

UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL POLICY
Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading Option
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GC2006 – 01 (rev. 01)

The Graduate Council recognizes that a legitimate educational opportunity provided by the current Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading option is to allow graduate students to “explore” areas outside the student’s major program without fear of academic “penalty”. The purpose of the S/U option is not to protect a student’s GPA, but rather to encourage students to explore academic course work in areas unrelated to their academic discipline. Doctoral students who are not advanced to candidacy and master’s students who have not completed all the courses included in their program of study and have not advanced to candidacy may not take any course within their academic major, including prerequisites or deficiencies, on an S/U basis under any circumstances. However, courses for which the Graduate Program has received prior approval from the Graduate Council are exempted from this restriction. Programs may submit a request to the Graduate Council for specific exceptions to the S/U option rule, accompanied by appropriate justification.

Prior to advancement to candidacy, a student may petition to take one graded upper division or graduate course outside his/her academic major per academic term on an S/U basis with the approval of the Graduate Adviser. The Dean of Graduate Studies (or designee) will determine whether a petition for S/U grading is to be approved. A course that is optionally graded S/U may be used to fulfill unit requirements. This course would be in addition to any of those that are normally graded on an S/U basis (e.g. course 299). The Graduate Adviser will make S/U grading recommendations judiciously.

Petitions for any course(s) to be taken on an S/U basis must be filed with the Dean of Graduate Studies by the end of the fifth week of instruction for a given term. After the fifth week, students must also provide compelling justification explaining the reason for missing the deadline to request optional S/U grading. Late petitions are not normally granted, and no petitions will be approved after the final day of instruction for the term.

Doctoral students who are advanced to candidacy and master’s students who have completed all the courses included on their program of study and advanced to candidacy may, with the approval of the Graduate Adviser and the Dean of Graduate Studies, take an unlimited number of courses on an S/U basis including courses offered by student’s major program. In addition, graduate students may take all lower division courses on an S/U basis unless they are prerequisites,. To receive a grade of S in lower or upper division work, a student must earn a C- or better in the course. To receive a grade of S in a graduate course, the student must do B- or better work. When a program permits a student to take a course under S/U grading, only the officially recorded S or U (not the original letter grade) can be used to determine satisfactory academic progress.