

**Subject:** COVID-19 Pass/Fail and Withdrawal Policy Updates to Support Students  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 6:42:54 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Mike Marshall  
**To:** .Bellarmine OFFICIAL Students  
**CC:** .Bellarmine OFFICIAL Employees  
**Attachments:** image005.jpg

Dear Bellarmine Students:

I hope this note finds you safe and healthy! I know this month's transition to remote learning has been difficult and I am grateful for the ways you have engaged with your instructors and each other in this unprecedented time. We remain committed to supporting every student's success at Bellarmine and I am pleased to announce two new options for current students.

Please review the information below very carefully. If you feel that either policy might help you manage your program of study and help you achieve success at Bellarmine, you are strongly encouraged to discuss your options with an academic advisor. The choices you make in response to these policy revisions might have unanticipated consequences as described below, so please proceed with caution and with guidance from your advisor.

### **Pass/Fail Policy Modification and Deadline Extension**

In response to the extraordinary circumstances this semester, Bellarmine faculty have recommended, and I have approved modifications to the Pass/Fail grading option in the course catalog. This change applies only to the current Spring 2020 semester and creates opportunities for students at all levels to consider converting one or more courses in which they are currently enrolled to be graded as pass/fail. Converting one or more courses to pass/fail might be a good choice if you are struggling to maintain successful performance considering the disruption in family or learning environments.

### **Pass/Fail Policy for Spring 2020**

- **Undergraduate students** may convert **any or all of their courses** to Pass/Fail, some exceptions apply.
  - We've modified the existing Undergraduate Student Pass/Fail policy such that any earned grade of D- or above will now be considered a Pass. If your earned grade is an F, your transcript will reflect a Fail. A Pass grade does not impact your GPA but a Fail grade is calculated into your GPA as an F.
  - **To ensure your course is eligible for Pass/Fail, please see Exceptions and Cautions section below.**
- **Graduate students** may convert **up to two courses** to Pass/Fail, some exceptions apply.

- We've modified the existing Pass/Fail policy such that any earned grade of B- or above will be considered a Pass for graduate students. If your earned grade is a C or below, your transcript will reflect a Fail. A Pass grade does not impact your GPA but a Fail grade is calculated into your GPA as an F.
- **To ensure your course is eligible for Pass/Fail, please see Exceptions and Cautions section below.**
- The deadline for changing to Pass/Fail is **April 22, 2020**.
- Any Pass/Fail courses you take in the Spring 2020 term will not count against the maximum number of Pass/Fail courses allowed during your Bellarmine academic career.
- Once you opt for Pass/Fail on a course, that decision cannot be reversed.

Consult with your academic advisor prior to completing a [Pass/Fail Option Declaration form](#), found on the forms page of the Registrar's Office website. A decision to opt for a pass/fail grade is not reversible. [Click here](#) for a link to the full policy.

If you do NOTHING – you will not be impacted by this policy and your grades will be governed by existing policy (i.e., you will receive letter grades unless you previously elected to receive a pass/fail grade).

### Exceptions and Cautions

- Because of accreditation obligations and other regulatory policies, **not all courses or programs of study allow for pass/fail grading**. See a [list of courses not available as Pass/Fail](#).
- Students receiving certain financial support (e.g., some employer-funded or -reimbursed tuition programs) could be adversely impacted by electing to change a course to pass/fail.
- We cannot anticipate how graduate programs and post-graduate professional programs like medical school, law school, etc. will interpret pass/fail grades or whether, like many institutions, they will treat the Spring 2020 term as an anomaly and consider exceptions to any policies they have about accepting these grades.
- Converting a course to be pass/fail should not be taken lightly and is **NOT** an optimal choice if you are already performing well in your classes.
- **I urge you to talk to your advisor for specifics** related to your specific situation.

We have created three documents to help inform your decision:

1. a list of courses that cannot be taken pass/fail.
2. a list of program-specific exclusions to the pass/fail option.
3. a FAQ document.

All three documents can be found on the [Registration Information page](#) of the Registrar's

Office website. Please review these documents before making any decisions or consulting your advisor.

### **Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Program (SAP)**

Please note that Financial Aid regulations require that students meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements to maintain eligibility for financial aid. Although Financial Aid must evaluate students for SAP, the team is fully aware of the impact that the COVID-19 situation has had on students' academic success. If necessary, students are eligible to submit any extenuating circumstances through the appeal process. The SAP review process will begin after final grades are submitted at the end of the Spring 2020 term.

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### **Withdrawal Deadline Extension**

I have approved extending the spring withdrawal deadline to **April 22, 2020**. This is the same deadline for electing to take a course Pass/Fail. All students who want to withdraw from a course are expected to consult with their academic advisor first and will have to complete the [Withdrawal Form](#) found on the forms page of the Registrar's Office website. As always, all students should consider fully the range of outcomes that could occur after withdrawing from any course before submitting the withdrawal form.

- In most cases, withdrawing from a course might not be as desirable as converting a course to Pass/Fail (see above). For example, if you're an undergraduate and currently have a C- in a class and can maintain a grade of D- or above through April, you are probably better off converting that class to a Pass/Fail and receiving a pass grade.
- If you withdraw from a course, it will appear on your transcript as a W grade, having no impact on your GPA. While many employers and post-graduate institutions will likely understand a student's decision to withdraw from one or more courses during a pandemic, and while you may have a very compelling reason for doing so, we cannot anticipate all possible consequences or responses to this notation on your transcript.

The faculty, staff, and administrators at Bellarmine are here to support you and I hope that these options will serve to alleviate stress for many of you. Please reach out to your academic advisor if you want to take advantage of either option.

The Registrar's Office will be available to assist with questions via email at [registrar@bellarmine.edu](mailto:registrar@bellarmine.edu).

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