What is the purpose of the COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy?

- The COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy was designed in consultation with campus Presidents and Deans, the University Faculty Senate, The University Council of Registrars, and the University Student Senate to provide students with maximum flexibility during the ongoing and challenging transition of all courses to distance learning.

Does this policy apply to students in all academic programs?

- This policy applies to all CUNY students who are enrolled in credit and non-credit bearing courses for the Spring 2020 semester, including undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral courses, with the exceptions of the CUNY School of Law and the CUNY school of Medicine, regardless of their graduation status. Courses in all Spring 2020 sessions, including 8-week and mini sessions, are included in the CR/NC policy. The policy applies to all courses, including capstone, internship, and lab courses except dissertation continuation courses.

Will all course grades automatically be converted to a Credit/No-Credit (CR/NC) option? When will this conversion happen? If students need to decide, how will they do so?

- No, course grades will not automatically convert to CR/NC. The change is optional, at the student’s discretion.
- Students will have up to twenty business days after the University’s final grade submission deadline (May 28) to elect CR/NC (this also applies to any/all courses completed in all sessions completed prior to regular session end date).
- Students enrolled in Spring Session 1 (or session already completed prior to Session 1 end date) who wish to have one or more course grades converted to CR/NC will have up to June 25, which is 20 business days after the University’s final grade submission deadline (June 17), to submit their request.
- Students enrolled in Spring Term 2 (or sessions that started after Session 1 and already completed prior to Session 2 end date) will have up to September 10, which is 20 business days after the University’s final grade submission deadline (August 12), to submit their request.
- Undergraduate students who are graduating and whose cumulative or major GPAs are below a 2.0, or graduate students who have a GPA below a 3.0 should consult with their advisor before declaring the option. Additional information regarding the election process will be forthcoming.

Can students elect the CR/NC option for individual courses?

- Yes. A student can opt to take the CR/NC option for all, some, or none of their graded classes for Spring 2020 semester.

Are there circumstances or conditions in which a request would be denied, or a student would be ineligible for this option? Can a program prohibit use of the CR/NC option?

- Students will not be denied the right to opt-in to receive a CR/NC grade for any course that applies toward their degree (general education courses, electives, major, minor, and prerequisite courses) based upon this University policy. While CUNY programs cannot prohibit use of the CR/NC options, a grade of CR/NC may not be acceptable to licensing, accreditation or other bodies external to CUNY. Students should consult with their program advisors or the external body prior to making the decision to elect CR/NC.
Are there cases when a student should not choose the CR/NC option?

- **Graduation**: If an undergraduate student’s major GPA and/or cumulative GPA is below a 2.0, and the student is graduating, and the letter grade will raise the GPA to at least a 2.0, then choosing the CR/NC option would prevent the student from graduating. Similarly, if a graduate student’s cumulative GPA is below a 3.0, and the student is graduating, and the letter grade will raise the GPA to at least a 3.0, then choosing the CR/NC option would prevent the student from graduating.

- **Professional Licensure, Transfer, and Graduate School Admission**: Some professional licensure organizations, and graduate schools outside of CUNY, may not accept a grade of CR. As such, students, in consultation with program advisors, should weigh the potential impact of electing the CR/NC option on their ability to earn licenses, transferability of credit to non-CUNY institutions, and/or admission into graduate school outside of CUNY. As one example, there are some graduate programs that typically convert a CR grade to a C and an NC grade to an F when evaluating a transcript. The University is currently working to provide additional clarity on these matters.

- The University will endeavor to ensure that the flexibility afforded by this policy works in the best interest of students. Students will be encouraged to be in contact with external scholarship organizations, the transfer admissions office at non-CUNY institutions, the graduate admissions offices at non-CUNY institutions and any organization external to CUNY that could have an impact on their current or future educational or professional plans.

Does this policy apply to any semester other than the one in progress? Does this include Spring 1 and Spring 2 terms?

- This policy currently applies exclusively to courses taken during the Spring 2020 semester. This includes Winter Session, Spring Session 1 and Spring Session 2 (relevant for Kingsborough, LaGuardia, and Guttman), and any other session within the Spring 2020 semester. Following the end of the Spring 2020 semester, the Chancellor has the discretion to review and extend the policy as necessary to meet public health emergency policies and practices.

Will this policy be published in the Course Catalog of each campus?

- Yes, every CUNY campus catalog will be updated with University Policy on Credit/No Credit for students, faculty and staff.

Is the decision to convert course grades to the CR/NC option reversible during the 20 days following the University’s final grade submission deadline?

- No. After the University’s final grade submission deadline a student will have up to twenty business days to elect the CR/NC option. Once a student chooses to convert course grades to the CR/NC the decision is final. Importantly, there may be circumstances where electing the CR/NC option may not be in the best interests of the student, some of which are described below.
Financial Aid

Will the decision to elect CR/NC impact financial aid?

- There may be cases where a student’s eligibility for financial aid could be adversely impacted by electing the CR/NC option, including private scholarships, state student aid, and federal student aid. Students should meet with financial aid advisers prior to choosing CR/NC. More information is provided below, and additional information will be posted on the CUNY Continuity Site.

- **Federal Student Aid:** Students who receive federal aid are required to successfully complete courses within a specified period of time, with a determined GPA and at a pace based on the length of their academic program, known as Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). The federal CARES Act allows for a college to exclude any attempted credits that you did not complete from spring 2020 semester SAP calculation, as a result of COVID-19. You will not need to submit an appeal for the exception.

- **State Student Aid:** Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), New York State’s higher education student financial aid agency, has determined that students certified by the college as impacted by COVID-19 and receiving state financial aid will not suffer negative consequences regarding their current or future awards. You will be required to submit the CUNY COVID-19 Financial Aid Documentation form to the college where you are enrolled to support your circumstance. The form can be found [here](#).

- **Private Scholarships:** Private scholarship organizations may not accept a grade of CR. In light of that, Financial Aid Counselors can help students to best leverage the flexibility afforded by the CR/NC option by reviewing private scholarships with students and advising them to communicate with private scholarship organizations. Most scholarships will not be affected by a change in grading system unless they are for more than one year and have academic requirements.
Grades

How will the CR/NC grades be calculated into the grade point average?

- Neither the CR nor the NC is included in the calculation of the GPA. The CR grade will allow the student to earn credit but is not factored into the GPA. If the student elects an NC grade in place of an F then it is not factored into the GPA, but the student will not earn the credit. As mentioned previously, a student should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of electing the CR/NC option, particularly on matters related to graduation, professional licensure requirements, financial aid eligibility, and transfer of credit and/or graduate admissions to non-CUNY institutions.

Will a grade of CR at one CUNY institution transfer to another CUNY institution?

- Yes, a grade of CR earned at one CUNY institution will transfer to another CUNY institution. There are no exceptions to this.

Will a CR grade in a course be acceptable to register for higher level courses in subsequent semesters if the course taken in the spring was a prerequisite with a minimum grade requirement?

- All students opting for a CR grade will receive credit for that course. Students will not be prevented from registering for courses in subsequent semesters that require specific grades in courses completed in the Spring 2020 semester, including students who transfer. Prerequisites for all courses and programs will be considered complete with a CR grade, at all CUNY institutions. Students should, however, consider the likelihood of succeeding in subsequent courses, in which they will earn a letter grade, if they have not mastered the material in a related lower level course. In the case of programs that fulfill the academic requirements for licensed professions, student decisions to pursue the CR/NC option may impact their acceptance into the program (or graduate program). These students are encouraged to check with their respective departments.

Does this policy impact ePermit/Study Abroad grades?

- The policy applies to all courses, even taken via ePermit, in the Spring 2020 semester.

Will a Spring 2020 hold or stop prevent a student from selecting the CR/NC option?

- No. Stops and holds will not have an impact on a student’s ability to select the CR/NC option.

Will the CR grade replace a previously taken class where the F grade was earned?

- A grade of CR is a passing grade and will replace an F and apply towards the F-Repeat policy, and count towards the 16-credit F-Repeat limit but will still not contribute to the calculation of the term GPA.

Will the NC grade replace a previously taken class where the F grade was earned?

- A NC grade will not replace a previously earned F grade.

Will a WU grade convert to a NC grade?

- WU is not an earned grade and is assigned to students who stop participating in and do not complete the course; thus, student will not have option to convert to an “NC” grade. After consulting with the financial aid office, on a case by case basis, campuses can decide to exercise this option for a student. As is generally the case, campuses must document and retain this exception decision.
Will a FIN grade convert to a NC grade?

- FIN is not an earned grade and is assigned to students who do not complete coursework for which they received an INC grade in Spring 2020 semester, thus, student will not have the option to convert to an “NC” grade. After consulting with the financial aid office, on a case by case basis, campuses can decide to exercise this option for a student. As is generally the case, campuses must document and retain this exception decision.

Does this policy apply to INC grades earned in Spring 2020 semester?

- Yes, this policy will apply to all grades earned during Spring 2020 semester.

Does this policy apply to a course where a student has already earned any version of the W grades on their record for Spring 2020 semester?

- If a student has a version of the W grade (W, WN, WA, WD) on their record for a particular course for the Spring 2020 semester, this option does not apply to that course.

Will this interfere with the number of Pass/Fail/No Credit grades that a student can utilize after the Spring 2020 semester which is dependent on local campus policy?

- No. These grades will not be included in the total number of non-letter grade courses a student may take as per the existing campus policy.

Does this policy impact a student’s eligibility for Dean’s List/Campus Honors for Spring 2020 semester?

- Credit/No Credit grades are not counted toward the Dean's List and Campus Honors. Students must earn letter grades in order to be considered for any honors opportunities.

If unexpected issues arise around CR/NC implementation, does there exist a process to ensure that they are addressed?

- Yes. Each campus has a grades appeals process that can be invoked in the event that issues arise as a result of the CR/NC policy.

Will successfully retaking the course in subsequent semesters replace the NC grade.

- No, the NC grade will not be replaced and will continue to appear on the transcript. A grade of NC is not calculated into the GPA; therefore, it will not impact the 16-credit university limitation on repeats. On the other hand, if an F is received in a course, then successfully repeating that course later would replace the F grade in the calculation of the GPA.
Credit/No Credit Opt-in

What is the estimated timeline for the roll out the CR/NC policy?

- The CR/NC Taskforce is currently in the process of developing a timeline for the communication and implementation that will be rolled out throughout the next 5 weeks.

Will students have to apply through CUNYfirst or through DegreeWorks?

- Students will use CUNYfirst to elect the credit/no credit option. Detailed instructions and communications will be provided across multiple channels as part of the communication and implementation plan.

What will this look like on my transcript?

- The grade glossary, attached to each transcript, will be updated to include a notation denoting that all Spring 2020 grades, including CR or NC, were earned during a major disruption to instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If a student’s grade is not submitted or posted in time for them to select the CR/NC option, will the student be allotted more time?

- Campus registrars will be able to assist any student with late grade submissions, on a case-by-case basis.

Should a student opt for NC if they earned a D and want to repeat the course?

- No. A passing letter grade (A, B, C, or D) can convert to ‘CR’ with credit for the class being awarded, while a failing grade (F) can convert to ‘NC’, with no credit awarded. Still, it is important to understand that under certain circumstances, there is a difference between a passing grade for the purposes of CUNY, and an acceptable grade in the eyes of institutions outside of CUNY, specialized programs such as Nursing, and standards for professional licensure. Students should consult with their advisers before electing the CR/NC option.

Will a Spring 2020 hold or stop prevent a student from selecting the CR/NC option?

- No. Stops and holds will not have an impact on a student’s ability to select the CR/NC option.
Additional Considerations for Specific Student Populations

What are the implications of CR/NC opt-in for International Students?

- International students should consult campus International Student and Scholar Services before initiating this option. For Spring 2020, international students will be able to opt-in to CR/NC without any impact on their visa status if the decision is due to the COVID-19 crisis.

What are the implications of CR/NC opt-in for Veterans Benefits?

- The VA does not typically pay for classes for which the grade received, such as CR/NC, may not contribute to student progress standards for graduation (what the VA calls "non-punitive grades"). Non punitive grades have the same effect as taking a class in “audit” status. If COVID 19 is reported as by the institution as a mitigating circumstance for the student’s receipt of a nonpunitive grade (i.e., Fail in a Pass/Fail class) then VA will pay for the class. As a mitigating circumstance, Veteran students should consult campus Veterans Support Services before initiating this option. More information is available here.

Does this policy apply to Non-Degree, College NOW, or Early College Initiative (ECI) programs?

- The policy applies to all students taking courses in the Spring 2020 semester regardless of matriculation status.

How will this policy affect undergraduate Macaulay Honors, Campus Honors, Adult and Continuing Education, ASAP courses, and other special academic programs?

- The policy applies to all courses applicable to all CUNY undergraduate programs equally.
Students Pursuing Licensed Health Professions Programs

I am applying to a degree program in a licensed health profession at my school at the end of this semester. How will accepting a grade of CR affect my admission to the program?

- Admission to many of the licensed health profession programs at CUNY is highly competitive. There are more students interested in these programs than there are clinical placements available, therefore there is a selection process based upon a review of the academic record of each student seeking admission. While no student will be deprived the right to a CR grade in any class at CUNY, overall GPA is not the only indicator in admissions decisions to licensed health profession programs. Students are encouraged to review the admissions criteria, which can be viewed on the program’s webpage, for acceptance to the program. Program directors will review the full transcript of each student and will make their admissions decisions based upon conclusions drawn from the review of those transcripts. Opting for a CR grade instead of a letter grade in a course may impact your ability to meet the expected admission criteria and acceptance into the program. Students doing poorly in a course may be advised to withdraw from a course, which has been extended to May 14, or take a CR/NC grade option and repeat the course in a subsequent term.

I am a student in a licensed health profession program at my school, currently taking courses in my major. How will accepting a CR grade in my major courses affect my ability to continue in the program?

- No student will be denied the right to elect the CR/NC grade option. All students, regardless of their field of study need to consider the impact that their level of proficiency in a Spring 2020 course will have on their success in a future course or in successfully advancing in the program in which they will earn a letter grade or choose a CR/NC option. This consideration is particularly important for students in programs preparing them to take licensing examinations in one of the health professions upon graduation. Students doing poorly in a course may be advised to withdraw from a course or take an NC grade and repeat the course in a subsequent term. Students should contact their professor or advisor either prior to the end of the semester or certainly prior to opting for the CR/NC grade.

I am a senior applying to graduate programs in a licensed health profession. How will the CR grades impact my chances of gaining admission to the schools to which I have applied?

- Each graduate program will view these grades as they see fit. Many colleges and universities throughout the United States are implementing similar type grading options for students for the Spring 2020 semester, so your transcript will most likely not be the only one with a CR/NC. Students may consider admission criteria for graduate schools in your selected health profession to inform decisions on eligibility and other conditions that may potentially impact admission to the program. You have twenty days after your letter grade has been submitted to decide if you want to opt in for the CR/NC grade. We advise you to use that time to check with the admissions office of each program to which you have applied in order to make an informed decision.
Education Students

I am a student in an Education program that leads to teacher certification. How will accepting a CR grade in my Education courses affect my ability to get certified?

- Candidates who complete a registered program would apply for certification through the approved program pathway. In this pathway, NY State Education Department (OTI) looks for the institutions’ recommendation for certification in the candidates’ TEACH account and does not look at courses on a transcript. Credit/No Credit courses would not be an issue in this case.

I am a student taking education courses because I intend to apply for certification through the individual evaluation pathway. (I am not enrolled in a registered program that leads to certification.) How will accepting a CR grade in my Education courses affect my ability to get certified?

- Candidates who complete college courses but are not matriculating in a registered program and would not receive an institution recommendation for certification, may apply for certification through the individual evaluation pathway. In this pathway, “candidates must have achieved at least a C or its equivalent in any undergraduate level course and at least a B- or its equivalent in any graduate level course in order for the semester hours associated with that course to be credited toward meeting the content core or pedagogical core semester hour requirements for a certificate”, according to the regulations.

- Students pursuing the individual evaluation pathway who earn at least a C or its equivalent in any undergraduate level course and at least a B- or its equivalent in any graduate level course may decide to accept the letter grade (and not convert it to CR) so their transcript can be more readily assessed by NY State Education Department.

How do CR grades apply to the general core and content core requirements of NY State Education Department?

- The minimum letter grade requirement does not apply to the general core (liberal arts and science) courses, unless they are also counting towards the content core semester hour requirements. CR/NC grades would be acceptable for those courses. In addition, any grade is acceptable, including pass/fail grades, for the 12-semester hour graduate coursework content core for the Professional certificate master’s degree requirement, as long as the college granted degree credit for the course.

I am a senior applying to graduate programs in an Education. How will the CR grades impact my chances of gaining admission to the NY colleges to which I have applied, given the state’s 3.0 GPA minimum?

- Each graduate program will view these grades as they see fit. Many colleges and universities throughout the United States are implementing similar type grading options for students for the Spring 2020 semester, so your transcript will most likely not be the only one with a CR/NC or P/F grade. CUNY’s Credit/No Credit grades will not impact the students’ GPA. You have twenty days after your letter grade has been submitted to decide if you want to opt in for the CR/NC grade. We advise you to use that time to check with the admissions office of each program to which you have applied in order to make an informed decision.

What other issues should Education programs and their students consider?

- Colleges may give students additional advice stemming from their accrediting bodies, etc. (CUNY will send letters explaining the CR/NC policy to CAEP and AAQEP, in addition to Middle States.) Before choosing this grading option for one or more of their classes, students will consult with their academic and financial aid advisors regarding potential impact to their financial aid, licensure requirements, and graduate school admissions.