

# UMSL | Academic Affairs

## University of Missouri–St. Louis

### Extending the deadline for undergraduate students to exercise the S/U grading option

The COVID-19 crisis finds our faculty, staff and students at the University of Missouri - St. Louis encountering unprecedented challenges on all fronts of their lives. As we endeavor to transition to new course delivery formats and feel the impact of uncertainty at many levels, the faculty and staff at UMSL seek to extend the greatest possible consideration for students while maintaining the continuity and quality of our courses. Extending the timeline for undergraduate students to select a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading option provides students with a choice for completing the term that best suits their individual needs. Some students may be working to improve their GPAs and counting on earning letter grades, while others are struggling to keep pace amidst unexpected circumstances or living conditions that impede their best performance and thus would benefit from the less stressful Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory option. Our goal is to offer a student-centric option, informed by advisors to ensure students are aware of potential unintended consequences associated with selecting this grading basis. We expect that providing students with the option to change their grading basis will positively impact retention and progress to degree completion.

### Current UMSL Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Option policy:

#### Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Option

Undergraduate students may take up to 18 credit hours on a satisfactory/ unsatisfactory (S/U) grading basis. This includes courses taken as electives or those that satisfy general education requirements. Most courses required for a specific degree may not be taken on a satisfactory/ unsatisfactory basis. Academic departments may designate other courses within their jurisdiction that may not be taken under the option. A satisfactory grade “S” is recorded when an instructor assigns the grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C or C-, and has no numerical value in computing students' cumulative grade point average; however, it does satisfy credit-hour-for graduation requirements. An unsatisfactory grade “U” is recorded when an instructor assigns the grades of D+, D, D-, or F. A course assigned a “U” grade will not satisfy credit hours for graduation. Grades will be recorded on transcripts as S or U.

Students register for courses in the normal manner and may exercise the satisfactory/unsatisfactory option before the end of the first four weeks of a regular semester (or the first two weeks of a summer session). Requests for this option are made through the appropriate dean's office. Instructors are not informed of students taking courses on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis until submitting course grades.

### Proposed extension of the deadline to exercise the S/U grading option and waiver of maximum S/U hours

- The deadline for undergraduate students to exercise the S/U option will be extended to Friday, April 30th at 5:00pm.
- Courses taken on the S/U grading basis during the Spring 2020 semester will not count against the cap of a maximum 18 credits of coursework taken on the S/U grading basis for undergraduate students

#### Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

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#### Notes relevant to the process:

- There are no negative impacts on Federal Financial Aid unless students receive an Unsatisfactory grade which, while it would not negatively impact the GPA, would not contribute to satisfactory academic progress for the semester.
- Adding advisor approval to the workflow for the student request would ensure that students are made aware of potential unintended consequences, including those related to programs with GPA requirements, before the grading basis is finalized.

#### Proposed workflow for student requests to change grading basis

- An online workflow will be created to process these requests designed by ITS and the registrar
- Included in the workflow will be
  - Initiation by the student to select the course/s that they would like to change to the S/U grading basis from a list of currently enrolled courses
  - An advisor approval which provides an opportunity for the advisor to assess the potential impact of moving to the S/U basis and deny any requests that would be disallowed by departmental restrictions and advise students accordingly
  - A final approval by the appropriate dean's office – this approval exists in the current process
  - Action by the registrar's office to enter the grading basis change in MyView

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