

WKU FACULTY SENATE: May 6, 2021  
AcQ Policy Proposal, WKU Pass/Fail

Senate Recommendation 2021-04-15 AcQ Policy Proposal Pass/Fail

*Julia Shadoan, Senate Chair*

## **General Guidelines for Proposal to Create a New Academic Policy**

- This form is used to establish university academic policies such as those included in the Academic Requirements and Regulations section of the undergraduate catalog.
- A proposal to create a new academic policy at the program or college/school/departmental/unit level should be submitted using the proposal to revise a program.
- Proposals to establish new academic policies are **action items**.
- **Item 1** should briefly state the proposed academic policy.
- **Item 2** should state the proposed policy to be printed in the catalog and proposed section of the catalog to print the policy.
- **Item 3** should cite specific justification for the proposed academic policy including supporting data, if appropriate. Is the proposed academic policy related to a state or federal regulation or other governing or oversight agencies?
- **Item 4** should indicate the impact on any related existing policies that may be affected by the proposed academic policy, including the impact upon the populations that may be affected. Note that creation of new academic policies may impact non-academic policies.
- **Item 5** should indicate when the proposed academic policy goes into effect and any special provisions for currently enrolled students.

Proposal Date:

**Office of Academic Affairs  
Office of the Registrar  
Proposal to Create a New Academic Policy  
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Jennifer Hammonds, Jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu, 270-745-5030

**1. Identification of proposed policy: Pass/Fail Grading Option: Student-Initiated Option**

**2. Catalog statement of proposed policy:**

2.1 Proposed catalog policy:

**Pass/Fail Grading Option: Student-Initiated Option**

The Pass/Fail option encourages undergraduate students to take courses they might otherwise avoid because of lack of background or concern for lowering their grade point average (GPA). It allows students to experiment in academic disciplines without the same grading pressures incurred as in their major area of study. When undergraduates choose this option, they must adhere to the course syllabus the same way as students enrolled for a letter grade. For this reason, this policy can contribute substantially to a student's breadth of experience at WKU.

**Note: Not all undergraduate courses are approved to be taken Pass/Fail. Graduate-level courses (400G-499G, 500 or higher) may not be taken under the Pass/Fail option.**

1. Taking courses under the Pass/Fail student-initiated option is subject to the following restrictions:
  - A. The student must complete the appropriate Pass/Fail form by the deadline published in the registration guide.
  - B. The form can be completed at the time of registration but not later than the last day to withdraw for a class for that semester/term as listed in the appropriate registration guide.
  - C. The choice to receive a traditional letter grade or a Pass/Fail grade cannot be changed after the last day to withdraw from a course except by withdrawal or by repeating the course.
  - D. A student may not repeat a course on a Pass/Fail basis in order to replace a previously earned letter grade of *A* through *F*.
  - E. The student must be an undergraduate student (degree seeking or non-degree seeking). Dual credit students are excluded from this policy.
  - F. Courses taken Pass/Fail must be elective in nature or part of the Colonnade Connections categories and cannot be used to fulfill specific major, minor, or certificate requirements or a prerequisite requirement for admission to a degree program. If a student changes their major/minor after taking and passing the course, they may request a retroactive change to a letter grade from the department head/chair of the program in which the course is housed.
  - G. No more than 9 credit hours toward graduation may be completed through the student-initiated Pass/Fail.

- H. The grade of *P* will not be computed in the GPA but the credit hours associated with the course will be counted as credit hours earned and will count toward graduation under the restrictions previously mentioned.
  - I. The grade of *F* will be computed in the student's GPA as hours attempted.
2. Under the student-initiated Pass/Fail policy, the instructor will not know whether an individual is taking the course for a traditional letter grade or Pass/Fail. When the semester ends, the instructor will submit traditional letter grades for all students. For those students taking the course as Pass/Fail, grades will be converted by the registrar's office.

2.2 Proposed catalog section: Same as 2.1

**3. Rationale for proposed policy:**

WKU does not currently have a pass/fail policy. It was discovered as we navigated the Covid-19 pandemic where we wanted to offer this to our students. Examples of institutions with a pass/fail grade option: University of Louisville, Northern Kentucky University, Eastern Kentucky University, Ball State University, Central Michigan University, Ohio State University, Ohio University, Bowling Green State University, Vanderbilt University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Florida Atlantic University. The Pass/Fail option encourages undergraduate students to take courses they might otherwise avoid because of lack of background or concern for lowering their grade point average (GPA). It allows students to experiment in academic disciplines without the same grading pressures incurred as in their major area of study.

**4. Impact of proposed policy on existing academic or non-academic policies:**

- 4.1 Impact on policies: Students may choose the Pass/Fail policy in place of an audit. Unlike audit, the pass grade will count towards graduation.
- 4.2 Impact on populations that may be affected: This policy may affect special populations or departmental accreditations.

**5. Proposed term for implementation: Fall 2021 (Grades of Pass earned in Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 are not subject to the credit hour limit.)**

**6. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Department/ Unit      Office of the Registrar



College Curriculum Committee (if applicable)

UCC Academic Policy Subcommittee (if applicable)

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

University Senate