Graduate students at ECU have been required to make profound adjustments to their academic life due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the Undergraduate Special Grading Accommodations initiatives and feedback from the GPSS and individual graduate students, the Graduate School and Graduate Council propose the following adjustments to help minimize the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pass/Fail Grading. Graduate students will be able to opt in to Pass/Fail grading for a maximum of two courses in the spring 2021 term. This means that, instead of keeping the letter grades they receive from their faculty, students can request a Pass grade for courses where a grade of C or above is earned or a Fail grade for courses where they earned a grade less than C.

**Additional Details:**
- All academic transcripts will have a note added to spring 2021 indicating the major disruption the coronavirus pandemic has caused to the academic experience.
- Students will be able to make Pass/Fail selections beginning Tuesday May 11th at 8 am until Wednesday May 26th at 8 am via PiratePort. Instructions about how students request Pass/Fail grading will be distributed in April, before the last day of classes.
- Courses graded as Pass/Fail will count towards applicable curricular, major, continuation and graduation requirements.
- A grade of Pass/Fail will not count toward a student’s GPA but will count toward earned semester hours.
- Some programs may require a grade of B or better for their course requirements and may be excluded from the Pass/Fail option.
- Some programs may not allow a grade of Pass/Fail for certain pre-requisite courses.
- All Fail grades result in no credit earned and cannot be used to fulfill any degree requirements. This can negatively impact financial aid eligibility and even delay student time to graduation.
- Pass/Fail course selections will be reviewed by an academic advisor after students request it. Students will be contacted if there are concerns that their choices will have a negative impact on degree progression or graduation timeline. Your academic advisor is listed on the top, left column of your Degree Works audit. If there is no name in the advisor space, please contact your Graduate Program Director so one can be assigned in the system.
- If a Pass/Fail course request is flagged by an advisor or department, students will have a limited amount of time to decide if they want to adjust their course selection. Students should check their ECU email regularly up until June 7th, so they don’t miss time-sensitive information.
- Students currently on Admit-by-Exception or Academic Probation statuses will have their records reviewed to determine appropriate actions.
- Programs have the right to require students to complete remediation activities if letter grades are lower than expected standards even if pass/fail is chosen so grades do not negatively affect the GPA. For example, students who earn grades of C that change to a Pass may not be able to continue on to a subsequent course that was reliant upon that course’s performance. Students must discuss future course progression with their advisors.

Course Withdrawal Options
- The deadline to withdraw from 15-week spring 2021 courses without a GPA penalty is Tuesday, April 27th (which is an extension from the original 3/25 deadline). Withdrawal deadlines for spring 2021 block courses are the last day of classes (March 5 for the first block and April 27 for the second block).
Students planning to withdraw from courses or request the Pass/Fail option should talk with the Financial Aid Office or their Graduate Program Director about any potential impacts to their future aid eligibility.

**Before Making Decisions.** Students should carefully consider all pros and cons before moving forward. To help them with their decision-making process they can take the following steps:

- Talk with their advisor. Some departments/programs require grades of B or better for courses or pre-requisites in their majors and will not allow Pass/Fail grades to satisfy these requirements. The student’s choice may impact competitiveness for future licensures, graduate programs, or professional schools, and an academic advisor can help them make an informed decision.
- Calculate the impact to their GPA. Opting for Pass/Fail grading can protect their semester or cumulative GPA but may also negatively impact progress toward graduation because of credit earned/lost.
- Consult with the Financial Aid Office about possible impacts on future financial aid eligibility. If students are receiving financial aid, they will still be held to the required standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress.