ESCC Emergency Grading Policy for Spring 2020 Classes

Updated April 30, 2020

Why is there an Emergency Grading Policy?
The COVID-19 emergency, and the resulting closure of college campuses and transition to remote instruction, has created access and learning challenges for many Virginia Community College System (VCCS) students. To ensure that students’ academic progress is not adversely impacted this semester, the VCCS is instituting a default Pass/Withdraw/Incomplete grading scale for all 16-week, second 8-week, and dual enrollment remote instruction classes.

What is the Emergency Grading Policy?
Students will receive one of four grades: P+ P- W or I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>What does the Grade Mean?</th>
<th>How does it Apply?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P+</td>
<td>Pass with a grade of “C” or higher*</td>
<td>Applies to college transfer, technical education, and dual enrollment courses. A grade of P+ will not impact a student’s GPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-</td>
<td>Pass with a grade of “D”</td>
<td>Applies to college transfer, technical education, and dual enrollment courses. A grade of P- will not impact a student’s GPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Withdraw</td>
<td>A student may withdraw up until May 4, 2020,**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>The faculty member and student may agree to a plan to complete remaining course requirements in the summer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For healthcare courses in which students must have an average of 80% to earn a grade of P+. The P- grade will not be used in healthcare courses.

**Dual Enrollment Students may elect to Withdraw by the last instructional day set by their school system and BEFORE their final exam or course assessment.

Which Courses will be Graded under the Emergency Policy?
All Spring 2020 16-week, second 8-week, and dual enrollment remote instruction classes will be graded under the P/W/I system except developmental courses. Developmental courses will be graded S/W/I, where S indicates a passing grade.
What Does it Mean that the Emergency Grading System is the Default System?
The Emergency Grading System will automatically be used by instructors to report Spring 2020 grades in courses covered by this policy. Students do not have to request the P/W/I system.

What if a Student Prefers the A-F Grading System?
Students are permitted to request to remain in the A-F grading system, except for developmental courses. To do so students must follow these steps:

1. Fill out the ESCC Spring 2020 Grade Choice form for each course. You may request the form from your instructor.
2. You must email the form both to your instructor and to gradechoice@es.vccs.edu.
3. The form must be submitted by May 4, 2020. (Broadwater Academy students have until May 15.) Otherwise, you will be graded on the emergency P/W/I system.
4. If you inform your instructor that you wish to use the A-F system, you will not be able to change to the P/W/I system.

Where can Students go for Guidance on Whether to Choose the A-F grade?
Students should discuss their current class grade and upcoming graded assignments with the instructor to fully understand their situation in the class. The instructor cannot advise a student to stick with the default system or choose the A-F system. Students can confer with Student Services, financial aid, other colleges and universities, and other knowledgeable people to get better guidance on the advantages and disadvantages of each system. Ultimately, students must make their own choices.

Do Students have to Choose the Same System for All Classes?
No. Students may use the P/W/I default system for some classes and request the A-F system for other classes. It is the student’s responsibility to complete the form for each class in which they want to be graded under the A-F system for any class.

How Will the Instructor Determine the A-F Grade?
The instructor will use the grading policy published in the syllabus for all work during the entire semester. The instructor may modify the grading policy as long as the new policy is not stricter and as long as the new policy is announced to students and published in the syllabus.

How Will the Instructor Determine if I Should Get a P+ or a P-?
The instructor will use the grading policy published in the course syllabus. For course grades of C or higher, a P+ grade will be reported. For course grades of D, a P- grade will be reported. Note: For healthcare courses in which students must have an average of 80% to earn a grade of P+. The P- grade will not be used in healthcare courses.

Can an F grade be reported in the P/W/I System?
No, the F grade is not an option in the P/W/I system. For course grades of F in the P/W/I system, the student may withdraw from the course with a grade of W. If a student with an F grade does not withdraw from the course, the instructor will withdraw the student. Students who wish to be awarded an F grade must select the A-F grading option by May 4. (Broadwater Academy students have until May 15.)
Can the instructor Modify Grading Policies in their Courses?
The instructor may update the grading policy in the syllabus as long as the new policy is not stricter than the former policy. Instructors should include the P/W/I system in their syllabi and notify students of the syllabus updates.

When is the W Grade Used?
A W grade is for students who choose to withdraw from the course or who would otherwise earn an F grade in a course graded in the P/W/I system. Students may withdraw themselves or the instructor may report the withdraw grade of W. A grade of W will be reported on the student’s transcript. The W grade does not affect Grade Point Average (GPA).

When is the I Grade Used?
The I grade signifies that the student has not completed the course. The I grade will be used only in the following cases:

1. More than 60% of the course has been delivered, but the college is unable to deliver instruction in hands-on courses before the semester ends.
2. The student has completed more than 60% of the course with a grade of C or higher and the student and instructor agree that it will be possible for the student to complete the remainder of the course in the summer term. The student must request the I grade. Students who have not completed more than 60% of the course with a grade of C or higher will be withdrawn from the course. For condition #2 above, the student must request the I grade by contacting the instructor.

How will P/W/I Grades Affect GPA?
The grades will not be factored into the student’s GPA.

How will P/W/I Grades Affect Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?
P grades are considered successful in our SAP policy, so they will not negatively impact a student’s status. At this time, ESCC does not have a ruling from the federal government on how the W & I grades for Spring 2020 will affect SAP. As soon as we get definitive guidance, we will share it with students and staff.

We will be excluding Spring 2020 courses with a W, WC, or I grade from the quantitative SAP calculations (i.e., 67% and 150% rules). Beyond that, students still have the option to submit a SAP appeal as they normally would. The Department of Education intends to provide additional guidance regarding how to implement these flexibilities related to Satisfactory Academic Progress. We will keep you updated as we receive new information.

A grade of W may impact some students who are receiving benefits, i.e., post 9-11 GI Bill benefits. If you are receiving benefits, contact financial aid at finaid@pdc.edu to see if opting into the standard grading scale, withdrawing, or requesting a grade of “I” could affect your benefits?

How will P/W/I Grades Affect Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension?
Students graded on the P/W/I system who are on Academic Warning, Probation, or Suspension will remain in those statuses until the next semester in which A-F grades are awarded. Students may appeal Academic Warning, Probation, or Suspension. Students on Academic Warning, Probation, or Suspension will not be further penalized for not having exited those statuses in the Spring 2020 semester.
How will P/W/I Grades Affect Competitive Admissions Programs at ESCC and Other Colleges?
The Virginia Community College System will issue guidance on how P/W/I grades will affect admission to competitive admissions programs at ESCC. For programs at other schools, students should check with those schools.

Will P+ and P- Grades Count Towards Degree Completion and Graduation Requirements?
P+ grades will be counted towards course completion and graduation requirements for required courses. P- grades will be counted towards course completion and graduation for required courses.

Will P+ and P- Grades Count for Courses that are Prerequisites for other Courses?
P+ grades can be used to satisfy prerequisite requirements. P- grades can be used to satisfy prerequisite requirements, except if a grade of C or higher in the prerequisite course is required.

How will P/W/I Grades Transfer?
The State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) has received assurances from all public colleges and universities in Virginia that courses graded P+ will be awarded transfer credit. UVA has stated that they will accept P+ grades for admission, but they have not given a final ruling on accepting P grades for transfer. SCHEV continues to survey public and private schools in Virginia, and ESCC will share any additional guidance we receive. Students planning to transfer to UVA and non-public colleges and universities in Virginia schools should check with those schools to find out how the P+ grade will transfer.

W grades will appear on the student’s transcript, but will not count for course completion for transfer.

I grades must be completed by the end of the summer term or they will turn into the default grade noted on the I grade form submitted by the instructor to Student Services. I grades will not count for transfer.

How will other Colleges and Universities know what the P+ and P- Grades Mean?
A note will be placed on the student’s transcript indicating what the P+ and P- grades mean.