



UM | Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences

Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences FAQs for COVID-19 Grade Options (Updated May 5, 2020)

The Agricultural and Food Sciences Student Services team have tried to anticipate your questions in regard to the final grade options available to students due the current COVID-19 situation. If your question is not answered below, please reach out to us by email: aginfo@umanitoba.ca.

Students are *strongly* encouraged to consult with Student Services once their final grades are known if they wish to apply for an alternate grading option than Standard. Please be aware the deadline to apply for revised grading options is SUNDAY, May 10th. **Students will need to contact Students Services *in advance* of Friday, May 8 to ensure they can obtain advice.**

In addition to this, students in Dietetics should also refer to the memo that was sent on April 7, 2020 and that is also posted [here](#).

Please note:

- “regardless of any choice made with respect to course grading, students will remain obliged to meet all existing admission, prerequisite, progression, degree, and graduation policies and requirements that may apply to them.” (as approved by Senate Executive Committee, April 1, 2020)
- Sunday, May 10, 2020 is the deadline for selecting final grade option(s)

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16: Can the grade options be used on courses taken on a Letter of Permission? (UPDATED MAY 5)

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1: What are the different grade options?

1. Standard Approach: Accept the Letter Grade received.
 - This is the standard grading approach approved at the UM and represents the default grading approach for students. The grade will be used in GPA calculations. Note the exception that any grades of F will automatically be inputted at F* (excluded from the GPA calculations).
2. Option 1: Accept the Letter Grade received but exclude it from the UM GPA calculations.
 - Letter grade will appear on the student’s transcript with a notation indicating that the student chose to exclude it from their UM GPA calculations due to the COVID-19 situation. Grades excluded in the calculation of the GPA will not be used in calculating GPA for the purpose of program progression and/or overall graduation GPA requirements. However, letter grades will continue to be used to satisfy UM prerequisite* requirements for entry into other courses, or admission to other programs, and to satisfy any other program requirements (as approved by Senate Executive Committee; March 25, 2020).
3. Option 2: Choose to have performance assessed as a ‘Pass’.
 - In this scenario no letter grade will be recorded or retained. A notation will be used to indicate that the student chose this approach. ‘Pass’ grades will be available only if the original letter grade is ‘D’ or higher and will not be included in the UM GPA calculations (as approved by Senate Executive Committee; April 1, 2020).
4. Voluntary Withdrawal: Grade appears as ‘VW’ on transcript.
 - Limited Access to re-take the course will not apply to subsequent terms.

*What is a prerequisite?

A prerequisite is a course that must be completed before being able to register in a subsequent course(s). A minimum grade must be achieved in the prerequisite course. For example, CHEM 1300, with a minimum grade of 'C' or higher, is a prerequisite for CHEM 1320 or CHEM 1310. Specific course prerequisite information can be found in course descriptions.

Note that a 'Pass' will be equivalent to a grade of 'D' for prerequisites purposes. If a 'C' or higher is required as a prerequisite, the grading option 'Pass' will not suffice.

2: What is the deadline to declare my grade option choice(s) for my courses?

Sunday, May 10th, 2020 is the deadline to choose one of the above options should you wish to use them. In addition to the grading options listed in question 1, May 10th is also the revised deadline to Voluntary Withdrawal (VW). **Students will need to contact Students Services *in advance* of Friday, May 8 to ensure they can obtain advice.**

3: How do I declare my grade option choice?

The process to apply for an alternative grade option as well as to VW a course is now available by logging into [UMLearn](#) (please follow the instructions). Students are recommended to review this document carefully and to seek guidance from an Advisor prior to applying for an alternative grading options.

4. The Voluntary Withdrawal option has been removed from AURORA. How do I VW a course?

The process to VW a course is now available by logging into [UMLearn](#) (please follow the instructions). Students are recommended to review this document carefully and to seek guidance from an Advisor prior VWing a course as it may be beneficial to choose a different grade option.

5: Once I make my grade option choice, can it be changed?

Students should consult with Academic Advisors prior to Friday, May 8th to ensure they have all the information needed to make important grading decisions before the deadline on Sunday, May 10th.

6: If I do nothing, what is the default grade option?

The default grade option will be the Standard Approach: Accept the letter grade received. Note the exception is that the default grade for an 'F' will be 'F*' (excluded from the GPA calculations).

Students receiving an 'F*' should consult with an Academic Advisor on whether they should choose to Voluntary Withdrawal (VW) instead.

7: What is the difference between "excluding a grade from my GPA calculation" and choosing the 'Pass' grading option?

In both cases, your grade will be excluded from your GPA calculations.

If you choose to exclude your grade from the GPA calculations but do not select the 'Pass' option, AURORA will still use the grade you earned when it checks for prerequisites – it just won't count the grade in your overall GPA calculation.

Choosing the 'Pass' option excludes the course from the GPA calculation and also removes the letter grade you earned from sight. AURORA won't use a 'Pass' grade the same way it uses 'C' or better grades for prerequisites.

A 'Pass' grade is equivalent to a 'D' letter grade in terms of prerequisites. A 'Pass' grade will not satisfy prerequisite grade requirements in courses that require a 'C' or higher.

A 'Pass' may not be a viable option for students in dietetics planning to pursue dietetic internships/practicums or for those who wish to apply for Graduate Studies. Dietetics students should refer to the memo that was circulated on April 7, 2020 and is posted [here](#). All students are strongly recommended to consult with an Academic Advisor before making a decision.

8: If I choose the 'Pass' grading option, can I use my 'Pass' grade to satisfy the prerequisite for advanced level courses?

Only if the prerequisite for the higher-level course accepts a minimum grade of 'D'. If the higher-level course requires a 'C' or higher grade in its prerequisite, choosing the 'Pass' grade is **not** recommended. Any student wishing to satisfy a prerequisite must obtain the minimum grade required in the prerequisite course, as indicated in the course description.

If a course is being taken to satisfy a prerequisite for any related course or program, and you receive a final grade that achieves that prerequisite, you should not opt for the 'Pass' option or you may have to retake the course in order to progress. **Consider carefully before opting for the 'Pass' option.** Even if you had earned the minimum prerequisite grade required prior to selecting the 'Pass' option, you may not use any course with a grade of 'Pass' as a prerequisite to other courses.

You can select the "Exclude grade from GPA calculation" option and still use that course and grade (provided it meets the listed minimum) for program entry and / or prerequisite purposes.

A 'Pass' grade is equivalent to a 'D' letter grade when it comes to prerequisites requirements.

9: What happens if I fail a course during the 2020 Winter term?

If you should happen to fail a 2020 Winter Term (or 2019 Fall/2020 Winter Term spanned) course, the final grade for that course:

- Will appear on your transcript as "F*"; and,
- Will remain on your record; and,
- Will automatically **NOT** count in the calculation of your GPAs; and
- Will **NOT** be counted in the end of term assessment toward the maximum number of attempted credit hours allowed within an FAFS degree program (30 credit hours).
- Such grades will be notated on the transcript as having been excluded from UM GPA calculations.

Student may want consider a Voluntary Withdrawal (VW) in the case of an F* grade, and should consult with an Academic Advisor before making decisions.

10: Will a grade of “F*” or other grading options from the 2020 Winter term be used to assess my academic progress?

Any students currently on Academic Warning or Probation are required to have a Term GPA of 2.0 or higher. No excluded grades (ex. F*) will be counted towards the calculations of your GPA, including Term GPAs.

Students in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences are required to maintain a Degree GPA above 2.0 to remain in good standing. The Assessment Standards can be found our Academic Regulations section of the [Academic Calendar](#). Any grades that are chosen to be excluded or “F*” will not be included in a student’s GPA calculations. Note that any excluded grades (*) that are repeated will not count towards the maximum attempted credit hour limit (30 credit hours).

11: If I choose one of the grade options, will I still be able to graduate?

Yes, as long as the course is successfully passed and all other requirements are met. Courses a student may choose to exclude from their GPA calculation and/or choose to have marked using the ‘Pass’ option can be used to satisfy degree requirements as along as the student has met the minimum grade requirements for courses in their program.

12: If I choose to exclude a grade from my GPA calculation, will it negatively impact my chances for any of the following: scholarships, prizes, bursaries, medals?

Students who choose to exclude a grade from their GPA calculation may use the credit hours of that course to satisfy load requirements for any of the following: scholarships, prizes, bursaries, medals. Accordingly, the grade for the “excluded” course(s) will not be used in any GPA calculation described in the specific terms of reference for each scholarship, prize, bursary, or medal.

13: How do the grade options affect the Dean’s Honour list or Graduate “With Distinction”?

- **Dean’s Honour List:** To qualify for the Dean’s Honour list, students must complete a minimum of 12 credit hours in the term and have a minimum TGPA of 3.50. Term GPA calculations will not include any “excluded” grades.

Choosing an alternative grading option will not effect your eligibility for the Dean’s Honour List.

Examples:

- Jane Smith receives 4 letter grades (12 credit hours): A, B+, B and D. Jane chooses to exclude the B+ and B grades and chooses ‘Pass’ for the D grade, now: B+*, B* and P*. Jane now has 12 credit hours and a term GPA of 4.0 **and qualifies for the Dean’s Honour Roll.**
- John Doe receives 4 letter grades A, B+, B and C. John chooses to exclude the B+ and B grades and VW the C grade, now: B+*, B* and VW. John now has 9 credit hours and a term GPA of 4.0 **and does not qualify for the Dean’s Honour Roll.**

- **Graduate with Distinction:** To qualify for Distinction students must obtain a minimum Degree GPA of 3.75. Degree GPA calculations will not include any “excluded” grades. Choosing an alternative grading option will not affect your eligibility to graduate “With Distinction” if your final Degree GPA is a minimum of 3.75.

14: If I choose to have my course marked using the ‘Pass’ option, can I use that course to satisfy the admissions requirements of another Faculty at the U of M? At another institution?

No. Faculties or Schools that require specific grades in specific courses will not accept a grade of ‘Pass’ in any required course, unless they specifically say that they will in their admissions documentation.

Students should also think carefully about how their target faculty or school may adjust the grade point average of applicants to their schools or programs. Selecting a grade of ‘Pass’ in courses now could have unintended consequences related to the adjusted GPA calculation of their target faculty/school/institution. Before choosing the ‘Pass’ grading option, students are encouraged to contact the admissions office of their destination.

Students who choose to exclude an earned grade from their GPA calculation but also choose to have the earned grade remain on their record can use that grade to meet the course and/or adjusted GPA admission requirements of another Faculty at the U of M or another institution.

15: What if I am in Dietetics and have a pre-selected internship position or am planning to apply for future internship/practicum programs?

A notice was issued to Human Nutritional Sciences students on April 7th, 2020 regarding the grading options and impact on Dietetics. **Please read that notice carefully.** It is also posted [here](#).

16: Can the grade options be used on courses taken on a Letter of Permission? (UPDATED MAY 5)

Students may request that a grade received from another institution be excluded from their GPA calculation during the Winter 2020 term. Students may not VW or use the ‘Pass’ option for a grade from another institution.

Should a student wish to exclude a Letter of Permission grade from their GPA, they will need to contact an academic advisor. Students will receive an email when grades are entered letting them know that they now have **10 days** to request the grade be excluded from their GPA should they wish.

17: I have been granted a deferred exam from the April exam series. Can I opt for a grade option alternative when I get my grade from the deferred exam?

The grading options are available on Winter 2020 and Fall2019/Winter 2020 spanned courses, so students who defer an April exam will be eligible to choose one of the grading options up to 10 days after they receive their final grade. The grading options are not available to students who are writing a deferred exam from a previous term.

18: How is Manitoba Student Aid affected by grading options?

A Message for Students on Manitoba Student Aid.

- Manitoba Student Aid will not penalize students for not completing their study period due to COVID-19. This includes students who did not meet the full time requirement, voluntary withdrawals, and incomplete classes.
- This means that funding already approved for students' current application will not be affected, and they will not face an over-award when assessed for future applications.
- Students and schools are not required to inform MSA about these changes.