Update on S/F Policy for Spring 2020

The Dean’s Office in AS&E has received a range of comments and questions on the recently announced S/F policy for Spring 2020. Under this policy, all courses transitioned to the satisfactory/fail (S/F) grading option as of March 23, with students allowed to select a letter grade (A-E) option for any/all of their courses through submitting a formal request. The Dean’s Office continues to believe that this is the best approach to assist students and instructors in navigating the transition to online courses and the broader situation with COVID-19.

It is with this intent that the Dean’s Office has made the decision to extend the deadline for students to select the letter grade option to April 10. This decision is in response to the concerns expressed by some students, faculty and staff that students would need some additional time to adjust to the online version of courses. The Dean’s Office will continue to monitor how students and instructors are adapting to their new circumstances moving forward.

In addition, as Deans of the College and of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs, we can’t emphasize enough the importance of instructors and students pulling together to achieve the original learning outcomes of the courses to the greatest degree possible. The response to the COVID-19 outbreak has disrupted the semester and we know that the new S/F policy may create some additional challenges. However, we firmly believe in the dedication of our instructors and the resiliency of our students. We strongly encourage all instructors to design exams, papers and other assessments in ways consonant with the current online learning environment and that ensure student learning regardless of the grading basis (S/F, letter grade) of the student. On their side, students should commit to achieving course goals to the highest degree possible in their current environment and actively reach out for assistance from instructors, advisors and other support staff when necessary.

Finally, we want to clarify a few important points regarding the new policy. The Dean’s Office will soon post a FAQ to answer some common questions on the S/F for Spring 2020, but these points bear special note.

- The S/F policy for Spring 2020 applies to all courses taken by undergraduates in the College, including all graduate courses in AS&E, the School of Medicine and Dentistry, and other schools.
- The webform to select the letter grade option for courses in Spring 2020 will be released later this week. Links to the form will be placed on the Advising Handbook (http://www.rochester.edu/college/CCAS/handbook/index.html) and Registrar’s Office sites (http://www.rochester.edu/registrar/), among other modes of distribution.
- Faculty will receive a list of students selecting the letter grade option during the week of April 13.
- Faculty will submit “satisfactory” or “fail” grades directly into Instructor Access. (This is different from how the policy has worked in past semester.) The grade submitted for “satisfactory” will be “P” and the grade for “fail” will be “F” in Spring 2020. These are the grades that will appear on student transcripts as well. More information on final course grades will be forthcoming later in the semester.
As always, we appreciate your dedication and willingness to adapt to the evolving situation with COVID-19. We continue to feel confident that we can ensure the success of our students and the achievement of our educational goals in these challenging times. The AS&E Dean’s Office will continue to support these efforts as we move forward with the semester.

Jeff Runner
Dean of the College

Nick Vamivakas
Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs

--
Jeffrey Runner, PhD
Dean of the College
Arts, Sciences & Engineering
Professor of Linguistics and Brain & Cognitive Sciences
317 Lattimore Hall
PO Box 270401
Rochester, NY 14627-0401
585-273-5001
Jeffrey.Runner@rochester.edu
he/him/his