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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	February 5, 2021
FROM	Wade Parkhouse, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies	PAGES	1/1
RE:	Policy on Pass/Credit/No Credit Grading System (SCUS 21-17)		

Action undertaken by SCUS on February 4, 2021 gives rise to the following recommendations:

Motion:

That Senate approve the temporary amendment to the Academic Standing and Continuance policy, to determine academic standing using a student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) after two terms of enrollment and completion of at least nine course units during the Spring, Summer and Fall 2021 terms.

For information:

Included with this proposal, at its meeting of February 4, 2021 SCUS approved the the implementation plan and policy for the pilot elective grading system Pass/Credit/No Credit (P/CR/NC) for the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2021 terms (pilot period); and approved a temporary amendment to the "Limits on Repeated Courses", that the limit to the number of courses which a student may repeat is temporarily increased from five to eight, for courses taken between Spring 2020 and Fall 2021.



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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	SCUS	DATE	February 4, 2021
FROM	Kathryn Verkerk Registrar and Executive Director, Student Enrolment <i>pro tem</i>		
RE:	Elective Grading System Implementation and Policy, and Amendments to the Academic Standing and Continuance and Limits on Repeated Courses Policies		

Discussion at the regular meeting of January 7, 2021 and at the Special Meeting of SCUS on January 21, 2021, regarding the implementation of the elective grading system (P/CR/NC), and the recommendation to consider flexibility regarding the Academic Standing and Continuance and Limits on Repeated Courses policies, gives rise to the following motions:

Motion 1:

“that SCUS approve under delegated authority and submit to Senate for information the implementation plan and policy for the pilot elective grading system (P/CR/NC) for the Spring, Summer and Fall 2021 terms (pilot period).”

Motion 2:

“that SCUS approve under delegated authority and submit to Senate for information the temporary amendment to the Academic Standing and Continuance policy, to determine academic standing using a student’s cumulative grade point average (CGPA) after two terms of enrollment and completion of at least nine course units during the Spring, Summer and Fall 2021 terms.”

Motion 3:

“that SCUS approve under delegated authority and submit to Senate for information that the limit to the number of courses which a student may repeat is temporarily increased from five to eight, for courses taken between Spring 2020 and Fall 2021.”

Thank you,

Kathryn Verkerk

Elective Grade System (Pilot Period: Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021 terms):

*policy details in Appendix

Calendar Entry – Grading Systems and Policies

<http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2021/spring/fees-and-regulations/grading-policy/grading-systems-and-policies.html>

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Definition
P	No equivalent	Satisfactory performance or better (pass, ungraded, meets pre-requisite standard)
CR	No equivalent	Credit without grade
NC	No equivalent	No credit

Explanation for Elective Grade System

Students in undergraduate programs may designate standard letter grade elective courses with a Pass/Credit/No Credit (P/CR/NC) grade instead of a standard letter grade over the pilot period (Spring 2021 – Fall 2021). This grade will be recorded on a student’s Official Transcript of Academic Record in lieu of their standard letter grade in the course.

Courses that use P/CR/NC grades may not be used to meet the program requirements of any major, joint major, honours, joint honours, minor, double minor, extended minor program, certificate, or any combination thereof. A program of study may allow, on a restrictive basis, and with the approval of the Chair, the utilization of a P/CR/NC grading system for certain program-specific requirements. If such an allowance is made, it shall be noted in the Academic Progress Report (APR).

No more than 12 units with P/CR/NC grades may be applied towards a degree program over the pilot period. Within a given term, no more than 8 units (maximum two courses) may be graded P/CR/NC for students enrolled in 9 or more units and no more than 4 units (maximum one course) may be graded P/CR/NC for students enrolled in less than 9 units.

Students must choose this grading system no later than the last day to drop classes with a WD notation.

A student cannot change from a standard letter grade to a P/CR/NC grade, or vice-versa, after the deadline to opt into the P/CR/NC grading system has passed.

A P (Pass) grade will satisfy prerequisite requirements, when no minimum letter grade is required. For courses requiring a pre-requisite higher than a grade of C-, that department may, at the discretion of the Chair, accept a P or CR grade in place of a standard letter grade. In such cases where the department or student does not consent, the student may need to:

- take the course again under its normal standard letter grade (credit shall be granted only once for the course under these circumstances),
- take another comparable course in its place, or
- not register in that program of study.

Should an undeclared student become declared, or a declared student change their program of study, and a course previously taken as an elective become a program requirement the student may need to:

- take the course again under its normal standard letter grade (credit shall be granted only once for the course under these circumstances),

- take another comparable course in its place, or
- not register in that program of study.

In some cases, with consent of the Chair, a new program of study may accept a P or CR grade in place of a standard letter grade.

In exceptional circumstances, with the consent of the student and the permission of the Dean and the Registrar, the P or CR grade may be converted back to the originally-assigned standard letter grade.

Only standard letter grade courses will be used to meet the grade point average (GPA) requirements for awards and scholarships, including honour roll designations and entrance scholarship renewals; Pass/Credit/No Credit grades will not be used toward these requirements. Students are encouraged to visit the Student Financial Assistance and Awards Office if they have concerns with the financial assistance or awards implications of taking a course with Pass/Credit/No Credit grade.

Students are encouraged to seek guidance from an academic advisor in advance of making decisions about their options.

Calendar Entry - Definitions

<http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2021/spring/fees-and-regulations/enrolment/enrolment-definitions.html>

Courses:

Elective

Any undergraduate course not used to satisfy the program requirements as specified in the Calendar. Normally, an elective will also be a course outside the subject area of a declared program of study; or any undergraduate course designated as Writing (W), Quantitative (Q) or Breadth (B-Humanities, B-Social Sciences, B-Sciences) that is not required to fulfill program requirements.

Program Requirements

The courses used to satisfy the program subject or field requirements (e.g., major, joint major, honours, minor, double minor, certificates, or any combination thereof) as specified in the Calendar.

Amendment to the Academic Standing and Continuance Policy Proposal:

Temporarily amend the Academic Standing and Continuance policy to determine academic standing using the student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) after two terms at SFU and the student has completed at least 9 units.

Background

Academic Standing and Continuance

Academic standing is currently assessed after a student completes 9 units of study at SFU. In delaying the determination of academic standing to the end of the second term, this will provide students an additional term to improve their CGPA before being required to withdraw (RTW).

In any term the student has completed, if the term GPA <2, an academic alert will be sent via email to the student regardless of the number of units the student has completed. When the student is sent an academic

alert, the student will be provided with a list of resources (academic advising, student learning commons, health and counselling, career and volunteer services) and encouraged to meet with an academic advisor.

After the student's second term, if the student's CGPA < 2, the student will be placed on academic probation (OAP). The assessment of academic standing will continue as per the current policy after the second term enrolled or 9 units completed, whichever comes later.

Calendar Entry – Standing Required for Continuance

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2021/spring/fees-and-regulations/grading-policy/grading-systems-and-policies.html#continuance>

For the Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Fall 2021 terms, the required standing for continuation will be calculated after two terms and an attempt of nine units at Simon Fraser University.

Calendar Entry – Academic Probation

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2021/spring/fees-and-regulations/grading-policy/grading-systems-and-policies.html#academic-probation>

For the Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Fall 2021 terms, a student who has completed two terms, attempted at least nine units and has a CGPA of less than 2.00 shall be placed on academic probation (OAP) and may not enroll in a course overload.

Amendment to the Limits on Repeated Courses Policy Proposal:

Temporarily increase the limit to the number of courses which a student may repeat from five to eight, for courses taken between Spring 2020 and Fall 2021.

Repeats

All courses taken are currently counted as an attempt and, therefore, counted as a repeat if the course is taken again. However, Faculties and departments have a pre-existing authority to waive the five repeats limit. The use of this waiver varies among the Faculties and departments. Many units do not feel they have the authority to waive this requirement without a clear motion approved by SCUS.

Where a student repeats a course, the course(s) with the lower grade will be recorded on official records as an excluded course. If the same grade or grade equivalent value is earned for a repeated course, the course that was completed most recently is included in term GPA and CGPA, and the former course is excluded in the term GPA and CGPA. With the P/CR/NC grading system the P is the grade equivalent of a C- and the CR is the grade equivalent to a D when determining which grade to include and exclude. NC and F are not equivalent; F will be treated as the lower grade because NC would not impact a student's GPA.

Calendar Entry – Limits on Repeated Courses

<http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2021/spring/fees-and-regulations/enrolment/policies-and-procedures.html#limits>

For courses taken between Spring 2020 and Fall 2021, the number of courses which a student may repeat in a degree program is temporarily increased to eight. The number of times a student may repeat a course is once. Courses completed at Simon Fraser University for which a student has already received transfer credit from another institution will count within eight repeats limit.

APPENDIX

Elective Grade System policy details

Effective Date:

2021 Spring term

Principles

This policy is designed to:

- 1) Recognize that the pandemic and remote learning have adversely affected students
- 2) Ensure students are prepared for subsequent courses and levels of study
- 3) Encourage students to acquire knowledge and skills in a variety of fields by taking courses outside of their program of study.

Defined Terms:

The following terms are defined for the purposes of this policy:

Program Requirements: The courses used to satisfy the program subject or field requirements (e.g., major, joint major, honours, minor, double minor, certificates, or any combination thereof) as specified in the Calendar.

Elective:

- Any undergraduate course not used to satisfy the *program requirements* as specified in the Calendar. Normally, an elective will also be a course outside the subject area of a declared program of study; or
- Any undergraduate course designated as Writing (W), Quantitative (Q) or Breadth (B-Humanities, B-Social Sciences, B-Sciences) that is not required to fulfill *program requirements*.

Pilot Period: Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021 terms.

Applicability:

This policy applies to students in all undergraduate degree programs.

This policy applies to all *elective* courses graded on the [standard grading system](#).

Exclusions:

Specific courses or programs may be declared to be ineligible for Pass/Credit/No Credit grade in their course descriptions. A publicly available directory of all ineligible courses will also be maintained by the Registrar.

A program of study may allow, on a restrictive basis, the utilization of a Pass/Credit/No Credit grading system for certain program specific requirements within the twelve (12) unit maximum, during the pilot period. If such an allowance is made, it shall be noted on the SFU website.

Policy details:

- 1) Students may designate a maximum of 12 units of *elective* coursework from a Standard Letter Grade system to a Pass/Credit/No Credit basis over the *pilot period*.
- 2) Within a given term, no more than seven (8) units (maximum two courses) may be graded Pass/Credit/No Credit for students enrolled in nine (9) or more units.
- 3) Within a given term, no more than four (4) units (maximum one course) may be graded Pass/Credit/No Credit for students enrolled in less than 9 units.
- 4) Credit will be awarded for Pass (P) and Credit (CR) grades and included in the number of total units earned towards degree completion. No credit will be awarded for No Credit (NC) grades.
- 5) Courses taken under the Pass/Credit/No Credit grade will be excluded from the grade point average (GPA) calculations.
- 6) A Pass (P) grade will be awarded for grades of C- or higher; Credit (CR) grade will be awarded for a grade of D; No Credit (NC) grade will receive zero (0) credits.
- 7) While Pass/Credit/No Credit courses will not count towards the calculation of the GPA, any units earned will count towards unit thresholds for the calculation of Academic Standing.
- 8) Students shall be able to select a course or courses to be taken on a Pass/Credit/No Credit via the student information system, goSFU. The deadline to opt in or out of Pass/Credit/No Credit will be the same as the deadline to withdraw from a course (WD).
- 9) A student cannot change from a standard letter grade to a Pass/Credit/No Credit grade, or vice-versa, after the deadline to opt into the Pass/Credit/No Credit grading system has passed.
- 10) A P (Pass) grade will satisfy prerequisite requirements, when no minimum letter grade is required. For courses requiring a pre-requisite higher than a grade of C-, that department may, at the discretion of the Chair, accept a P or CR grade in place of a standard letter grade. This exception will be recorded and tracked in the Academic Progress Report (APR). In such cases where either the student or the department does not consent, the department, at its discretion, may require the student to:
 - i. Repeat the course under the Standard Grading scheme (credit shall be granted only once for the course under these circumstances),
 - ii. Take another comparable course in its place, or
 - iii. Not register in that course.
- 11) Should a student change their program of study (including where an undeclared student declares a program), and a course previously taken as an *elective* using the Pass/Credit/No Credit basis becomes a program requirement and the new program of study may, at the discretion of the department Chair, accept a P or CR grade in place of a standard letter grade. This exception will be recorded and tracked in the Academic Progress Report (APR). In such cases where either the student or the Faculty does not consent, the Faculty, at its discretion, may require the student to:
 - i. Repeat the course under the Standard Grading scheme (credit shall be granted only once for the course under these circumstances),
 - ii. Take another comparable course in its place, or
 - iii. Not register in that course.

Advisors should confirm a student's options *prior* to admitting them to the new program, as they may be precluded from completing the program.

- 12) With permission of the Dean (or designate) and the Registrar, a Pass/Credit/No Credit course may, on rare occasions, be changed back to its original standard letter grade to meet the requirements of a program. In cases where a required course sits within a different Faculty, Deans (or designate) must approve. The following may be reasons for approving such a request:
 - i. To help meet external requirements (i.e. accreditation) where a change may have occurred since the student made their choice;
 - ii. In cases of administrative error; or
 - iii. In cases of documented misadvising where a student has been significantly disadvantaged
- 13) The student information system (goSFU) shall store both the Pass/Credit/No Credit grade and the standard letter grade received for a Pass/Credit/No Credit course but the letter grade will not be displayed or released to any party except in cases of an appeal or review of academic grade under sections 10 or 12 of this policy, or as necessary for goSFU maintenance, development, and administration.
- 14) An Official Transcript of Academic Record and those goSFU interfaces normally available to faculty members, advisors, and administrators will display the appropriate Pass (P), Credit (Cr), or No Credit (NC) grade for electives taken under this policy and not the student's standard letter grade.
- 15) Tuition fees will be unaffected by the grading option chosen.
- 16) Faculty members will not be informed by the University or goSFU of a student electing to take an elective with Pass/Credit/No Credit grade, and the responsibilities of both the student and the faculty will remain the same as in the standard letter grade option.
- 17) Only standard letter grade courses will be used to meet the grade point average requirements for awards and scholarships, including honour roll designations and entrance scholarship renewals. Pass/Credit/No Credit grades will not be used toward this requirement. Students are encouraged to visit the Student Financial Assistance and Awards Office if they have concerns with the financial assistance or awards implications of taking a course with Pass/Credit/No Credit grade.