

University of South Florida

Temporary Change of Course Grading Options in Response to COVID-19: Requesting Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grading, Incompletes, or Withdrawal March 25, 2020

Due to unprecedented disruptions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of South Florida will take the following actions through the Spring 2020 semester, to help reduce students' uncertainty and stress, while encouraging a focus on the successful achievement of student learning outcomes:

- **Easing of restrictions to S/U grading mechanisms:**
 - During the window from March 30 to April 10, 2020, students at the University of South Florida's three campuses (Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee) will be permitted to request the "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" grading option, on a course-by-course basis, for courses in which they are currently enrolled for a letter grade. (For exceptions and variations to this policy see footnote (1)).
 - Earning a grade of "S" in a course indicates that a student has met all course-specific minimum letter grade requirements and demonstrated the acquisition of associated student learning outcomes.
 - Undergraduate catalogs state that for undergraduate courses, the letter grades of A, B, C (+/-) are equivalent to a grade of "S" and letter grades of D (+/-) or F is equivalent to a grade of "U."
 - Graduate catalogs state that only courses with grades of "C" (2.00) or better will be accepted toward a graduate degree and that no grade of C- or below will be accepted. Thus for the purposes of this policy for 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.
 - Currently, all USF students may request the use of the "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" grading option for courses in which letter grades are normally awarded. However, current practice (i) restricts the type of courses for which the "S/U" grading option can be requested, (ii) requires instructor approval, and (iii) limits the number of letter-graded courses which can be completed using the S/U option, etc.
 - For the Spring 2020 semester only, USF will lift all restrictions currently placed on the use of the "S/U" grading option.
 - A student cannot petition to return to a letter grade once the "S/U" option is selected.
 - "S/U" grades do not impact a student's GPA.
 - As part of the process for requesting the "S/U" grading option, students will be fully informed and must acknowledge potential impacts. Students will be provided the opportunity to discuss these with their Academic Advisors or Graduate Program Directors prior to submission of their requests.
 - Faculty in courses that award letter grades will continue their current course grading practices, submitting the letter grade in Canvas. The conversion of letter grades to "S" or "U" will be completed (for those students requesting it) by the Office of the Registrar, based on the letter grade equivalencies stated above for undergraduate and graduate courses.

¹ Students in the Doctor of Pharmacy degree program are excluded from this temporary policy change. Students in the Morsani College of Medicine's Undergraduate Medical Education, Physician Assistant, and Doctor of Physical Therapy programs should consult with their respective Program Directors for information on the specifics they adopted for awarding "S/U" grades for Spring 2020.

- **Reinforcing the option for Incomplete grades for Spring 2020 courses:**
 - In accordance with current policies and practices, students who are making satisfactory progress in a course and have completed nearly all of the required coursework, but are unable to complete all requirements, may request an “Incomplete” (I). Students will be cautioned against requesting multiple “I” grades as it can create an added burden to their academic progress.
 - Instructors are expected to work closely with students requesting an “Incomplete” (I), given the extenuating circumstances arising from Covid-19.
 - The Instructor will follow current practices, completing the I-grade contract with the student, and delineating the scope of work and timeline required for successful course completion.
 - The current two-semester time-limit for completion of the work for undergraduate students and the one-semester time-limit for graduate students remain in place.
 - Until removed, the “I” is not computed in the GPA.
 - Students are advised that an “I” grade may limit the continuation of scholarships and/or financial aid with satisfactory progression requirements, and this option should be discussed with their Academic Advisors or Graduate Program Directors; and their Financial Aid Advisors.

- **Extending the deadline to withdraw from courses without academic penalty:**
 - While students are strongly discouraged from withdrawing, USF is extending the current deadline for withdrawal from March 28, 2020, to April 3, 2020.
 - Students should not drop classes without the approval of an Academic Advisor or Graduate Program Director. If students drop all classes prior to March 24, 2020, they may be required to repay some of their federal financial aid.
 - Withdrawing from courses will impact a student’s academic progression and may impact the continuation of financial aid as many scholarship renewals require students to earn a minimum number of credit hours annually. Students should review their scholarship Terms & Conditions in OASIS for more information.
 - Florida Bright Futures recipients will be billed for dropped hours per State of Florida statute. For most other financial aid programs, recipients who remain registered for at least 1-credit hour and do not request a refund of their tuition and fees for the dropped classes will not be impacted.
 - Students receiving financial aid who have questions about the impact of withdrawing from some or all of their classes should contact their financial aid advisor.
 - Students utilizing VA Educational Benefits or Tuition Assistance should consult the Office of Veteran Success before the withdrawal.
 - Students on USF issued F-1 Visas are urged to consult with staff in the Office of International Services in USF World before the withdrawal.
 - Student-Athletes should consult their academic advisors in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics before the withdrawal.
 - Withdrawals made after March 24, 2020, through the end of the Spring 2020 semester are automatically coded as *Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances (WE)* in the student’s record.
 - *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 with the Office of the Registrar, accompanied with objective, verifiable documentation.
 - Between March 24, 2020, through the end of the Spring 2020 term, May 7, 2020:

- The limit on the number of courses from which a student can withdraw (for those requested beginning March 24) without submission and approval of a petition will be lifted.
- The limit on course withdrawal (for those requested beginning March 24) from all courses in Banner without submission and approval of a petition will be lifted.

**Students' academic records and transcripts for Spring 2020 will denote
"Extraordinary circumstances encountered - (COVID-19)"**