Pitzer College’s Spring 2020 Grading Policy
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers
(revised 4-30-2020)

Q1: What is Pitzer’s grading policy for Spring semester 2020?
The Pitzer College faculty originally changed the grading policy for this semester on April 9, 2020. However, on April 29, 2020, the Pitzer College faculty amended the previously adopted grading policy for Spring semester 2020. Here is the new policy:

Pitzer College will implement a grading system of Satisfactory Pandemic/No Record Pandemic with a GPA boost for Spring 2020. Under this policy, no letter grades will be given. A Satisfactory Pandemic (SP) is defined as a minimum passing grade of D-. For each course that a student passes, an SP will appear on the transcript, but each SP will be recorded in the GPA as equivalent to an A. A grade of No Record Pandemic (NRP) will not appear on a student’s transcript. All courses graded SP this semester will qualify toward completion of requirements for majors, minors, and graduation. Letter grades will not be necessary this semester to qualify for honors.

Q2: Why was the grading policy changed for Spring 2020?
Like many colleges and universities, Pitzer College has transitioned all classes to online formats. This change was sudden and accompanied by moving most students out of campus housing and returning students from study abroad sites around the globe. As a consequence, faculty and students are facing numerous challenges to effective teaching and learning, not the least of which are new living situations, uneven or unstable internet connections, caretaking and family support obligations, illness, and hampered access to usual academic support services and resources.

The Pitzer College faculty changed the usual grading policy in recognition of these challenges and to help reduce associated pressure and stress. In changing the grading policy for Spring semester 2020 only, the faculty considered a number of different grading systems and tried to be responsive to student preferences expressed in surveys conducted by the Pitzer Student Senate and also by the 5C Students for Grade Equity for a universal grading system and one that offered a “safety net” for student grades. The faculty also considered a proposal from the Pitzer College First Generation Executive Leadership Board for a Universal A policy.

Faculty are aware that students have dramatically different levels of access to resources, and that the transition to remote learning has exacerbated already existing inequalities. Faculty sought to create a grading policy that would respond to these circumstances and be equitable to all students. Faculty also chose to incorporate a GPA boost in order to support students who must maintain a certain GPA for reasons pertaining to scholarships, financial aid, and academic probation. Faculty also considered the potential effects of different grading systems on students applying to graduate school and professional training programs. Finally, the faculty sought to ensure that the grading system clearly designated that academic practices and grades were different this semester from other semesters.
Q3: How will my Spring 2020 classes be graded? What will appear on my transcript?
Pitzer student grades will either be SP (Satisfactory Pandemic) or NRP (No Record Pandemic), although only SP grades will show up on the transcript. If a student receives a grade of NRP, it will not be recorded to the official student transcript. There will be language added to the transcript legend that explains this grading system. The current expectation is that this SP/NRP grading system will be used only in Spring semester 2020.

Any courses for which Pitzer students previously elected to receive a P/NC grade this semester will be changed to the SP/NRP grading system.

Q4: How does the SP grade work? Does it affect my GPA?
An SP grade indicates earned credit for the course and will appear on official student transcripts. As indicated in the adopted policy, an SP grade is assigned for any traditional letter grade from A to D-. SP grades will be recorded in the GPA as equivalent to A grades.

Q5: How does the NRP grade work? Does it affect my GPA?
Students will not receive academic credit for any course for which they receive a NRP grade, and the NRP grade will not appear on official student transcripts. Courses for which students receive NRP grades have no impact on the student’s grade point average. However, they do count as courses attempted for purposes of financial aid satisfactory academic progress calculations.

Q6: I understand that I will receive SP/NRP grades for my courses, but what if I want one or more letter grades? Can I get a letter grade in a course?
NO. As stated in the policy, all Pitzer students will be graded according to the same SP/NRP system and no letter grades will be given this semester.

Q7: I understand that I will receive SP/NRP grades for my courses. Are there any implications for financial aid, and especially if I receive one or more NRP grades?
All courses in which students were enrolled after the last day to drop/add for a tuition refund or financial aid adjustment this semester (February 3, 2020) count as attempted courses for purposes of calculating financial aid satisfactory academic progress. This includes any courses subsequently dropped and courses for which a NRP grade is assigned. If you have questions about your satisfactory academic progress and financial aid, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at financial_aid@pitzer.edu.

Q8: Will the Pitzer grading policy apply to classes I am taking at other Claremont Colleges?
YES. The grading policy follows the student, not the professor or the college. This means that the adopted grading policy applies to all Pitzer students -- and only Pitzer students -- regardless of which college is offering the course. Likewise, students from other Claremont Colleges who are enrolled in Pitzer classes will be graded according to the policies determined by their home institution.

Q9: Are the other colleges using the same grading policy as Pitzer?
NO. The colleges are using different grading policies this semester. This means that grade options will differ between students in the same classes. Students should not worry about other
grading systems. Pitzer student grades will either be SP (Satisfactory Pandemic) or NRP (No Record Pandemic).

Q10: How will faculty know my grading policy?
Faculty members will receive guidance from their Academic Dean and Registrar about the different grading policies and how to record grades for their students at the end of the semester. The different grading systems will be part of the grade input process, so faculty across all of the colleges will be aware of the system to use for Pitzer students.

Q11: My major or minor requires some or all courses to be taken for a letter grade. Will SP courses still count?
YES, at least for Pitzer majors and minors. For Spring 2020 semester, these requirements are waived at Pitzer. Courses for which students receive a SP grades count toward major, minor, or other graduation requirements. Pitzer students pursuing off campus academic programs should consult with their advisor(s) about any implications of the grading policy for their academic program.

Q12: How will SP/NRP grades impact honors?
The Pitzer College honors GPA requirement is unchanged. As noted above, each SP grade received this semester will be calculated in the GPA as equivalent to an A. Courses for which students receive NRP grades will not impact their grade point average. Field Groups have different requirements for honors in a major, but letter grades are not required this semester for any work (i.e., courses, senior project, thesis) to count toward honors requirements. Students are encouraged to contact their field group advisor(s) with specific questions about honors in their major. Pitzer students pursuing off campus academic programs should consult with their advisor(s) about any implications of the grading policy for their academic program.

Q13: I was studying abroad this semester. How will my courses be graded?
The grading system for all Pitzer courses this semester is SP/NRP. Students will receive either SP or NRP grades for courses in Pitzer direct-run study abroad programs; SP grades will be recorded as equivalent to A grades for purposes of calculating a student’s grade point average. Students who were on exchange or third-party study abroad programs may receive a letter grade as long as the partner institution is using a letter grading system. However, Pitzer’s long-standing practice is to record letter grades for courses from exchange or third-party programs but not to include them in calculating a student’s grade point average. Instead, students simply earn academic credit for the courses they successfully complete.

Questions about specific study abroad programs and grading policies can be directed to studyabroad@pitzer.edu.

Q14: I am an international exchange student and I am concerned that non-letter grades may not be recognized at my home institution. What can I do?
The grading policy states that no letter grades will be given this semester. The Office of Study Abroad and International Programs (studyabroad@pitzer.edu), the Office of the Registrar (registrar@pitzer.edu), and the Dean of Faculty (dean_faculty@pitzer.edu) will work together to ensure that international exchange students receive credit at their home institutions for the
courses they successfully complete this semester. There may be different solutions for different home institutions. More information on how international exchange student grades will be handled will be forthcoming.

**Q15: What happens if I cannot complete the required work for a course? Can I receive an Incomplete grade?**

YES. Course instructors have discretion to record an Incomplete grade for a student provided that several conditions are met (listed on the Explanation of Incomplete Form that must be submitted by the Instructor). Incomplete (I) grades will be resolved as SP or NRP grades. The due date by which instructors must submit the appropriate final grade (SP or NRP) is during the second week of classes in the fall semester.

**Q16: Can I still withdraw from a course?**

YES. The last day for withdrawing from a class is May 8, 2020. Completed Withdraw from Course forms should be emailed to registrar@pitzer.edu. The forms are available in the Forms section of the Registrar’s Office website. Students should consult with their advisor and instructor before withdrawing from a class because it may delay progress toward graduation and/or affect financial aid. Withdrawing from a class will result in a “W” grade on the student’s transcript for the withdrawn course.

**Q17: Will there be classes over the summer?**

YES. Summer school registration is currently open. All summer school classes will be taught online and they are being offered at a discounted rate. For more information, please go to: https://www.pitzer.edu/summer/. Summer school classes will return to our usual system of letter grades.

**Q18: What are the plans for fall classes?**

The situation is fluid and we do not definitively know one way or the other if we will be back on campus and able to conduct face-to-face classes in the fall. A final decision about fall classes will be made later this summer and in conjunction with the other Claremont Colleges. You will be informed of that decision as soon as it is made.

In the meantime, students are encouraged to engage in usual academic planning for the fall semester. Advising Days were April 20-21, and Pre-registration is scheduled for April 28-May1.

**Q19: What if I still have questions? Who can I contact for more information?**

Students are encouraged to talk to their advisor and course instructors about their courses and grading policies for this semester. Questions also can be sent to the the Registrar (registrar@pitzer.edu), Financial Aid (financial_aid@pitzer.edu), Study Abroad (studyabroad@pitzer.edu), or the Dean of Faculty (dean_faculty@pitzer.edu).