

GRADE REQUIREMENTS

A student must pass all courses required by the program curriculum. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and at least a C- in all major and minor courses are required to graduate. No courses with a grade of D or P may be used to fulfill a major or a minor requirement. However, if a student decides to pursue a major in an area where he or she has already passed a course with a P grade, the student may petition the Student Affairs Committee to count the course toward the new major or to substitute another course.

Grades for Undergraduate Credit

Each instructor determines their own guidelines and expectations for grades, including how attendance and participation are graded. In general, however, students are expected to commit the time and effort to attend all class meetings and participate in their courses. The faculty member may lower a student's final grade due to absences and lack of participation, so students who are likely to miss classes or be unable to participate in the course for any reason should not register since it may not be possible to earn a passing grade.

The following grades may be awarded for undergraduate courses at SPS:

Grade	Grade Description	Grade Point Value
A	passing grade	4.0
A-	passing grade	3.7
B+	passing grade	3.3
B	passing grade	3.0
B-	passing grade	2.7
C+	passing grade	2.3
C	passing grade	2.0
C-	passing grade	1.7
D	passing grade (not for major or minor)	1.0
F	failing grade	0.0
X	failing grade (unauthorized withdrawal)	0.0
Y	incomplete	0.0
W	official withdrawal	no grade points awarded
P	pass	no grade points awarded
N	no pass	no grade points awarded
V	audit	no grade points awarded

Passing Grades

All grades of D and above are considered passing grades and satisfy the course requirement. D's are not counted toward major or minor coursework, however.

Failing Grade

Grades of F may be given for failing work or for cases where a student has failed to attend a single class or submit work. An X is given for unauthorized withdrawal from a class. Courses graded with an F do not count toward a degree. Failed required non-elective courses must be

retaken. Both the grade for the original class and the retaken class are calculated in the cumulative GPA, and the failing grade remains on the transcript.

Incompletes

In rare circumstances, students may be granted a grade of incomplete, which is designated with a grade of Y. A student must obtain advance permission from the instructor and submit a Student Affairs Petition (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php>) to receive a grade of incomplete. Y grades will count as a 0.00 in a student's grade point average until a final grade is submitted by the instructor.

When an instructor grants an incomplete, they determine the amount of time the student has to finish the work within the maximum allotted one term of additional time.

For courses in which a grade Y was initially assigned, students must complete the course and the faculty must submit the grade change no later than the grading deadline of the following term or the incomplete grade will be changed to a final grade of F (failure). Instructors may establish an earlier deadline for the completion of missing work based on considerations specific to their course. Students with extenuating circumstances can petition for an extension through a Student Affairs Petition (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php>).

Students are not allowed to carry more than one incomplete (Y) grade at a time. Students who have two or more incomplete grades on their record will be placed on academic probation and prevented from registering for additional classes until the incomplete work for at least one course is turned in with a grade entered in CAESAR. Students planning to graduate must complete required courses and receive grades before graduating.

Pass/No Pass Courses

The pass/no credit (P/N) option is designed to encourage students to learn more about subjects outside their fields of study without endangering their academic standing. It is available to students admitted into a degree program who have a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students in certificate programs may not take courses P/N.

One P/N may be used for every nine courses completed at SPS. Students may take no more than four P/N courses in total and no more than one P/N course per quarter. P/N may be applied only toward distribution requirements or electives. It may not be used for ENGLISH 111-CN Writing Seminar II or ENGLISH 111-DL Writing Seminar II and ENGLISH 205-CN Intermediate Composition or ENGLISH 205-DL Intermediate Composition. Consult courses listings for additional restricted courses. Courses taken P/N are not figured into the grade point average.

At Northwestern, the P/N option is a "blind registration"—instructors do not know whether a student is taking the course P/N. Faculty assign a grade for the course that is converted to a P or an N, as appropriate. A request to take courses P/N—or to change from P/N to a grade—must be approved by an academic adviser before the second class meeting. The Pass/No Pass Option Request Form can be accessed at the SPS Forms page (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php>).

Auditing Courses

Certain undergraduate courses may be audited. Students who audit do not receive a grade or credit; they attend all classes and participate in discussions but do not submit graded coursework. Audited courses do not count toward undergraduate degrees, post-baccalaureate programs,

or undergraduate certificates. Students may make credit/audit changes before the second meeting of the class.

Online courses, denoted by the suffix -DL, may not be audited. Most courses in the following subject areas may not be audited: accounting, art, English writing, information systems, journalism, mathematics, physics, statistics, and theatre. Some courses in other subject areas may not be audited.

Calculating Grade Point Average

At the end of each course students receive a letter grade that has a corresponding number of grade points associated with it. These are listed in the grade table. A student's grade point average is calculated by dividing the total grade points earned by the number of courses attempted. All courses attempted are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA, including courses for which a failing grade was received.

It is important that students are aware of their cumulative GPA, which is used to determine academic status and continued participation in a program. A student's quarterly and cumulative GPA is listed on the unofficial transcript, which can be viewed in CAESAR.

Grade Concerns

SPS follows Northwestern University practice which gives faculty members complete grading authority in their sole academic discretion. Accordingly, a course grade may be changed only to correct a clerical or computational error. Grade changes are not allowed for any of the following:

- Reasons of financial reimbursement by an employer
- Dissatisfaction with the grade
- Submission of extra work or redoing an assignment after grades have been submitted to the Registrar's Office
- Unauthorized rescheduling or re-taking of an exam after grades have been submitted to the Registrar's Office

Students are entitled to an explanation of how their final course grade was determined and how the component parts of that grade were weighted. If a student seeks further clarification of a final course grade, they should discuss that matter directly with the faculty member.

If, after consulting with the faculty member, a student believes a clerical or computational error has not been rectified or believes the grade was determined in a prejudicial or capricious manner, the student can submit a letter to the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs with detailed documentation as evidence to support their claims. While SPS administrative staff do not have the power to change a grade assigned by an instructor, the Assistant Dean (or their designee) will investigate the student's claims, which may entail:

- Speaking with the student
- Speaking with the faculty member and relevant staff members
- Requesting additional materials

After a review of all evidence, the Assistant Dean (or their designee) will notify the student in writing of their decision regarding the grade dispute. If not satisfied with the outcome, the student has the right to appeal in writing within 10 business days to the Associate Dean of Academics with appropriate documentation and explanation of the grounds for appeal.

Students are reminded to adhere to the University's Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/>) in all their interactions with faculty members and staff.

All members of the Northwestern community – including students, faculty, and staff – must adhere to the university's policy on discrimination and harassment. If you believe you have been discriminated against or harassed, carefully review the **university's policy on discrimination and harassment** and contact your academic advisor for guidance. As appropriate, your adviser may refer you to Northwestern's Equal Opportunity Office (847-491-7458 or eeo@northwestern.edu).