

June 9, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

At its meeting on April 22, 2015, the UCSC Academic Senate approved expanding grading options to include C-, D+, and D-. These new grading options will become available in the Fall quarter, 2015. The approved legislation is available [here](#).

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) would like to take this opportunity to clarify how these grades should be used. As with the current grading system, a grade of C or better will continue be required to satisfy general education requirements, major requirements and course pre-requisites. The new C- grade should therefore only be used to describe work that falls just below this standard. Because C- grades will not satisfy pre-requisites, GE requirements, or major requirements, students may repeat courses in which they receive a grade of C- or below. Please note that C- grades should only be given for work that would earn the grade of D under the current grading system.

If a student selects the P/NP grading option, he or she must do C quality work or better in order to Pass; work of C- or lower quality would earn a No Pass grade. P grades will continue to satisfy course pre-requisites; GE requirements and major requirements. Under the new grading system, students will continue to receive credit toward the 180 credits needed to graduate for grades from A+ to D- or P, but not F or NP. The similarities and differences between the current and new grading options are summarized in the chart at the end of this email.

In response to recent inquiries from faculty, CEP would also like to clarify the policies regarding the scheduling of final examinations. The final exam schedule (see the Spring 2015 schedule [here](#)) is determined by the Registrar in consultation with course-sponsoring units. The final exam for each course is scheduled for a specific three-hour block, with only thirty minutes to one hour between exams. Students frequently have two or more final exams in a single day.

Three hours represents the maximum duration of an exam given to students without testing accommodations approved by the DRC (see below). However, faculty are permitted to give a shorter final examination if they wish to do so, as long as the starting time and length of the exam is clearly stated in the course syllabus distributed at the beginning of the quarter. By choosing to give shorter examinations, instructors can reduce the burdens placed on students who have multiple exams in one day.

It should also be noted that, in some cases, students with documented disabilities are given extra time to complete exams by the Disability Resource Center. CEP understands the necessity of these accommodations: these students have documented disabilities that are independently diagnosed. Nonetheless, scheduling final exams for students who require extra time to complete an exam poses clear logistical challenges. Departments and divisions must find rooms and proctors for these exams, and, depending on the nature of the DRC accommodations, the students taking these exams may spend a great deal of time taking final examinations. This problem, too, could be made somewhat less severe by scheduling shorter exams.

If an instructor were to decide to give a shorter exam he or she must be explicit about the length of the exam in writing and enforce it when given; if an exam is to be two hours, for example, then students should be informed of this on the syllabus, and any students who do not require an accommodation must have their exams collected after two hours. If a student is allowed to take twice the amount of time to complete an exam due to a disability, this would be twice the time relative to the amount of time allotted to a student without an accommodation. Thus, if a student is allowed to take twice as long to complete a test, and the exam is announced as a two-hour exam, then he or she could be given four hours (rather than six) to complete the final examination.

Finally, since this email concerns important issues about grading and final exam scheduling that affect Senate as well as non-Senate faculty, we request that this message be circulated throughout your department to graduate students and lecturers.

Please let us know if you have any other questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

John Tamkun, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

A. Current grading options at UCSC

count toward 180 credits required for graduation								
no credit	satisfies pre-requisites, GE requirements and major							
F	D	C	C⁺	B⁻	B	B⁺	A⁻	A
0	1	2	2.3	2.7	3	3.3	3.7	4.0
NP			P					
no credit			counts toward 180 credits required for graduation satisfies prerequisites, GE requirements & major requirements					

B. New grading options

count toward 180 credits required for graduation								
no credit	satisfies pre-requisites, GE requirements and major							
F	D	C⁻	C	C⁺	B⁻	B	B⁺	A⁻
0	1	1.7	2	2.3	2.7	3	3.3	3.7

