

Distance Learning Grading Policy

Board Approved: April 23, 2020

Board Amended: December 17, 2020

Policy Number: 409

I. Background

Given the circumstances of distance learning, Spectrum feels it is necessary to take a unique approach to determining students' grades for their courses across the school. It is important to make a distinction between grading practices for individual assignments and the grading system used to determine the final grade. It is not the intent of this policy to significantly change the manner in which individual assignments and assessments are graded. This policy addresses the latter of the two.

In the school setting (on-campus), teachers have a greater ability to influence the inputs and other variables that affect a student's education. In distance learning, while the information is made available in a digital format and many supports are put into place, teachers have less of an opportunity to influence the inputs. In the distance learning environment, more variables enter into the equation - quality of access to the internet, student motivation, students' mental health, or other factors outside of school that can detract from the student's ability to complete their work in a timely and efficient manner.

After thoughtful consideration and ongoing research, the following grading policy may be applied with administrative discretion any time Spectrum is utilizing a distance learning model. This policy may override the Grading Policy found in the Student/Family Handbook at the time of implementation.

II. College/University Partners

Spectrum's concurrent enrollment college partners may choose to modify their grading systems due to distance learning. If an option other than A-F is available for concurrent enrollment classes, information will be conveyed regarding specific courses through the teacher and/or school counselor.

If a student is taking PSEO classes, they are encouraged to check with the individual college to understand the grading policy and the potential impact on their transcript. Spectrum also recommends that seniors contact their intended post-secondary institution to understand any possible admission's impact. Spectrum will accept all PSEO grades and credits to be applied to the student's transcript as they are conveyed by the respective college/university.

Students should carefully consider their future goals when making the decision to change a grade to something other than a standard letter grade (A-F). Colleges/universities, scholarship committees, athletic programs, professional and graduate programs, and employers will make individual decisions based on transcripts that are not always predictable. Given the unknown implications, it may be safest (when possible) to retain A-F grading for courses being taken as prerequisites for graduate or professional schools.

III. Spectrum High School (SHS - grades 9-12)

- A. Given the complexities of distance learning and the potential impact to a student’s transcript and high school grade point average (GPA), SHS administration may allow students to choose a “no credit” (NC) option according to the guidelines below. The decision to make this option available will be made no less than two weeks before the end of a semester and may be applied for all students or individually based on unique circumstances.
- B. Students should carefully consider their future goals when making the decision to change a grade to something other than a standard letter grade (A-F). Colleges/ universities, scholarship committees, athletic programs, professional and graduate programs, and employers will make individual decisions based on transcripts that are not always predictable. Given the unknown implications, it may be safest (when possible) to retain A–F grading for courses.
- C. Guidelines for choosing NC (if made available)
 - 1. If students are interested in electing a NC grading option, they will need to work with their High School Counselor.
 - 2. Electing the NC grading option will be on a “per course basis”, meaning students will need to elect this option for each individual course for which they would like it applied.
 - 3. The A-F grading scale will be the default grading method for all SHS courses - meaning a student must opt-in to the NC option by connecting with their School Counselor in order for it to apply.
 - 4. All courses chosen as NC will not impact a student’s GPA (either positively or negatively). However, choosing NC for a course that is needed to fulfill a graduation requirement means the student will have to retake the course for credit at a later time.
 - 5. The decision to change a course to NC must be made within 14 (calendar) days from the end of a semester and may not be changed once adjusted.
 - 6. A decision to change a grade to NC must be approved by the parent/guardian.
 - 7. All other Spectrum graduation requirements remain.

IV. Spectrum Middle School (SMS - grades 6-8)

- A. SMS will address student concerns/needs by making adjustments in grading practices and will be responsive on a case-by-case basis.
- B. SMS will continue to be supportive of its learners, especially with regard to the unique challenges of distance learning. SMS has the best interests of its students and families in mind. Adjusted due dates, additional attempts to revise work, fewer graded assignments, etc. are all examples that can be controlled by SMS. When communicating with families, SMS will individualize a response that is appropriate to the unique situation and needs of that student, keeping equity through the grading system the same for all SMS learners.
- C. This approach, with the intention of supporting all students, is designed to minimize the potential impact of distance learning on final grades.

V. Sting Service

Due to the implementation of distance learning and the inability for students participating in Sting Service to serve as teachers' assistants, Sting Service will not be available during distance learning. If a student began a semester in Sting Service, credit for the class may be prorated.

VI. Service Learning

Due to limitations on connecting with outside organizations, administration may choose to pause Service Learning requirements during distance learning.

- A. Credits may be prorated, if deemed appropriate, for work completed prior to distance learning being implemented.
- B. Consideration will be given to the students' ability to earn service learning/elective credit when reviewing student transcripts and graduation requirements.