



UPDATED: April 8, 2020

New Grading Options to Support Your Academic Success During COVID-19

The following guidance relates specifically to the Spring 2020 academic term. Our overall goal is to 1) keep you and your faculty safe during this outbreak, and 2) help you complete your spring courses by May 15th, although the learning may look quite different than in past semesters.

PASS/NO CREDIT GRADING OPTION

What Is It? Most classes at Pine Technical and Community College are typically graded with a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F. For the Spring 2020 term, we are giving students the option of choosing to be graded instead using the grades of either P for “Pass” or NC for “No Credit.” Please note that students in Practical Nursing and Associate Degree Nursing programs will not have this option. Pre-nursing students and students enrolled in the Business Transfer Pathway program are advised to consult with their program advisor if considering taking this option.

How Does It Work? Your faculty will continue to grade you on an A-F scale. After the semester has ended and grades have been awarded, you will have 9 days to request to have your grade converted to a P/NC designation. If you choose the P/NC option, your A-F grade will be converted to a corresponding “Pass” or “No Credit” grade which is determined by your program requirements. When you receive a P grade, this means that you have achieved enough of the essential learning outcomes of the course to have passed the course. You can make these decisions on a course-by-course basis. You will have until **May 27, 2020** to decide.

Potential Benefits

1. With all of the time and effort you have invested in your courses already (*as of April 3, we are nearly 2/3 of the way through the semester!*), this grading option will provide a low-risk way for you to finish the course and continue to make progress toward your ultimate goal of graduation and/or transfer.
2. P and NC grades are not included in the calculation of your grade point average (GPA). Thus, if challenging personal circumstances or the unexpected remote learning environment is making it harder this semester to get as high a grade as you would have otherwise, this choice will protect your cumulative GPA.
3. Because P and NC grades don't impact GPA, the P/NC grade will offer students some protection against being suspended as part of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) process based on grade point average. However see point 2 under Drawbacks for additional SAP implications.



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Potential Drawbacks

1. Although a P/NC grade can't hurt your GPA, it also can't help your GPA. If students determine their GPA will increase by sticking with the A-F grading method, they should do so.
2. A grade of NC will be counted towards "credits attempted" for Satisfactory Academic Progress and thus negatively impact your % of courses successfully completed.
3. Under normal circumstances, many transfer institutions and graduate schools do not accept courses that were graded on a P/NC scale. Minnesota State is seeking to get assurances from our College's primary transfer partners that they will make an exception during semesters impacted by COVID-19.
4. Some students may not be eligible for P/NC grading. These may include veterans on GI benefits, some international students, and students in some programs with external licensure such as nursing. Both the federal government and licensing bodies may change these rules during semesters impacted by COVID-19.

*The good thing is – **You don't have to decide right now.** You will have until May 27, 2020 to submit a petition if you wish to opt for P/NC grading. By this time, you will know how well you did in the course, and by then we will know more about what the implications are for transfer, graduate schools, veterans, etc.*

Information for High School Students Regarding P/NC Grade Option

- All high school students participating in PTCC courses will have the option to convert their grade to P/NC.
- Traditional PSEO and ITV students will need to make this decision by **May 27th, 2020**.
- Concurrent Enrollment students (courses taken at the high school with taught by the high school teacher), who are enrolled in yearlong or spring courses will need to make this decision by **June 26th, 2020**.
- Students will make this request by submitting the [Spring 2020 Grade Method Change form](#).

High school students should contact their high school counselor with questions regarding how grades for PTCC courses will be posted in high school transcripts.

INCOMPLETE (I) GRADE

What Is It? An Incomplete (I) grade gives students a chance to complete coursework after the semester ends. While the "P/NC" grading option is up to an individual student, the "I" grade is solely at the discretion of the instructor.



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How Does It Work? Your instructor issues an Incomplete (“I”) grade at the end of the course. The grade is changed to an A-F or P/NC grade when the work is later completed. There is a time limit for completing the work; eight weeks into the next full semester, which would be October 17, 2020. If the work is not completed by then, the I grade is automatically changed to an F on your transcript. Normally, College policy only allows faculty to give students an Incomplete in limited circumstances. The College will be expanding options for faculty to use I grades in cases where the student cannot finish essential coursework by the end of the semester as a result of COVID-19. We will be developing guidance for faculty on the use of this option and will update this document as soon as we have details.

Potential Benefits

1. Extreme personal circumstances related to COVID-19 could prevent an individual student from completing their work. The use of I grades could give an individual more time to complete the course.
2. In some classes, face-to-face activities necessary for students to achieve the course’s essential learning outcomes or contact hour requirements have been impacted by COVID-19. This may be hand’s-on lab or clinical activities. Many faculty have been able to set up alternate distance learning activities in order to achieve outcomes of the course. For courses where that is not enough, our hope is that restrictions will be lifted within the current semester so that we can resume these activities. However, faculty are currently determining what “gap instruction” may need to occur should we not be allowed back on campus. In that extreme case, an “I” will be issued to students.

Potential Drawbacks

1. Our research shows that historically, many students who receive I’s never complete the late work, resulting in an F on their transcript.

EXTENSION OF DEADLINE TO WITHDRAW

What Is It? The Minnesota State system typically sets a deadline for students to withdraw that is set at 80 percent of the course term. The system has extended that to 90 percent of the course term, which means PTCC students in full-term courses will have until May 4, 2020 to decide whether or not to withdraw.

How Does It Work? Students in full-term courses can withdraw (and get a grade of W) at any point between now and May 4. If you are in a shorter-term course, you can check your new withdrawal deadline in your eServices account.



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Potential Benefits

1. This later deadline this will give students additional time to determine whether their new learning environment and personal circumstances provide an environment in which they can academically succeed in the current term.

Potential Drawbacks

1. A Withdrawal (W) grade will have the same impact on GPA, completion rate, and Satisfactory Academic Progress as does a No Credit (NC) grade. But the Withdrawal deadline is earlier than the Pass/No Credit deadline, and an NC may be viewed more favorably on a student's transcript than a W.

The College is continuing to analyze the impacts of a W and an NC and will update this guidance as soon as more information is known.

"COVID-19" NOTATION ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT

What Is It? The Minnesota State system (like many other colleges and universities throughout the country) will be developing a mechanism for making it clear on your transcript which grades were issued in terms impacted by COVID-19.

How Does It Work? Minnesota State continues to work on this change to transcript notation. As a student, you do not need to do anything.

Potential Benefits

1. It is expected that transfer institutions and others will make allowances for grades impacted by the unprecedented disruptions of COVID-19 on students and institutions.

Potential Drawbacks

1. There are currently no known drawbacks to this approach.