

Admissions to Psychology Honors during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Alternative Grading

The psychology department recognizes that the pandemic has been both stressful and disruptive to many students, including those who are interested in applying to the Schreyer's Honors College (SHC) or pursuing honors through the Paterno Fellowship Program (PFP).

In response to these stressors and disruptions, Penn State has implemented an Alternative Grading policy that allows students the option of choosing a grade of Satisfactory (denoted SAT) in lieu of standard letter grades (e.g., A, B, C, etc).

With regard to eligibility for Honors in Psychology, Paterno Fellow Program aspirants and those planning on applying to the Schreyer's Honor College through the sophomore or junior gateway, should be aware that the psychology department will allow *only one* SAT grade to be applied to the department course work and grade admissions criteria.

As a reminder, the department requires that applicants seeking admission to the PFP to have taken PSYCH 100, PSYCH 105, PSYCH 301w (or PSYCH 300H) and STAT 200 *AND* to have received an "A" grade in all four course. The department does allow for one "A-" among those four courses. As applicable, the department applies the same standard for those interested in admission to the SHC through the sophomore and junior gateway.

Keeping with the University's position that students should use the alternative grading option judiciously, the department suggests that students strongly consider not using the SAT option in the aforementioned required courses. However, in conjunction with the University, the SHC, and PFP policies, we will allow *one* SAT grade among the four courses. If you elect to do so, you should be aware that you must have full "A" grades (i.e., not "A-" grades) in the other three course and an "A" grade in another 200 level or 400 level PSYCH course. Research Projects (294, 494), Internship (295, 495), and Independent Studies (296,496) are not allowed to count toward this requirement.

You should also keep in mind that use of the alternative grade/SAT option may impact your applications to professional schools, graduate schools, scholarships, and other academic-related pursuits (e.g, programs may treat the SAT grade as a "C" grade).

If you have any questions, you should check with the SHC and the PFP regarding their requirements and suggestions about SAT grades and admissions. You can discuss the use of the use of the alternative grading option with psychology advisers or my emailing Professor Karen Gasper (Director of Undergraduate Studies) at (kxg20@psu.edu) or Professor Kenneth Levy (Psychology Department Faculty Coordinator and Lead Honors Advisor) at klevy@psu.edu if you have any questions or concerns. We are happy to speak with you and think through the issues and any concerns you have.