

Important Considerations for Late Drops & S/U Grading Exceptions

The list below is designed to help graduate students, advisors, and major professors discuss the best way to support students managing coursework and the added challenges associated with COVID-19 and remote work. Please note that not all items will pertain to each student.

Late Drops

Full-time Enrollment: Students who are expected to maintain full-time enrollment (12 units), should be sure to adjust their schedules accordingly to account for course drops. One option is to submit a [Variable Unit Change Petition](#) to add units to your 299 research or other variable unit courses. You must have Graduate Advisor approval.

Important Note: International Students must maintain 12 units of enrolled coursework at all times and should **not** drop below 12 units under any circumstances without discussing their plans with an advisor at Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS).

Course Offering: Students should consider when the course they are dropping will be offered in a subsequent term and how that might affect their schedule.

Time to Degree: Dropping a required course could extend time to degree. Students should discuss the impact of dropping their course(s) with their Graduate Advisor.

S/U Optional Grading

Preparation for Important Degree Milestones (Qualifying/Preliminary/Comprehensive Exams): Letter grades are typically required for major coursework because demonstrated competency in these areas are an important indication of students' mastery of their discipline. These courses are also integral in preparing students for important degree milestones that assess their mastery, such as qualifying, preliminary, or comprehensive examinations. Students who choose to change a course to S/U grading will need to maintain an appropriate level of course engagement in order to achieve necessary mastery.

Fulfillment of Degree Requirements: Currently, program degree requirements state that required coursework must be completed for a letter grade. In addition, some programs require specific letter grade minimums in order to complete certain degree requirements. Students must confirm with their advisor and/or program coordinator that the program will accept an "S" (Satisfactory) grade towards the fulfillment of degree requirement(s).

GPA: S/U grades do not affect GPA as they do not have associated grade points. Students should consider how changing to S/U grading could affect their chances of achieving their target GPA at the end of the term. This can apply to:

- **Meeting Degree Requirements:** Students who need a minimum GPA to advance in their program; students who need to improve their GPA to reach certain GPA thresholds to meet degree requirements
- **Financial Aid/Funding:** Students receiving funding that requires that they maintain a specific minimum GPA each term.
- **Returning to Good Standing:** Students currently on Academic Probation hoping to return to Good Standing.

Academic Probation: Students on Academic Probation who opt for S/U grading for all courses for Spring 2020 will effectively extend their Academic Probation status by another quarter because the GPA from the prior term will remain a student's cumulative GPA at the end of Spring 2020. Typically, 2 consecutive terms on Academic Probation make a student subject to academic disqualification. Grad Studies will be working closely with programs to review their recommendations for disqualification in light of the extraordinary circumstances.

Repeating Coursework: Courses previously attempted for a letter grade cannot be repeated on an S/U grading basis.

Applying to Other Graduate Programs: Students considering applying to other graduate programs should consider the impact S/U may have on their future admissions. Students in this situation are advised to consult with the Admissions office of the institution(s) the student wishes to apply to and review their policy on accepting S/U grades for coursework.