

Committee on Educational Policy
Policy on Campus Standard GPA Calculation

CEP encourages all undergraduate programs to articulate the foundation or “gateway” courses that are essential for success in their majors; students who encounter difficulties in these courses should be discouraged from entering the major. In most cases, this can be accomplished via informal academic advising. However, some programs wish to formalize these guidelines by implementing a policy that restricts qualification to one or more majors depending on the student’s performance and progress in a set of courses—some programs will wish to add a GPA across these courses.

CEP has established a campus standard for program faculty to reference when making these types of requests. This policy is based on fairness to students and based on our own senate regulations.

The first principle of this policy is that calculations of the GPA in required courses for purposes of major qualification should follow campus regulations and standards for the calculation of the overall student GPA.

Campus regulations for GPA calculation include:

Pass/No Pass (P/NP): Pass and No Pass grades are not included in the GPA calculation. Qualification policies may require students to take courses necessary to qualify for the major on a letter grade basis only.

Withdraw (W): Withdraw grades are not included in the GPA calculation. Campus regulations allow for students to withdraw from a course and repeat the course once. Further attempts to repeat a course must be approved by the student’s college in consultation with the student’s program of study.

Incomplete (I): Grades of Incomplete or In Progress (IP) are not included in the GPA calculation.

Repeated Courses: When calculating the GPA for qualification or within the major, grades in courses that are not included in the campus GPA calculation are not included in qualification or major GPA calculation. Senate regulations allow students to repeat a maximum of 15 credits for GPA improvement during their career at UCSC. The grade in the final course attempt is the grade used for GPA calculation within this 15 credit limit.

The second principle of this policy, separate from a qualifying GPA, is that programs may propose taking into account non-passing work (D/F/NP) in major qualification courses. But, qualification policies must always allow at least one or two failing grades (in order to account for extenuating circumstances).

For example, a program may propose to CEP that students who receive more than one D, F, or NP grade in its list of qualifying courses may not declare the major except by appeal (W grades may not be mentioned in such proposals). In majors with many qualifying courses and a high qualifying GPA, CEP favors allowing two failing grades, in part to ensure that one bad term does not prevent qualification.

For simplicity, programs should evaluate whether or not some combination of a letter-grade requirement and GPA, or 9.1.8 eliminate the need for an explicit limit on failed major qualification coursework.

CEP believes that the combination of campus regulation 9.1.8, GPA calculation on the gateway courses, and, if necessary, set limits for the number of failures allowed in gateway classes, will allow the campus programs to meet several important goals: First, it will allow program faculty the flexibility to set progress and performance measures that correlate well with potential students' chances of success in the majors (used in conjunction with a fair appeals policy). Second, it will allow for clarity for students, advisers, and faculty. Third, it will allow the Registrar and Learning Technologies to add functionality to the my.ucsc.edu website that will allow each student to check their major GPA—possibly for many different majors—as the student moves towards a successful degree program.

Approved by the Committee on Educational Policy on April 17, 2013