

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 9, 2017

TO: All University of Arizona Faculty

FROM: Dennis Ray, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Walter Klimecki, Chair, Graduate Council
Janet Sturman, Associate Dean, Graduate College
Celeste Pardee, Assistant Director for Academic Policies/Organizations

RE: Grades and Grading System Policy Changes

Effective with Fall 2017 courses, the K grade will be discontinued, and the Alternative Grade System of S/P/C/D/E will be replaced with the S/P/F System for **courses offered in Spring 2018**. These two changes will apply to all undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses, as approved by the Faculty Senate.

The proposal to eliminate the K grade for “a course in progress” was initiated by the Graduate Council on 1/20/17. The K grade has been an option for 900-level courses and other continuing-project graduate courses. Use of the K grade has been problematic for several reasons: it doesn’t clearly document student progress in a given semester (i.e., satisfactory or unsatisfactory); carrying no credit, the K grade is an obstacle for awarding financial aid; and finally, K grades on a student’s record must be retroactively changed to unit-bearing grades prior to degree completion. To correct these problems, the K grade will be replaced with S/P/F grades for 900-level and other continuing-project graduate courses. Those unit-bearing grades don’t calculate in the GPA but indicate whether the student has made satisfactory progress for a given semester. An I grade may be awarded, as long as conditions for the [Incomplete Grade Policy](#) are met. The Senate approved the elimination of K grades on 3/6/17, effective in Fall ’17.

The proposal to replace the Alternative Grade System of S/P/C/D/E with S/P/F was initiated by the Undergraduate Council on 3/7/17. The combination of special and regular grades (S/P/C/D/E) has been available, along with Regular Grades (A/B/C/D/E), for the following undergraduate and graduate Research/ Project Courses and Small Group Courses:

- Senior Capstone (498),
- Colloquium (195, 295, 395, 495, 595, 695, 795),
- Proseminar/ Seminar Courses (196, 296, 396, 496, 596, 696, 796), and
- Pharmacy 800-level courses.

The rationale for replacing the S/P/C/D/E System is twofold: (1) the combination of special grades (S/P) and regular grades (C/D/E) is confusing, since the grade of P—“passing”—overlaps the grades of C and D; and (2) the combination system is unfair because the high grade of S—“superior”—doesn’t count in the GPA but lower grades do. For all courses listed above, the faculty proposed the S/P/F Grade System (less confusing and more fair because none of the grades factors into the GPA) or the option of Regular Grades (A/B/C/D/E). The Senate approved the replacement of the S/P/C/D/E System on 5/1/17, effective in Spring ’18.

These two changes to the [Grades and Grading System Policy](#) will appear in the **2017-18 Catalog** in the sections on [Alternative Grading Systems](#) and [University-wide House-Numbered Courses](#).

Implementation of the Alternative Grade Changes:

- Beginning with Fall 2017, instructors of 900-level and other continuing-project graduate courses will only award grades of S, P, F or I at the end of the term. The K grade won't be available.
- Beginning with Spring 2018, instructors of Senior-level Research/Project courses, Small Group courses, and Pharmacy 800-level courses will select either the S/P/F System or the A/B/C/D/E System at the course level. The two systems cannot be combined in one course. For consistency and fairness, all students enrolled in the course will be graded by one system or the other; a mix of two systems won't be permitted.
- The Registrar's Office will provide more detailed information on how the undergraduate grade system changes will be displayed and managed in UAccess.

Questions on implementation of Alternative Grade Changes may be addressed to Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Management Beth Acree, Office of the Registrar, at 621-5200, acree@email.arizona.edu.

Questions on the undergraduate course policy changes may be addressed to Assistant Director Celeste Pardee, Curricular Affairs, at 621-5375, or cpardee@u.arizona.edu.

Questions on the graduate course policy changes may be addressed to Associate Dean Janet Sturman, Graduate College, at 621-0420, or sturman@email.arizona.edu.

Questions on the Pharmacy course policy changes may be addressed to Associate Dean Philip Schneider, College of Pharmacy, at 602-827-2446, or schneider@pharmacy.arizona.edu.