

Office of the Provost

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE S/U OPTION FOR ALL SPRING, MAY, AND SUMMER 2021 SEMESTERS

March 12, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Upon recommendation from the Faculty Senate and approval by the Provost in light of the recent winter storm that further disrupted student learning beyond the ongoing pandemic, UHD will offer students the option to select an S/U grade in any of the following semesters: Spring, May, and Summer 2021. **This includes Spring 8-week 1 and Spring 8-week 2.**

This memo offers details for how UHD will implement the interim S/U grading option—with the same methodology as last spring and summer 2020:

Item 1: General reminders for all S/U implementation cycles

Item 2: Action dates for the Spring 2021 15-week session

NOTE: updated timelines for the S/U in Spring 8-week 1 and 8-week 2 are posted in the [official UHD calendars](#). May and Summer calendars will be updated in the coming week.

Item 3: Details about W-date, Incompletes, and Accommodations

Item 4: S/U Grading Equivalencies

Reminders for all semesters will be sent throughout the coming months from the Registrar and Office of the Provost; information will also be available on the website.

Students are being informed by Enrollment Management of this option. Please review all information carefully and send questions to your department chair or contact Michelle Moosally at moosallym@uhd.edu/713-221-8254. Specific questions regarding business processes, calendars, or grading implementation should be referred to the Registrar's Office at registrar@uhd.edu.

1. General Reminders:

- **No adjustment to grading method on the syllabus:**

This S/U option for students does not require any instructor to adjust any of your grading expectations, assignments, or, most importantly, course learning outcomes. Regardless of when students request the S/U during the semester, **you should grade all student work based on the letter-grade grading policy posted in your syllabus.** This will help maintain course integrity and consistency as well as accuracy in any potential grade appeal processes, etc. The S/U grade will be determined *based on the letter grade that you assign to a student at the end of the semester—please see end of this memo for equivalencies.*

- **The S/U is a student opt-in process:**
Students explicitly contact faculty *in writing* (via email is fine) to request that you issue an S/U grade instead of a letter grade. They can submit this request any time until the established calendar deadline for requests. Please keep these emails on record for at least one year.
- **Faculty must post final grades in BB for student review before entering official grades:**
Some students may want to wait until course grades are calculated before deciding on grading method. Therefore, faculty must post final course grades in BB by the date specified in the calendars. Students will have a limited window to review those grades, also specified on the calendars, and contact you in writing if they want the S/U. Faculty will then enter grades as usual in the grade roster within the Faculty Center in PeopleSoft, using S/U only for students who have requested it.
- **Advisors are best positioned to help guide students:**
Given the potential differential impact of the grading options for different majors and graduation goals please direct students to advisors. Advisors will not select an option for students but will provide them additional information for the student to make the final decision.
- **The choice of grading option is not appealable:**
Students must choose the S/U option by the deadline for each term. A student's choice of grading option is not officially appealable, but the actual grade and errors in grade entry are appealable as per our appeals policy (e.g., student anticipated a B instead of a C or student requested S/U but faculty member entered letter grade).

2. Timeline for Spring 15-Week 2021 Session

[See [official calendars](#) for all spring semesters; May/Summer coming soon.]

SPRING 15-WEEK 2021	
May 8-14, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final exam period NOTE: students will have multiple exams; to minimize overlap of multiple exams for students particularly in all online courses, we ask faculty to plan finals using these two principles: 1) follow best practices for online exams by allowing a sufficient window for completion in case of technology issues and 2) ensure, to the extent possible, that the window overlaps the finals time frame originally assigned to any FTF or hybrid classes.
May 19, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty post assigned final letter grades <i>in your Blackboard shell</i> for each course by 5:00pm. • Faculty notify all students that final course grades are available for reviewing. (You may make grades available earlier if they are completed.)
May 19, 2021 -- May 23, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students review grades in Blackboard and notify faculty of their request for an S/U option by 5:00pm on May 23 if they have not already done so. • If students do not contact you in writing by this deadline, then you will issue the regular earned letter grade.
May 24, 2021-- May 28, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official grade entry begins at 8:00am on May 24 and closes at noon on May 28. • You will enter grades via the grade roster in Faculty Center within PeopleSoft accessed via <i>myUHD</i>. Faculty will have all grading options for each student: A, B, C, D, F as well as S, U. • Please retain written records of all student requests for the S/U option for at least 1 year.

The timeline allows faculty the full grading period originally assigned for spring semester to complete spring grades. We also understand that this timeline delays your completion of the semester. However, this method preserves the integrity of faculty authority over grade entry and also avoids a manual entry process after the fact which could delay student grades for several more weeks.

3. Additional information about W date, Incompletes, and Accommodations

Encouragement/communication with students: Please communicate these plans to students in your classes multiple times over the remainder of the semester. Also encourage them to talk to advisors before making a choice—there are still a number of professional organizations and graduate programs (e.g., law, medical, education) that may not accept S/U grades for students pursuing degrees or work in those fields.

All UHD degree programs must accept grades of S/U for this period, except in cases where independent accrediting agencies for a given discipline specifically prohibit S/U grades.

Use of W grades: Students must make their own choice for a “W”—the drop date has been extended for students until the last class day (May 7).

Use of Incompletes: The current policy describes the incomplete option as being limited to students who “have completed a significant portion of the course requirements and a documented emergency prevents the student from completing the remaining course requirements”—for spring 2021 semesters, however, we encourage you to feel free to employ the incomplete under a broader set of circumstances and timelines as you deem appropriate. All recommendations for incompletes remain within the purview of each faculty member. Any incomplete still requires a documented agreement of work to be completed, a due date for completion of work, and a consultation with the department chair. Students will seek your wisdom, of course—incompletes might under the right conditions offer an opportunity for a student to complete the learning objectives for a class that they might otherwise feel compelled to drop because of COVID-related difficulties.

S/U for Incompletes: Students with an incomplete for any semester where the S/U option was available may still choose an S/U grade. We encourage faculty to use the same process in the sense that faculty would share the potential letter grade and the student would notify faculty of their request for an S/U before the deadline for completion of the incomplete (which should have been agreed upon by both faculty and student when the incomplete is given).

COVID Accommodations: We will continue to offer short-term academic accommodations through the Office of Disability Services—if a student reports COVID diagnosis, exposure, or other strain related to COVID, please ask them to submit a request as a “new student” at our [ODS website](#). Please note that, as with other accommodations, COVID-related ones are technically not retroactive. However, students do not always realize the impact until after the fact—in those cases, ODS will connect with faculty to determine what might still be possible and we ask that faculty consider flexibility where appropriate for their courses.

4. Grading Equivalencies:

For **undergraduate courses**, the S/U grading will be applied in this manner:

- **S: Satisfactory** = C or above, no effect on GPA, hours count toward graduation.
- **U: Unsatisfactory** = D or F, no effect on GPA, hours do not count toward graduation. Some degree programs may count a D as acceptable for the purpose of degree completion or graduation - students should consult with advisors to determine this before making a decision.

For **graduate courses**, the S/U grading will be applied in this manner:

- **S: Satisfactory** = B or above, no effect on GPA, hours count toward graduation
- **U: Unsatisfactory** = C, D, or F, no effect on GPA, hours do not count toward graduation. Grades of "U" cannot by themselves be used as a basis to dismiss students from graduate programs.

The Registrar's Office will run academic standing at the end of the Spring 2021 semester which will place students into academic statuses which may impact their standing at the university (probation, suspension, etc.).