

CAATE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Binary Grading (Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory): CAATE FAQs Updated

As part of a broad response to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, many institutions may be considering, or are already, implementing a variety of flexible policies pertaining to binary grading (e.g., pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory). The Commission has received a number of inquiries regarding binary grading and we have recently added the following questions to the CAATE FAQs.

Can our AT program change our existing letter grading system to a binary grading system (e.g., pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory) for selected or all courses?

Yes, the Commission does not have any standards dictating specific grading policies that would govern this scenario. This is an issue of institutional autonomy, meaning that institutions have the freedom to develop their own grading policies. However, should such a temporary change in grading be implemented, programs are still responsible to adequately assess student achievement of required course learning objectives, especially learning objectives that are related to the CAATE required competencies (**2012 Standards**)/curricular content (**2020 Standards**).

If a program has policies requiring specific letter grades, or a specific GPA,

for program progression and/or retention, they are free to modify these policies with appropriate institutional approval. The Commission does not govern program grading policies, this is an issue of institutional autonomy.

Any changes to grading policies, specifically those that involve moving from a letter grade to a binary grading system (e.g., pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory), should be fully explained to students. Furthermore, any risks/negatives associated with binary grading should be fully explained. For instance, students should be made fully aware if a binary grade for a specific course means that it will not factor into their grade point average (GPA) calculation. Further, they should be advised regarding how this may be viewed for transfer credit or for applications for advanced degrees where letter grades in certain courses may be required/preferred. Every effort should be made to make sure that students are aware of all of the potential consequences surrounding the selection of a binary grade over a letter grade.

Should a program elect, or be directed by their upper administration, to temporarily change their grading policies to comply with their own institution's Coronavirus guidelines/response plan, the Commission will not require programs to receive prior approval or notify the Commission at this time.

Can our AT program accept binary grades (e.g., pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory) for prerequisite courses or transfer credits?

Yes, the Commission does not have any standards dictating specific prerequisite or transfer course grades that would govern this scenario. This is an issue of institutional autonomy, meaning that institutions have the freedom to develop their own policies regarding how they view/consider prerequisite and transfer course grades.

If the AT program currently has policies requiring specific letter grades for prerequisite or transfer courses, the program must obtain appropriate institutional approval to accept binary grades. Should a program elect, or be directed by their upper administration, to temporarily change their policies/practices pertaining to prerequisite courses to comply with their own institution's Coronavirus guidelines/response plan, the Commission will not require programs to receive prior approval or notify the Commission

at this time.

CAATE FAQs

The Commission is committed to the health, safety, and well-being of our stakeholders. CAATE Coronavirus updates are posted on a dedicated **Coronavirus Updates and FAQs** landing page on the **CAATE website**.

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