

The unexpected mid-semester transition from face-to-face courses to virtual courses has led us to **decide to make pass/fail, which we call satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U), the default grading mode for spring 2020 courses that began as face-to-face courses and are now being offered virtually.** We recognize the disruption you are experiencing in your academics as well as in many other aspects of your life. We hope this change will relieve some of the stress and anxiety you may be experiencing

You will find below a description on the general policy, an explanation of how to opt for a letter grade in any or all of your courses, some details about how grading will be handled this semester, and an explanation of how this change may affect students in different circumstances.

GENERAL POLICY

- Courses that **started** spring semester 2020 as **100% online course** and which started the semester with letter grades will **still have letter grades (A-F).**
- The **default grading mode for all other courses is S/U.**
- Students can **opt in to receive a letter grade** for any or all of their courses.
- The **deadline** for opting in for a letter grade is **May 1, 2020.**
- Students will receive an **"S" for a grade of D or higher** and a **"U" for a grade of F.**

PROCESS FOR OPTING FOR A LETTER GRADE

Early next week you will be able to go to the Registrar's page to access the form for indicating that you want to opt in for a letter grade for one or more courses. You will need to know the following information to complete the form: *Course number (e.g. GES123); Instructor's name; CRN for the course.* To find this information for your classes: *Go to: MyBethel>Academics>Active Courses>Student Detailed Schedule; Choose Spring 2020 CAS* You will get a pdf showing information for all the classes for which you are currently registered. You need to fill out the form **only if you are opting for a letter grade in one or more courses.**

COURSES

Grade Scale

Courses will use the grade scale in your original syllabus to assign grades at the end of the semester (e.g., A = 93 and higher; A- = 90-92.9; B+ = ...)

Doing assignments, taking tests, etc.

Students should plan on engaging with all of their classes and completing assignments. Many faculty will be including the following statement in their syllabi:

- In order to earn a grade of "S", you need to remain engaged with all course assignments throughout the spring 2020 semester. You are expected to complete all required course assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and other assignments in order to earn a grade of "S".

Calculating the Grade for a course

As is usually done, faculty will grade assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. throughout the course and then calculate a final letter grade at the end of the course. Students who choose the letter grade option will be assigned that final letter grade, which will appear on their transcripts. For all other students, the final letter grade will be converted to S/U, and the "S" or the "U" will appear on their transcripts.

Courses that have requirements for a certain grade or average test grade in a course to pass the course

Faculty will calculate grades using points, percentages etc. to determine the final letter grade for the course. However, any requirements to earn a certain grade on a test or a test average that is stated in the syllabus will still apply.

- Example: A student is taking a course in which the syllabus says they must get a 75% average on the three tests in the course. The student gets a D+ in the course, which would be a passing grade, but the student gets a 70% average on the three tests. The student's final grade in the course would be a "U" because they did not meet the test average requirement of 75% stated in the syllabus.

Students repeating courses that they have previously taken

As with Bethel's usual policy, the grade in the most recently taken course replaces the grade for the course the previous time the course was taken. Both grades stay on the transcript. Only the most recent course is used for the GPA.

- Example 1 (S/U in spring 2020) : If a student got a C- in a course last spring and is repeating the course this spring and takes it S/U, the C- will not be counted in the GPA and the S/U won't be counted in the GPA.
- Example 2 (letter grade in spring 2020): If a student got a C- in a course last spring and is repeating the course this spring and takes it for a letter grade, the C- will not be counted in the GPA. The new letter grade will be counted in the GPA, whether it is lower, higher, or the same.

CAS Programs with Licensure Requirements

- A grade of "S" in a course spring 2020 can be used to meet licensure requirements for all CAS programs.
- A grade of "S" in a course spring 2020 can be used to meet requirements for majors, admission to programs, progression in programs, and graduation from programs.
- In a small number of courses in programs leading to licensure, a grade of C will be required to earn an "S" for admission to the program. If this is the case for a course in a particular major, students in that major will receive a letter from the dean overseeing that area.

Graduate School Admission

It is not possible to say how graduate programs will use S/U grades in the admissions process. Students planning to go to graduate school should talk with their advisor before making a decision about staying with the default S/U grade or opting in for a letter grade.

Transferring S/U Courses to another College or University

Students considering transferring to another college or university from Bethel should be aware that many schools will not accept courses graded S/U for transfer. While it is possible that some schools may adjust their policy for students transferring to their school because of the large number of colleges temporarily allowing S/U courses this semester because of COVID-19, this decision is up to the school to which a student transfers. Some schools may require proof that a grade of "S" represents a minimum letter grade, such as C. An explanation of how Bethel currently treats S/U courses transferred to Bethel is found in the catalog transfer policies (p. [53 of the 2019-2020 catalog; see #4](#)). Students considering transfer to another school should consult the catalog for that school for similar policies.

PSEO Students

Before deciding whether to stay with the default S/U or opt in for letter grades in their courses, PSEO

students should check with their high school to find out if Bethel courses taken S/U can be used to fulfill high school graduation requirements.

GPA

Impact of S/U on GPA

- Courses in which students are graded S/U will not count toward GPA calculations.
- If students do not take any courses for letter grades in spring 2020, their cumulative GPA will be the same as it was at the beginning of spring 2020. They will not have a term GPA.
- Any courses taken for a letter grade will count toward GPA calculations and will affect the cumulative GPA and the term GPA

Academic Standing

At the end of each semester, academic standing (*Good Academic Standing, Academic Alert, Academic Warning, Academic Probation, Academic Dismissal*) is evaluated. The evaluation is based on cumulative GPA and term GPA. In spring 2020, academic standing will be evaluated as usual for anyone who completed at least one class with a Letter Grade (A-F). All other students will have an academic standing of *No Calculation* for the spring 2020 semester.

Athletic Eligibility

All S/U related questions about athletic eligibility should be addressed to Gretchen Hunt, associate athletic director: gretchen-hunt@bethel.edu

Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid is working on updating their policies to incorporate a system for evaluating the quality of a student's academic performance based on S/U grading. For more information, go to the [Satisfactory Academic Progress website](#).