COVID 19 – Info for VA Funded Students at the University of Dayton on the “Pass /Fail” Grading Option (Current as of 3/28/2020)

“Pass / Fail Option” and VA Benefits

As you are probably aware, UD has made Option 2 grading “Pass/Fail” available. Although it is generally known as “Pass / Fail” the grades for undergraduate students are actually Satisfactory (S) / No Credit (NC). Satisfactory means the student’s calculated grade would have been a C- or better on the normal grade scale. While graduate programs may vary, at the graduate level “Pass/ Fail” grades tend to be Credit (C) / No Credit (NC).

How does switching to “Pass / Fail” affect VA benefits?

This is a little nuanced. For students who switch to this form of grading and “Pass” (an S for undergrads or a C for most grad programs), there would not be any change to benefits. However, for students who receive a No Credit (NC), the VA (Veterans Affairs) generally treats this the same as a withdrawal from the course. As a result, a reduction in credits would have to be reported to the VA. According to federal regulations, the VA would then recalculate the student’s enrollment and rate of pursuit, which could make the student financially responsible for an overpayment of benefits.

For students who receive an S or C “Pass”, the VA will not reduce benefit payments. However, if the student wishes to retake the course in the future to increase their GPA, the VA will not pay for it.

How is this different from how the VA normally considers a failing grade?

This is different than how the VA considers a normal “F” which lowers a student GPA. When a student receives an “F” which lowers the student GPA, the VA considers it degree progress. It is negative progress because it lowers the GPA, but it is still progress, and therefore the VA can fund it. When the “NC” grade occurs, the VA considers it no progress, and cannot pay for it. Generally it is treated like a withdrawal W.

In general, undergraduate students need to achieve a grade of S, A, B, C, D, or F for 12 credits to receive the maximum financial benefit. For example, undergrad students who are enrolled in 15 credits can switch 3 credits to Option 2 grading with little to no impact on their financial benefits, even if they receive the NC since they will still have 12 credits with grades that permit VA benefits.

What about ROTC Cadets?

This paragraph is the only section of this document that pertains to ROTC Cadets. Cadets must achieve a 2.5 cumulative GPA to earn a scholarship from the Army and maintain a 2.0 per each semester to keep it. The Army calculates an S as a 2.0 for scholarship purposes. For ROTC student questions contact LTC Jefferson Burges at jburges1@udayton.edu (Cadets should use their chain of command).

See Examples Below for Possible Outcomes of Switching to Pass Fail for VA Funded Students

Example 1 and 2 – Undergraduate or Graduate Student

1) A student switches all classes to Pass / Fail and receives an S (Satisfactory) or C (Credit) in all classes. The student will have no changes made to their VA benefits.

2) A student switches all classes to Pass / Fail and receives an NC (No Credit) in all classes. The student may have all VA payments recouped, either by an issuance of debt directly from the student, by a VA recoupment from UD, or a combination. The student must repay to UD any amount recouped from the university.
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Example 3 – Undergraduate Student

An undergraduate student who is taking 12 credits (number of classes does not matter) switches 6 credits to “Pass / Fail” (this could be two classes, but again number of classes does not matter). The student receives a No Credit (NC) for 6 credits.

The VA will determine that the student has effectively dropped from 12 to 6 credits. This is a half time rate of pursuit for undergrads. Students will have their benefit recalculated at a 50% rate of pursuit. As a result, the VA has the right to recoup 50% of any costs that the VA paid directly to the student’s account at UD. The student is responsible for paying UD the entire amount of the recoupment. Alternatively, the VA may not recoup anything from the school, but instead issue a letter of debt directly to the student for the entire amount of overpayment made to UD.

Students who use the Post 9/11 GI Bill (or Fry Scholarship) must maintain a rate of pursuit of over 50% to receive a housing allowance. Since the student’s rate of pursuit dropped to 50%, the VA can issue debt for all of the housing allowance, and half of the Books and Supplies Stipend paid directly to the student.

VA benefit students who normally receive education benefits payments directly (not through their school account – such as Ch 1606, 30, or 35) will also have their rate of pursuit recalculated and can receive a corresponding debt from the VA for overpayment.

Example 4 – Undergraduate Student

An undergraduate student who is taking 15 credits switches 3 credits to “Pass / Fail”. The student receives a No Credit (NC) for 3 credits.

The VA will determine that the student has effectively dropped from 15 to 12 credits. This is still a full time rate of pursuit for undergrads. Students will not have benefits for enrollment or housing allowance adjusted. Post 9/11 GI Bill students will receive a small reduction $41.67 x 3 credits towards their VA Books and Supplies Stipend (however the stipend maxes out at 24 credits x $41.67 per year, so if the student still completes 24 credits per year the student will not see any reduction).

Example 5 – Graduate Student

Note: Graduate student billing and rate of pursuit differs by program, and this example only provides limited guidance to some grad programs that occur during normal length semesters.

A graduate student is taking 9 credits, and their student bill is calculated per credit. The graduate student switches 3 credits to pass fail. The student receives No Credit (NC) for 3 credits.

Because the student is paying per credit, the VA (under Post 9/11 or Fry Scholarship) can recoup 3 credits worth of the tuition payment made to UD. The VA will either recoup directly from the university, and the student must repay the university, or the VA will recoup directly from the student. The VA may also recoup 3 x $41.67 for the overpayment of Books and Supplies from the student. Because the student completed 6 VA qualifying credits, which for UD is considered full time graduate enrollment (with some exceptions such as Law), the VA still considers the student to be at a full time rate of pursuit. As a result, any payments made to the student for Monthly Housing Allowance, or any payments made directly to the student under Ch 1606, 30, or 35 will remain unchanged.

IN ALL OF THESE SITUATIONS, IT IS THE STUDENT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DEBT ISSUED BY THE VA!
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STUDENTS USING CHAPTER 31, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SHOULD DISCUSS MAKING
ANY CHANGES WITH THEIR VA VOC REHAB COUNSELOR TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT.

STUDENTS USING MILITARY FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE ARE NOT COVERED BY THIS
DOCUMENT AND SHOULD DISCUSS CHANGES WITH THEIR EDUCATION OFFICE.

Students should contact vetservices@udayton.edu with specific questions, or call 1-800-GIBILL1 to ask
questions directly to the VA. To speak with Sam Surowitz, Director of Military and Veteran Programs
and Services (MVPS) email ssurowitz1@udayton.edu or call 937-229-5540. For ROTC student questions
contact LTC Jefferson Burges at jburges1@udayton.edu (Cadets should use their chain of command).