

JRCNMT Statement on Changing Grading Scale

The JRCNMT has received calls and emails about whether a program can change its method of grading from letter grades to a pass/fail system for the current semester/quarter since courses have moved online. Based on the latest higher education news, many academic institutions across the US are considering whether to make this change, with students leading the charge.

JRCNMT policy and standards do not require courses to utilize a letter grading system. Standard C1 states that a program must follow its master educational plan, which includes what is stated in syllabi, but under the current circumstances due to COVID-19, allowances will be made for deviating from a syllabus mid-semester to change the grading scale.

It is important to consider the following factors:

- It is best that a grading scale change be done across an entire institution and not just in select courses or programs to avoid actual or perceived unfairness to students.
- Changing the grading scale should only be done with the approval of your administration since it may be necessary to obtain approval from the institution's regional/national accreditation agency.
- Legal counsel at your institution should be consulted prior to a grading scale change since there are risk management issues associated with such a modification within the semester.
- Giving students an option to stay with letter grading or change to P/F can reduce some of the legal burden of the change, though this method can be challenging for faculty attempting to keep track of how each student has selected to be graded in a particular course.

The JRCNMT hopes this information is helpful as you continue to navigate the changes associated with delivering higher education during the pandemic. If the JRCNMT can answer questions or provide support please call or email our office.