Grading Options

Grading options are intended to provide students with the opportunity to explore new and challenging subjects and to broaden their educational experience with reduced effect on term and cumulative ratings. These options must be approved by the student’s advisor and designated by Add Date.

Experimental Grading Policy to Increase Flexibility for Major Exploration in the First Year (Fall 2018 entrants only). First-year students entering during the fall of 2018 will be eligible to designate up to three Science, Mathematics, and Engineering (SME) General Institute Requirements (GIRs) (3.091, 5.111, or 5.112; 7.01n; 8.01n; 8.02n; 18.01n; and 18.02n including Concourse and ESG versions of these subjects) to be graded on a Pass or No Record basis (P/NR) after their first term. Other regular MIT grading policies including first-year (freshman) grading remain in effect.

This grading policy is authorized as an experiment by the Committee on the Undergraduate Program only for students entering MIT as first-year students in fall 2018. The experiment is intended to provide additional flexibility for students that will allow them to explore different majors or areas of study early in their careers.

Students should designate an SME GIR to be taken under P/NR when they initially register for the subject, though the deadline for this decision is Add Date of the semester in which the subject is being taken; regular deadlines for adding and dropping subjects remain in effect. Under this grading, a P (passing) indicates C or better performance (C- with modifier used within MIT) and NR reflects a grade of D or F. Students earning a grade of NR for SME GIRs taken under P/NR receive no credit for those subjects, which do not appear on their transcripts.

First-year students who earn a grade of NR in an SME GIR under P/NR in their first semester or ABC/NR in their second semester will be required to retake the subject. Students may subsequently designate that same subject as one of their three P/NR options or take it for regular grades.

Upper-level students who earn a grade of NR in an SME GIR they have designated to be graded P/NR may retake it as many times as needed to pass on P/NR without using up an additional P/NR opportunity.

Upper-level students who earn the internal grade of D in an SME GIR taken under P/NR, may elect to switch the P/NR grading to regular grades so that they receive academic credit for the subject. The grade of D will be reflected on their official transcripts and will count towards their GPA. Students are still considered to have used their P/NR option for this subject and may not elect an additional (fourth) subject to take under P/NR. Requests to change to regular grading for a particular subject in which a D was earned should be made via the add/drop application, by Registration Day of the student’s next regular semester at MIT, except for final term seniors who must make this request prior to the Committee on the Academic Performance’s SB degree candidates meeting.

Sophomore Exploratory. Sophomores may designate one subject as exploratory in each of their fall and spring terms. An exploratory subject is one in which the student may either accept the grade awarded in the subject or change the subject to listener status through Registration Day of the succeeding term. Students receive no credit for listener subjects, which do not appear on transcripts. Any subject may be designated as exploratory—including an Institute, departmental, or minor requirement or a cross-registered subject taken at another school.

Junior-Senior P/D/F. A student may take a total of two subjects to be graded P, D, or F during his or her junior and senior years, where P indicates C or better performance (C- with modifier used within MIT). Such subjects may not be used to fulfill the General Institute Requirements or departmental or minor requirements. However, the subjects will count in the units completed beyond the General Institute Requirements.