

**Course Grading Options Offered in Response to COVID-19:  
Requesting Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory (“S/U”) Grading, Incompletes, or Withdrawal  
FAQs**

**1. I heard that I can take my course for an “S/U” grade this spring. Is that true?**

Yes. Due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19, all restrictions on the use of “S/U” grading options are lifted in courses for which it is permissible.

**2. Can all students request the “S/U” grading option?**

All students can request the “S/U” grading option except for students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program in the Taneja College of Pharmacy. Questions should be directed to the Dean of the Taneja College of Pharmacy.

**3. Is the “S/U” grading policy the same for students in all degree programs?**

The policy is the same for almost all degree programs. There are some small differences in the policy for students in three graduate professional programs in the Morsani College of Medicine: Undergraduate Medical Education, Physical Therapy, and Physician Assistant. Students in these programs should consult with their respective program directors for information on the specifics of the “S/U” policy adopted.

**4. Can I take just one course for “S/U” or do I have to take all my courses for an “S/U” grade?**

You will be able to request the “S/U” grading option on a course-by-course basis for all eligible courses.

**5. How do I request the “S/U” grading option?**

You will need to submit an online application directly to the Office of the Registrar. The application will be available from March 30 to April 10, 2020.

**6. Why am I allowed to request the “S/U” grading option for courses that were not allowed before?**

We are making the “S/U” grading option broadly available to you as a result of the unprecedented disruptions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of removing all restrictions of the use of the “S/U” grading option is to reduce your uncertainty and stress while encouraging you to focus on the successful achievement of student learning outcomes. At this time, this option is available for the Spring 2020 term only.

**7. Will my Instructor or Advisor have to approve my request for the “S/U” grading option?**

No. All restrictions on the “S/U” grading option, including the current requirement of Instructor or other approvals, are lifted for the Spring 2020 term.

**8. Will my Instructor know that I am taking my course for an “S/U” grade?**

Not unless you tell your Instructor. Your instructor will continue grading your work, as specified in the syllabus. The Instructor will submit your letter grade at the end of the semester through CANVAS, and, if requested by the students, the change to your recorded grade (from letter grade to “S/U”) will be made by the Office of the Registrar.

**9. How will letter grades be converted to “S/U” grades?**

Based on current catalog language the following equivalencies will be used by the Registrar's Office to update the Spring 2020 course grades in your record (with the exception of some courses delivered by the Morsani College of Medicine):

- Undergraduate courses: The letter grades of A, B, C (+/-) are equivalent to a grade of "S" and letter grades of D (+/-) or F are equivalent to a grade of "U."
- Graduate courses: An "S" grade is equivalent to letter grades of a C or better, and a "U" grade is equivalent to a grade of C- or less.

**10. My major requires higher letter grades for successful course completion than used in the catalog for "S/U" equivalency. Will the higher letter grades be used by the Office of the Registrar?**

No. We are facing extraordinary circumstances, and we want you to focus on achieving the student learning outcomes in your courses. In undergraduate courses, a student must earn a letter grade of C- or higher, and in graduate courses a student must earn a C or higher, to be awarded an "S" grade for the course. All "S" grades will allow students to progress in their programs of study.

**11. Will I be able to select an "S/U" grading option from now on?**

No. There will be a limited window of opportunity to select the "S/U" grading option for courses being completed in the Spring 2020 semester ONLY. The temporary window will be from March 30 to April 3, 2020.

**12. Can I change back to a letter grade after I apply for the "S/U" grading option?**

No. One goal of expanding the use of the "S/U" grading option is to reduce your uncertainty. We believe requiring a well-informed decision that cannot change back and forth is a way to accomplish this goal.

**13. How will the "S/U" impact my GPA?**

"S/U" graded courses are not calculated into your GPA. If you have Bright Futures or other scholarships that require you to maintain a certain GPA, it will be very important for you to make sure you understand any implications of the "S/U" option on your GPA. If you have any questions, it will be very important for you to speak to a Financial Aid Advisor prior to selecting an "S/U" grade. Please remember, once you request the "S/U" grading option, you cannot go back.

**14. Can I still ask my Instructor for an incomplete (I) grade?**

Yes. The current plan is to manage incomplete (I) grades as they are normally done. Faculty have been encouraged to make every effort possible to support you, as long as you have been making satisfactory progress and have completed the majority of the work for the course. Please discuss the Incomplete option with your Instructor as soon as possible. Please consider the increased burden that multiple Incompletes will place on you in future semesters.

**15. Would it be better for me to request an "S/U" grade or an Incomplete (I) grade?**

Each option has potential benefits and potential limitations. For example, the "S/U" grade will not help you to increase your GPA, nor will it decrease your GPA. Sometimes it is important to earn a letter grade in a course because of plans for applying to graduate and/or professional programs; and, in that case, the Incomplete (I) grade with the opportunity to earn a letter grade in the future might be a better choice. An Incomplete (I) grade, however, may prevent continued eligibility for certain

scholarships. The decision can be complicated. It will be important for you to talk to your Financial Aid and/or Academic Advisor/Graduate Program Director if you have any questions.

**16. What if I want to withdraw from my course?**

We hope that you will not have to withdraw from your courses, but we know that sometimes a student will have no other choice. Before you make that choice, please speak with your Financial Aid Advisor and your Academic Advisor or Graduate Program Director. Students utilizing VA Educational Benefits or Tuition Assistance should consult the Office of Veteran Success before withdrawing. Students on a USF issued F-1 Visa should consult an advisor in the Office of International Services (USF World) before withdrawing. Student-athletes should consult their Academic Advisor in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics before withdrawing. Please be sure that you are aware of potential impacts on current and future financial aid and scholarship eligibility (<https://www.usf.edu/financial-aid/know-this/drop-credits.aspx>). Withdrawal will also impact your progression in your degree program. Again, we strongly recommend that you discuss withdrawal with your Academic Advisor or Graduate Program Director before you make a final decision. To provide you with the time to speak to advisors, we have extended the date for withdrawal through Banner from March 28 to April 3, 2020.

**17. If I withdraw from my course because of COVID-19, what will show in my academic record and my transcript?**

Withdrawals made after March 24, 2020, through the end of the Spring 2020 term on May 7, 2020 are automatically coded as *Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances Cause (WE)* in the student's academic record. All students' records for Spring 2020 will denote "Extraordinary circumstances encountered (COVID-19)" after the end of term processing is completed.

**18. I heard that I can withdraw from a course between March 24, 2020, and May 7, 2020. Does that mean I will get my tuition and fees reimbursed?**

Withdrawal from courses between March 24, 2020, and May 7, 2020, will be automatically coded as *Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances (WE)*. *WE* grades do not automatically result in approval for refunds of tuition and fees. Requests for refunds are subject to current policy requirements, including submission of a Fee Adjustment petition [Fee Adjustment Request](#), with the Office of the Registrar, accompanied with objective, verifiable documentation.

**19. I know there are restrictions about how many withdrawals I can take, but I need to withdraw from my course. What do I do?**

Between March 24, 2020 through the end of the spring 2020 term, May 7, 2020:

- The limitation on the number of courses from which a student can withdraw without submission and approval of a petition will be lifted.
- The limit on withdrawal from all courses in Banner without submission and approval of a petition will be lifted.

**20. Will my transcript have any special notations for spring 2020?**

All students' academic records for Spring 2020 will denote "Extraordinary circumstances encountered (COVID-19)" after the end of term processing is completed.

**ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS**

- 1. I heard that students can take courses for an “S/U” grade this spring. Is that true?**  
Yes. Due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19, all restrictions on the use of “S/U” grading options are lifted for all courses for which it is permissible.
- 2. Can all students request the “S/U” grading option?**  
All students can request the “S/U” grading option except for students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program in the Taneja College of Pharmacy. Questions should be directed to the Dean of the Taneja College of Pharmacy.
- 3. Is the “S/U” grading policy the same for students in all degree programs?**  
The policy is the same for almost all degree programs. There are some small differences in the policy for students in three graduate professional programs in the Morsani College of Medicine: Undergraduate Medical Education, Physical Therapy, and Physician Assistant. Students in these programs should consult with their respective program directors for information on the specifics of the “S/U” policy adopted.
- 4. Do students have to request the “S/U” grading option?**  
Yes. Students will be required to submit an online application that will be submitted directly to the Office of the Registrar. Requests will be made on a course-by-course basis.
- 5. Why are students being allowed to request the “S/U” grading option?**  
We are making the “S/U” grading option broadly available to students as a result of the unprecedented disruptions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of removing all restrictions of the use of the “S/U” grading option is to reduce students’ uncertainty and stress while encouraging a focus on the successful achievement of student learning outcomes.
- 6. Will Instructors or Advisors have to approve a student’s request for the “S/U” grading option?**  
No. All restrictions on the “S/U” grading option, including the current requirement of Instructor approval, are lifted for the Spring 2020 term.
- 7. How will Instructors know which students are taking courses for “S/U” grades?**  
Unless a student self-discloses, you will not know. Instructors should continue with their grading policies as stated in their syllabi. They will submit each student’s letter grade as they would normally through CANVAS.
- 8. How will letter grades be converted to “S/U” grades?**  
Based on current catalog language, the following equivalencies will be used for the majority of courses.
  - Undergraduate courses: The letter grades of A, B, C (+/-) are equivalent to a grade of “S” and letter grades of D (+/-) or F are equivalent to a grade of “U.”
  - Graduate courses: An “S” grade is equivalent to letter grades of a C or better, and a “U” grade is equivalent to a grade of C- or less.
- 9. Some programs require higher letter grades for successful course completion than used in the catalog for “S/U” equivalency. Will the higher letter grades be used by the Office of the Registrar?**  
No. We are facing extraordinary circumstances, and the transition to remote learning coupled with daily stressors prompted us to extend the published catalog criteria for “S/U” letter grade

equivalencies to all eligible courses through Spring 2020. The primary focus for many students will be on the achievement of student learning outcomes rather than a specific letter grade. All “S” grades will allow students to progress in their programs of study.

**10. How was the decision made to allow students to utilize the “S/U” grading option?**

Guidance from USF’s regional accrediting agency (SACSCOC) and consultation with key stakeholder groups led to this temporary action. The “S/U” grading option was thoroughly discussed and endorsed unanimously by the Faculty Senate Presidents on all campuses, the President of the USF System Faculty Council, College Deans across all campuses, members of the USF Academic and Student Success leadership team, the Senior Vice President for USF Health, the Provost and President. It is the right thing to do and the right time to do it.

**11. Will students be able to select an “S/U” grading option beyond Spring 2020?**

No. At this time, there is a limited window of opportunity to select the “S/U” grading option for courses being completed in the Spring 2020 semester ONLY. The application window will be from March 30 to April 10, 2020.

**12. Can students change back to a letter grade after they request an “S/U” grading option?**

No. One goal of expanding the temporary use of the “S/U” grading option is to decrease students’ uncertainty in the short term and not to prolong their anxiety. We believe requiring a well-informed decision that cannot change back and forth is a way to accomplish this goal for USF’s high achieving students.

**13. Can students still ask for an incomplete (I) grade?**

Yes. The current plan is to manage incomplete (I) grades the way they are done normally. We strongly encourage Instructors to carefully consider the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and make every effort possible to support students requesting (I) grades. Students should consider the increased burden that multiple Incompletes will place on their future semesters.

**14. What if a student wants to withdraw from a course or multiple courses?**

We hope that students will not have to withdraw from courses, but we know that sometimes a student will have no other choice. Before students make that choice, they should speak to their Financial Aid Advisors and their Academic Advisors or Graduate Program Directors. Students utilizing VA Educational Benefits or Tuition Assistance should consult the Office of Veteran Success before withdrawing. Students on a USF issued F-1 Visa should consult an advisor in the Office of International Services (USF World) before withdrawing. Student-athletes should consult their academic advisor in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics before withdrawing. Students need to be aware of potential impacts on current and future financial aid and scholarship eligibility (<https://www.usf.edu/financial-aid/know-this/drop-credits.aspx>). Withdrawal will also impact a student’s progression in a degree program. To provide students with the time to speak to advisors, we have extended the date for withdrawal through Banner from March 28 to April 3, 2020.

**15. If students withdraw from courses because of COVID-19, what will show in their academic records and transcripts?**

Withdrawals made after March 24, 2020, through the end of the spring 2020 term on May 7, 2020, are automatically coded as *Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances Cause (WE)* in the student’s academic record. All students’ records for spring 2020 will denote “Extraordinary circumstances encountered (COVID-19)” after end of term processing is completed.

**16. If all course withdrawals between March 24, 2020, and May 7, 2020, are automatically coded as *Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances (WE)* does that mean students will get their tuition and fees reimbursed?**

*WE* grades do not automatically result in approval for refunds of tuition and fees. Requests for refunds are subject to current policy requirements, including submission of a Fee Adjustment petition [Fee Adjustment Request](#), with the Office of the Registrar, accompanied with objective, verifiable documentation.

**17. Are there any restrictions about how many withdrawals a student can take?**

Between March 24, 2020 through the end of the Spring 2020 term, May 7, 2020:

- The limitation on the number of courses from which a student can withdraw without submission and approval of a petition will be lifted.
- The limit on withdrawal from all courses in Banner without submission and approval of a petition will be lifted.

**18. Will there be any special notations on transcripts for Spring 2020?**

All students' academic records for Spring 2020 will denote "Extraordinary circumstances encountered (COVID-19)" after end of term processing is completed.