



UNC CHARLOTTE

Office of the Graduate Council

9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Joel Avrin, Faculty President
FROM: Dr. Concepcion Godev, Graduate Council Chair
CC: Mr. Matt Wyse
DATE: February 3, 2021
RE: New Grade Type of SP/UP (Satisfactory Progress / Unsatisfactory Progress) for Continuing Research-- REVISED IMPLEMENTATION

Appendix

Policy on Grade of SP/UP for Continuing Research

Motion

At our February 2nd, 2021 meeting, the Graduate Council voted unanimously to recommend a revised implementation to the Policy on grade type of SP/UP (Satisfactory Progress / Unsatisfactory Progress) for Continuing Research. The policy itself (replacing IP with new SP/UP) was approved by the Graduate Council on October 6th.

Justification

The proposed new grade type (SP/UP) allows for a type of assessment that is better than the current In Progress (IP) grade.

NOTE: This policy was discussed at the Faculty Executive Committee meeting on November 12th, 2020. The policy (replacing IP with new SP/UP) is the same that was discussed then. What has been revised is its implementation. The new implementation allows for Master's programs to grade continuing research courses with either the new SP/UP grade or with a standard letter grade (A B C U).



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To: Dr. Concepcion Godev, Chair, Graduate Council

From: Sandra Krause, Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Services

Date: January 27, 2020 - **REVISIONS per Graduate Council**

RE: New grade type of SP/UP for continuing research

We appreciated the comments from the faculty and have incorporated their feedback into the final proposal revision. We ask that you consider the following proposal.

Proposal: Revise the multi-semester grading scheme for research coursework

Location: Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Grading and Related Policies/Grade of (IP) In-Progress

Rationale:

The Graduate School is proposing a revision to the grading scheme for multi-term research work. Currently most – but not all - programs use the IP “in-progress” grade when a student enters the research phase of the program. This presents several challenges:

1. In-Progress grades remain on the transcript until the final term when the research is finished. Then all the previous IP grades are changed to “Pass” or to the assigned letter grade. Students may not receive feedback along the way.
2. Over the course of a student’s career, faculty may leave the institution. This requires that a department chair or GPD make grade changes to each term in which an IP was issued. This is time consuming and may be unfair, since the faculty member who assigned the IP is not assessing the final product.
3. In addition, the current grading option is IP or U = unsatisfactory. The U grade is part of the graduate grading scale. As such it triggers suspension or termination from the program. The sanctions associated with U grades may be extreme for a student who did not make sufficient progress in a particular term.
4. When letter grades are used instead of the IP, the student’s GPA may be inflated by the grades.

This proposal changes the process in two important ways.

First, it eliminates the IP grade mode option for doctoral research and requires research progress to be graded each semester. A student's progress would be graded each term by the faculty advisor. Either a student makes acceptable progress or they do not. The assigned grade will reflect the advisor's evaluation of the work.

Second, it limits the doctoral research grade mode option to SP/UP which provides a mechanism to outline agreed upon expectations each semester. Changing the doctoral grade mode option from standard letter grade to SP/UP means that a student who is not making progress will receive a grade of UP = unsatisfactory progress. A UP grade must be accompanied by feedback to the student. In addition, the grade of UP does not trigger additional sanctions.

Master's research courses can be graded using either the standard letter grade or SP/UP grade mode option; in either case the course must be graded each semester. Although the Graduate School discourages switching from one capstone to another, if a switch from a thesis to non-thesis capstone is approved, the student must submit a graduate academic petition to withdraw from the thesis credit. The grade for the thesis work will be changed to W on the transcript with no refund of tuition for the course(s)

Current catalog copy: Grade of IP (In Progress)

The grade of IP is based on coursework for courses that extend over more than one semester. For example, a course that requires enrollment for two consecutive semesters would be eligible for an IP grade in the first term (i.e., Certificate Project, Master's Thesis, Master's Project, Doctoral Dissertation, etc.). The grade in the second term is also awarded for the course in the first semester. A grade of IP should not be given for coursework to be completed in one given term. It cannot be substituted for a grade of I. For a student in good standing in a certificate program, an IP grade expires after four years, and if no final grade has been awarded by that time, the IP grade will default to a grade of N (no credit). For a student in good standing in a master's degree program, an IP grade expires after six years, and if no final grade has been awarded by that time, the IP grade will default to a grade of N (no credit). For a student in good standing in a doctoral program, an IP grade expires after eight years, and if no final grade has been awarded by that time, the IP grade will default to a grade of N (no credit).

Proposed catalog copy: SP/UP (Satisfactory Progress/ Unsatisfactory Progress) Option

The grade of SP (satisfactory progress) or UP (unsatisfactory progress) is assigned to graduate coursework for research activity that extends over more than one semester, typically dissertation or thesis research. In these cases, the research is on-going so only the progress made in that term can be evaluated. SP indicates the student made acceptable progress as assessed by their advisor. A grade of UP indicates the student did not make agreed upon progress. Neither a grade of SP or UP will factor into a student's GPA. Credit graded as UP will not count toward the required credit hours for the degree, but will apply toward the total credit hours earned and noted on the transcript.

It is possible for a student to be registered in multiple sections of research in a given semester. The student could earn both SP and UP grades that term, thereby making partial progress. Any grade of UP must be accompanied by written feedback from the faculty advisor, which explains what is expected for a grade of "satisfactory" progress.

The second semester in which a grade of UP is earned will trigger a discussion **between the student and advisor** about lack of progress in the program. This discussion will include all possible recommendations from the advisor, such as pursuing a new topic, moving to a new advisor or even termination from the program. The advisor will discuss any recommendation to terminate a student for lack of progress with the Graduate Program Director prior to forwarding such a request to the Graduate School for consideration.

Graduate students cannot select the Satisfactory Progress/Unsatisfactory Progress option for a standard graded course.