



Addendum to Emergency Course Continuity policy – Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grade Options

Summary:	On March 7, 2020, the University of California Merced division passed an “Emergency Course Continuity” policy. This addendum provides flexibility to graduate students by allowing them to request to change the course grading option for their course(s) from letter grade to S/U, up to the final day of instruction. It also provides a list of potential consequences a student may experience in the event of changing their grade option.
Scope:	Graduate Education during Emergency Course Continuity

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I. Context

The purpose of this policy is to provide **flexibility to students** during Emergency Course Continuity (ECC). By giving students the ability to choose to change their grading options (from letter grade to S/U grade), this policy will allow students and instructors to address individual needs on a case by case basis.

The following policies and regulations apply to graduate student grades:

1. For a graduate student, only the grades A+, A, A-, B+, B, and S represent satisfactory scholarship, and only coursework in which these grades are received may be applied toward degree requirements.

2. A cumulative GPA below 3.0 is not satisfactory, and a student whose GPA is below that level is subject to academic disqualification.
3. Courses graded on an S/U basis are not factored into GPA.
4. A grade of Satisfactory (S) is equivalent to a grade of B (3.0) or better. No unit credit is given for a course in which a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) was assigned.
5. Courses in which a grade below a B (i.e., B-), or a grade of U, was received may be repeated only once.

II. Potential Consequences of Grade Policy Change

The consequences of changing the grade option from letter grade to S/U grade may follow a student throughout their educational program and career.

1. Graduate Programs require that courses that fulfill course requirements be taken for letter-grades for many, if not most, of the courses.
2. There are also potential financial implications for financial aid recipients, and Teaching Assistants, if their GPA falls below 3.0.

Students must consider the long-term impacts when making this choice.

III. Policy text

1. Faculty and instructors of record shall make every effort possible to deliver course content such that established grading policies may remain in place during Emergency Course Continuity (ECC).
2. For a course that was being offered on a letter grade basis, an instructor cannot unilaterally require that all students complete it on an S/U basis.
3. Should a student wish to change their course grade option from letter grade to Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory during the duration of the ECC Policy, the following provisions apply.
 - 1) During any term in which ECC has been declared, graduate students may request S/U grading in any course through the third week after the last day of instruction.

- 2) During any term in which ECC has been declared, students are not limited in the number of courses graded as S/U; they also may enroll the following term in as many as two courses with S/U grading option. If the following term is the Summer, this exception applies to both the Summer (two courses) and the following Fall term (two courses).
- 3) Students who exceed the graduate program's specified limit on the total number of S/U units for completion of a degree shall file a petition with the Graduate Program. Approval shall be granted based on excluding S/U units taken during or immediately after the ECC.
- 4) During any term in which ECC has been declared, GC recommends that programs consider temporarily waiving requirements that mandate students to take courses for a letter grade.