

COVID-19 Temporary Undergraduate S/U Grading Policy

The Committee on Academic Policies and Standards voted on 4/17/2020 and 5/6/2020 to recommend the following temporary policy for undergraduate students. Faculty Senate approved 4/23/2020 and 5/7/2020.

Students may request an S/U grade using the following process:

1. As in past semesters, instructors will enter letter grades using the current grade scheme.
2. Once grades are posted, students will be able to petition for the conversion of their earned letter grade, on a course-by-course basis, to the S/U designation. If approved, the following conversions will be considered.
 - a. Letter grades of "C" or better will be converted to an "S."
 - b. Letter grades of "D" or "F" will be converted to a "U."
3. Students petitioning for conversion of a course to an S/U designation will use the following process.
 - a. To petition for an S/U designation for a class, students will submit a completed form to their Dean's office by June 12, 2020.
 - b. The form will be developed by the Dean's offices, subject to approval by CAPS.
 - c. The result of the decision will be communicated to the student in a timely manner. May graduates' requests will be given priority. Approval is likely but not guaranteed. Impact on the student's academic progress or programmatic accreditation will be considered.
4. The Dean's office associated with the student's first major will receive all requests.
5. If approved, the Registrar will apply the "S" or "U" grade; if denied, the student may appeal to CAPS.
6. If approved, the conversion to S/U may not be reversed.
7. Students who were unable to request grade changes prior to June 12, 2020 may appeal that deadline to CAPS. CAPS will not hear appeals after one year (June 12, 2021).

Additional information

- Courses currently set up as P/F will not be altered or amended.
- Incomplete options remain as currently in policy.
- UWL Classes that began in the online format are included in this policy.
- UW Extended Learning online collaborative program courses are excluded. Grading of these courses is determined through Extended Learning policy.
- Dean's List determination will continue to be made on the original grades submitted and will not be altered by the conversion to S/U grades.
- Graduation and Commencement Honors policies continue as currently stated in the UWL catalog.

The following current practices for "S" and "U" grades will still apply:

- "S" grade
 - When communicating to other institutions about an "S" grade, it is current practice that an "S" be treated as a "C" or better for undergraduates. Final determination of how to treat an "S" grade is up to the institution reviewing the transcript.
 - An "S" grade satisfies prerequisite requirements.
 - An "S" grade counts towards major and minor requirements, unless specified differently by department policy.
 - An "S" grade counts towards the total credits earned
 - An "S" grade is not used to calculate GPA.
- "U" grade
 - When communication to other institutions about a "U" grade, it is current practice that a "U" be treated as an "F" for undergraduates. Final determination of how to treat a "U" grade is up to the institution reviewing the transcript.
 - A "U" grade does not satisfy prerequisite requirements.
 - A "U" grade does not count towards major and minor requirements.
 - A "U" grade does not count towards the total credits earned.
 - A "U" grade is not used to calculate GPA.
- Repeat Grade Policy
 - The "S" and "U" grades can be used to replace a previous "D" or "F" grade in the calculation of the GPA via the course repeat policy.

Additional considerations for students considering petitioning for an S/U conversion:

- Students with a GPA below 2.0 cannot graduate and conversion to an S/U grade may reduce their GPA.
- The GPA requirements for entrance into certain programs are still in place and adopting an S/U designation may decrease a student's GPA.
- As incomplete is still an option and may be a better choice for students needing to complete work in a lab/hands on/practicum course.

The S/U grade scheme was chosen for the following reasons:

- The grades already exist on the UWL grade scale and using existing grades is considered a "best practice" by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) organization.
- The transcript legend would not require permanent alteration
- S/U grades are already used in the WINGS processes in the transcript, advisement report, enrollment prerequisites, etc.... No additional coding required to adapt an entirely new grade type necessary for this one extraordinary term
- UWL does not currently have a policy limiting the numbers of credits earned with S grades as is the case for P/F grades.

Reasons to adopt a process requiring a student to petition for an S/U for a class versus adopting a blanket S/U policy:

- Instructors are providing diverse opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge in the current challenging environment and students and instructors are rising to that challenge.
- Many students want to earn letter grades.
- Many students need to earn letter grades for a large variety of reasons, including, but not limited to the following. A request process will allow discussion with students on these points.
 - Transferability of credit
 - Admission to particular courses
 - Admission to undergraduate programs
 - Admission to graduate programs
 - The requirements of accredited programs
 - Benefits (e.g., Veteran's benefits)
 - Eligibility (e.g., Athletes)
- By adopting a petition process, we are still sensitive to students with barriers to full online engagement associated with COVID-19 including but not limited to unforeseen financial situation, family situations, family or personal health considerations and other life challenges as well as access issues.
- Keeping letter grades maintains student motivation.
- Involving the Dean's offices as the primary point of contact mirrors a typical academic progress appeal and reduces the burden on the instructors to document and support the student appeals.