessful attempts** at courses in Spring 2020 **will not be counted** against the limits on non-passing attempts for declaring the majors sponsored by CSE (CE BS, CS BA, CS BS, NDT BA, and TIM BS),
- 2) The CSE Department will support one additional attempt beyond the limit of two for a CSE course unsuccessfully attempted in Spring 2020.
- 3) **Upper division courses** (those numbered between 100 and 199) used for the major requirements of the programs sponsored by the CSE Department (CE BS, CS BA, CS BS, NDT BA, and TIM BS) **may be taken in Spring 2020 for P/NP grading.**

Lower division courses (those numbered below 100) used for major requirements **must still be taken for a letter grade.**

We are maintaining the current letter grade requirement for lower division courses, since the courses used for major qualification **must** be taken for letter grades to compute the declaration GPA. We want to avoid any confusion about the necessity for letter grades in these courses since it could affect the ability to declare a major. Grades are used for multiple purposes, and a P grade will most often be interpreted as a C (such as in calculations for honors in the major), doing a disservice to those students who earned a better grade that is only reported as a P. Please review the **additional information on the next page.**

Spring 2020 is a challenging time for everyone dealing with the COVID-19 emergency. We are encouraged by the resilience and determination with which UCSC students, staff, and faculty have faced the challenge of conducting remote instruction with little time to prepare, while also often dealing with the personal impact of the pandemic on their families and communities. We understand the challenges that remote instruction poses, including the effects of access to technology and isolation from the campus community. While many students naturally fear that their grades will be affected, we believe that Spring 2020 will always be considered an unusual quarter, with less than stellar performance discounted as an anomaly and the determination to continue in Spring 2020 demonstrating character. Instructors understand the challenges this quarter brings and are interested in ensuring that the learning goals are still reached while providing as much flexibility as possible on assessments. If you encounter a difficulty please be sure to communicate with your instructors.

We also want to remind students that a P grade is only given for C work or better (not C-). The Advising Office has already received petitions from students mistakenly thinking that their C- or D+ grade in Fall and/or Winter courses can be retroactively changed to a P.

Here is some additional information to help you decide between a letter grade and P/NP:

- A grade of “Pass” indicates work was done at the level of a C grade or better. A “No Pass” indicates a grade of C- or worse.
- A “Pass” will satisfy prerequisites for other classes.
- Classes taken P/NP are not counted in calculating your GPA. Consequently, if you are striving to improve your GPA, you should stick with taking classes for a letter grade and work hard for a good grade. Be sure to utilize the many resources from [Learning Support Services](#) to ensure success in your classes.
- Students who are not in good [academic standing](#) normally cannot take classes on a P/NP basis. In Spring 2020, students who are not in good academic standing may choose to take classes P/NP. Not every student will benefit from this choice, since they may need grades to raise their GPA above 2.0 for academic standing or [financial aid reasons](#). [College academic advisers](#) can help you explore this option.
- Veterans and students in the armed forces may also be affected by the absence of letter grades. Please contact [Veterans Services](#) for more information.
- Some medical schools, graduate programs, and professional programs will not accept P/NP for key courses. Please contact your preferred graduate programs' Admissions Representatives for more information on grading requirements in undergraduate courses.
- Students considering changing majors/minors to any that require letter grades in specific courses should be cautious when considering the P/NP grading option in Spring 2020. The temporary relaxation of policies for Spring 2020 described in this message applies only to majors sponsored by the CSE Department majors and may not be transferable if you choose to majors outside of the CSE Department. Please consult the Major/Minor Advisor for any majors/minors you are considering changing to or adding in the future to confirm their department’s policies for Spring 2020.
- Go to the [FAQ’s for Students](#) on the UCSC Registrar’s website, select Grading, and click on “How do I change my grading option?”

Please direct any advising questions to the BSOE Advising Office. Thank you for your patience and perseverance this quarter.

Martine Schlag
Chair, Computer Science and Engineering