

**Standard Operating Procedure  
Advising of Emergency Grading Accommodation  
Department of Health Services and Information Management  
April 3, 2020**



**Introduction**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, East Carolina University (ECU), on March 23, 2020, enacted a policy ending face-to-face instruction for alternative, online modalities. In anticipation of the burdens many students may face due to alternative delivery methods, displacement, lost employment, or increased job responsibilities, ECU published the [Emergency Grading Accommodation](#) policy. This policy allows undergraduate students during the Spring 2020 semester to opt for a “Pass/Fail” grade in lieu of the standard letter grade. The policy states:

- Students will receive standard letter grades for all Spring 2020 courses by May 12, 2020.
- The student has from May 13, 2020 to June 30, 2020 to make a request to the Registrar’s Office to convert one or more letter grades to “Pass/Fail”. This is done on a course by course basis and cannot be reversed. No prior authorization is required.
- A “Pass/Fail” grade does not count toward the student’s GPA.
- A passing grade will count for hours toward a degree, hours in residence, senior college credits, and fulfill prerequisite requirements where a letter grade is not indicated in the academic catalog.
- Hours earned for a passing grade will count towards the student’s overall hours.
- A student’s academic standing will continue from Fall 2019, as a recalculation will not be done after the Spring 2020 semester.
- ECU will include a transcript note on all academic records, regardless of grading basis, noting the global public health emergency during Spring 2020.

Although the “Pass/Fail” option will undeniably benefit students adversely impacted by the ongoing disruptions, it may cause confusion for others, leading to several potentially serious unintended consequences. For instance, passing a course designated as a prerequisite requiring a specified letter grade (e.g., C or higher) will not fulfill the said prerequisite. Also, a grade of “Pass” is not generally transferable and may not be considered during graduate admissions as successful completion of a course. Therefore, the Department of Health Services and Information Management (HSIM) is providing the following department-level Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to assist prospective and current undergraduate students in making this decision.

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## **Goal**

1. This SOP is intended as a protocol for students to follow when deciding whether to opt for a “Pass/Fail” grade as defined in the Emergency Grading Accommodation.
2. This SOP provides a framework for the HSI department in determining the best course of action for students seeking our guidance in whether to pursue a “Pass/Fail” grade as defined in the Emergency Grading Accommodation.
3. This SOP provides a framework for the HSI department on how to evaluate “Pass/Fail” grades when a letter grade is required (e.g., program admissions, course transfer, and scholarship applications).

## **Procedures**

1. The SOP is only applicable to prospective, incoming and current students in the undergraduate programs (BS in Health Services Management and BS in Health Information Management)
2. Letter grades will be given for all courses at the end of the semester. No “Pass/Fail” grade will be given or promised prior to May 12th.
3. The decision for a student to convert a received letter grade to “Pass/Fail” – during the allotted time frame of May 13th to June 30th – is at the discretion of the student.
4. “Pass” is defined as receiving a grade of “D-” or higher for undergraduate courses.
5. All students must consult their academic advisor (Ms. Elizabeth Locklear) prior to converting to “Pass/Fail”.
6. The advisor will discuss all foreseeable unintended consequences with the student.
7. Undergraduate students who receive a “C-” or below for a course in the major, even after converting to a “Pass”, must repeat said course and may face additional academic discipline.
8. Unless a student can present proof of the letter grade earned, a “Pass” grade on an academic transcript will be considered a “D-” for undergraduate courses when evaluating students for program admission and scholarships.