COVID-19 AND ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

Changes in Academic Policies and Practices Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

This page is being continuously updated as additional information is received. Effective dates noted in the following reflect the date upon which a decision was taken. However, many of these decisions have been retroactively applied.

Most recent update April 8, 2020.

Stanford University responded to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis by addressing a broad array of policy and procedure issues in order to maintain academic continuity, to ensure the continuing success of Stanford students, to support faculty in teaching and research, and to assist academic staff in fulfilling their duties to students and faculty.

These pages represent a compendium of the academic continuity changes made. Relevant sections of this bulletin have been updated to reflect these changes, and such changes are notated as pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Additional notations concerning academic continuity changes have been noted on any degree program requirements page where such changes impact students.

As this page is published, Registrar Office staff continue to update this bulletin to reflect all academic continuity changes.

Any member of the Stanford community may contact the bulletin (https://stanford.service-now.com/student_services?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=a623e6d4131b53c88a9175c36144b082) with additional information; please provide complete and detailed information in your request.

Additional Information

Students and faculty with COVID-19 questions or concerns should contact the Student Services Center (https://stanford.service-now.com/student_services?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=c791e84edba38050404aa4cb0b9619ce). Faculty and staff with policy questions are advised to consult their Dean's Office; they may also contact the Stanford Bulletin (https://stanford.service-now.com/student_services?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=a623e6d4131b53c08a9175c36144b082) and Registrar's Office staff will forward their questions to appropriate authorities.

During the crisis, the University is publishing extensive information for the Stanford Community on its HealthAlerts (https://healthalerts.stanford.edu) and TeachAnywhere (https://teachanywhere.stanford.edu) sites.

Winter Quarter changes were effective March 16, 2020. Spring Quarter changes were effective March 27, 2020.

All changed dates and deadlines for the Academic Calendar for Spring Quarter (http://exploredisciplines.stanford.edu/academiccalendar/#Spr) have been published in this bulletin. Both Winter and Spring quarters had substantial changes in academic dates.

Winter Quarter exams were interrupted and then extended. See below (p. 2) for more detail.

Spring Quarter opens a week late, on April 6. Both the End-Quarter period and Final Exams are cancelled. The quarter ends on June 10. All Spring Quarter degrees are to be conferred on the normal commencement date of June 14. However, degrees will be posted for each academic career on the dates notated on the Academic Calendar (http://exploredisciplines.stanford.edu/academiccalendar/#Spr).

Spring Quarter Academic Changes

Classes

Effective March 26, 2020.

All classes are offered online only for the entirety of Spring Quarter for all students. The majority of undergraduates took their online classes from off-campus.

Final Exams

Effective March 26, 2020.

There are no final examinations for undergraduates or graduate students in Spring Quarter.

Academic Regulations

Effective March 26, 2020.

By legislation of the Faculty Senate (https://facultysenate.stanford.edu), as noted in Faculty Senate Legislation on Academic Regulations during the COVID-19 Disruption to Normal Academic Proceedings (https://facultysenate.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sblyb9976/f/send7775_final_legislation_on_covid_academic_regulations_0.pdf) (pdf), the following policies were enacted for Spring Quarter.

Grading Basis Changes for Undergraduate and Graduate Classes

Effective March 26, 2020.

All University courses (with the exception of those offered by the Graduate School of Business, the School of Law, and the School of Medicine M.D. program) are graded Satisfactory/No-Credit (S/NC) for Spring Quarter 2019-20. Specifically, undergraduates and graduate students do not have the option of any grading basis other than S/NC.

Units of credit taken for a 'satisfactory' (S) grade during Spring Quarter 2019-20 do not count toward the 36 maximum allowed 'S' units, nor do they count toward the 27 maximum allowed 'S' units for transfer students.

The Senate strongly urges that deans, departments, and programs exclude units of credit earned for a 'CR' or 'S' grade during Spring Quarter 2019-20 from program unit maximums and/or alter program requirements as appropriate. Such exclusions are note on affected programs in this bulletin.

Students who changed grading basis as a result of COVID-19 in Winter Quarter 2019-20 and who therefore exceed the limit on 'CR' or 'S' may apply for an exception. See the Late Withdraw/Change of Grading Basis (p. 2) section of this bulletin.

Transfer Credit

Effective March 26, 2020.

Units of credit taken by currently matriculated students at another accredited institution during Spring 2019-20 do not count toward the University limit on transfer credit. The criteria for the types of courses accepted for transfer remains the same.

Units of credit taken in extension, correspondence, and online courses by currently matriculated students at another accredited institution during Spring 2019-20 do not count toward the University limit on transfer credit.
The criteria for the types of courses accepted for transfer remains the same.

**General Education Requirements (Undergraduates)**  
*Effective March 26, 2020.*

Courses taken for an ‘S’ grade during Spring Quarter 2020 that are also certified to fulfill a Way may count towards the appropriate Way requirement. See the Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing (https://undergrad.stanford.edu/programs/ways) website for more information about how to search for courses that are Way-certified.

**Thinking Matters courses taken for an ‘S’ grade during Spring Quarter 2020 count towards the requirement.**

PWR 1, PWR 2, and Writing in the Major courses taken for an ‘S’ grade during Spring Quarter 2020 count towards the writing requirement. In addition, students who complete SLE, ITALIC, and/or WRITE 2 Introductory Seminars with an ‘S’ grade during Spring Quarter 2020 also fulfill the writing requirement(s) for which these courses are certified.

**Candidacy**  
*Effective March 26, 2020.*

For students who are currently in the second year of their Ph.D. program and have not yet been admitted to candidacy, the University allows departments and programs to defer the university candidacy requirement that students complete the department qualifying procedures and apply for candidacy by the end of their second year in the Ph.D. program. If departments and programs, specifically the department chair, director of graduate studies, or graduate studies faculty committee, believe that their qualifying process cannot be implemented in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19 disruptions, they may decide to allow students to meet the candidacy requirement by the end of Autumn Quarter 2020-21. If a department does offer qualifying exams in Spring Quarter 2019-20, students have the option to defer their qualifying exams to Autumn Quarter 2020-21 without penalty.

Students whose candidacy is delayed remain eligible for University fellowships and other awards, such as the Stanford Graduate Fellowship in Science and Engineering, through Autumn Quarter 2020.

**Leaves of Absence**

Students may take a leave of absence (https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/leave-absence) for Spring Quarter for any reason including that they do not want to take remote classes. The Registrar’s Office published "Instructions for Spring 2020 Leave of Absence, COVID-19 (https://registrar.stanford.edu/instructions-spring-2020-leave-absence-covid-19)" instructions for submitting a special leave of absence request under this policy.

Because of the exceptional circumstances relating to COVID-19, the deadline for submitting a leave of absence for Spring Quarter 2020 was Monday, April 13, 2020. Students can receive a full-tuition refund if they file for a leave by this deadline. If they file for a leave after this deadline, they may be able to receive a prorated refund.

**Decision Making**  
*Effective March 26, 2020.*

During Spring Quarter 2019-20, and if necessary, retroactively for Winter Quarter 2019-20, the Senate decided that for time-sensitive decision making the Chair of the Faculty Senate and the Academic Secretary have been granted decision making authority on other processes and issues in consultation with relevant Academic Council Committees and Emergency Operations Committees designated by the Provost.

**Winter Quarter Academic Changes**

All changed dates and deadlines for the academic calendar for Winter Quarter (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/academiccalendar/#Win) have been published in this bulletin.

**Final Exams**  

Final examinations were suspended on Monday, March 16, and then resumed online on Friday, March 20, ending on Wednesday, March 25. All final examinations were online and open-book. Students had the option to decline the final exam and, instead, be graded on work to-date, including in-class performance, papers, and graded tests and midterms. No penalty has been assessed for a student declining the final.

**Late Withdraw/Change of Grading Basis**  
*Effective March 9, 2020.*

An exception was approved by the Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy (C-USP) and the Committee on Graduate Studies (C-GS) to permit students to request late class withdrawals and/or changes to class grading basis to ‘CR/NC’ for those class that have ‘CR/NC’ as an option. This exception recognizes that course requirements may have changed as a result of the University’s response to COVID-19 that prohibits in-person class instruction and exams. For complete information, see the Registrar’s web page (https://registrar.stanford.edu/late-withdrawchange-grading-basis) on this subject.

**Winter Degree Conferral**

Winter Quarter degree conferral took place on time on the scheduled date of Thursday, April 2.

**Graduate Student Specific Policies and Practices**

**Candidacy**  
*Effective March 26, 2020.*

For students who are currently in the second year of their Ph.D. program and have not yet been admitted to candidacy, the University allows departments and programs to defer the university candidacy requirement that students complete the department qualifying procedures and apply for candidacy by the end of their second year in the Ph.D. program. If departments and programs, specifically the department chair, director of graduate studies, or graduate studies faculty committee, believe that their qualifying process cannot be implemented in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19 disruptions, they may decide to allow students to meet the candidacy requirement by the end of Autumn Quarter 2020-21. If a department does offer qualifying exams in Spring Quarter 2019-20, students have the option to defer their qualifying exams to Autumn Quarter 2020-21 without penalty.

Students whose candidacy is delayed remain eligible for University fellowships and other awards, such as the Stanford Graduate Fellowship in Science and Engineering, through Autumn Quarter 2020.

**Remote Oral Dissertation Defenses**  
*Effective March 7, 2020.*

Vice Provost Stacey Bent has temporarily, through Spring Quarter 2020, delegated responsibility to approve an exception to the policy (https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-7/)
which requires that the principal dissertation advisor, the student, and the out-of-department chair be present in person, to the department or program faculty Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). If the DGS is unavailable or is participating in the defense, the department chair may grant approval. Exception to this policy would allow the student, the principal dissertation advisor, and/or the out-of-department chair, as well as other committee members, to participate remotely.