

POLICY TITLE: Covid-19 Disruption Grading Option of Spring 2020

POLICY NUMBER: TBD

Approved by: John Karl Scholz, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Policy Contact: Scott Owczarek, University Registrar

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Effective Date: March 26 2020

Rationale/Purpose

In March 2020, midway through the Spring 2020 semester, the University launched a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Considerable disruption to student life was caused by the transition to remote/alternative instruction, the discontinuation of most in-person events, and the closing of university buildings. In recognition of this disruption, on March 26 2020 Provost Scholz announced that UW-Madison was establishing a special grading option for students in response to the COVID-19 events. This option, entitled the Disruption Grade Option (DGO), was established to mitigate adverse impacts of the Covid 19 disruption impacts. This document states the policy and documents some implementation considerations.

The Academic Affairs Continuity team (AACT), a sub-group of the Instructional Continuity Team, developed this policy. (AACT: Scott Owczarek, co-chair; Wren Singer, co-chair; Jocelyn Milner; Beth Warner; Will Lipske; Diana Maki; Christopher Lee; Christina Klawitter; Regina Lowery; Sherri Charleston). The Instructional Continuity-Academic Associate Deans, the Academic Advising Policy Leaders, and Professor Kirsten Wolf representing the University Committee reviewed and provided feedback on all recommendations. Provost Scholz announced the DGO after conferring with a range of stakeholders including the University Committee, Academic Staff Executive Committee, the deans of all of the schools/colleges, and the campus leadership team.

Scope

This policy applied to all UW-Madison students enrolled in credit instruction in Spring 2020, with the exceptions that it did not apply to students in the Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), or Law School students enrolled in Law courses.

Policy

- I. At the end of the Spring 2020 term students had a period in which students could elect to apply the Disruption Grade Option (DGO) to any or all of their A through F graded credit courses. The student may elect to replace the A through F grade with either SD (Satisfactory-Disruption) or UD (Unsatisfactory-Disruption).

Courses that were graded on a credit/no credit, pass/fail, or numeric grade basis were not eligible for the DGO.

All Spring 2020 courses, regardless of session start- and end-date, were eligible for the DGO option.

- a. For students in the Graduate School (GRAD career), grades of B or higher may be converted to SD and grades of BC or lower may be converted to UD.
 - b.. For all other students eligible for DGO (Undergraduate, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Master of Genetic Counselor Studies (MGCS), Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS), Master of Public Health (MPH) and University Special Students) grades of C or higher were permitted to be converted to SD and grades of D and F were permitted to be converted to UD.
- II. Course grades that a student elected to convert to SD were counted in the same ways that they would have counted had they been taken and passed on their regular letter-graded basis. SD counts toward requirements and prerequisites that require completion of a course, and completion with a certain grade. This includes University General Education requirements, degree/major requirements, certificate requirements, UW-Madison credit earned in residence, Honors courses, retroactive credits, and admission to majors that have an application process.
 - III. Courses for which a student elected UD were not to count towards meeting any requirements including any credit totals needed to complete a degree. Courses with UD grades did count towards semester credit load, full-time/part-time standing, tuition and similar calculations.
 - IV. Neither SD nor UD were calculated into a student's grade point average.
 - V. Undergraduates were not to receive a new negative academic standing action (e.g. probation or dismissal) at the end of a semester in which the DGO was in effect. The standard Academic Standing process, which determines probation status in each school/college, was modified to allow a student to stay in or clear probation status, but did not place any student on probation who had not been previously.
 - VI. For undergraduates who elected the DGO, these courses and credits will not count towards the course and credit limits established for the traditional Pass/Fail grading option.

Policy-related Implementation Considerations

- I. The window to elect the Covid-19 grading option opened on May 9th and closed on May 22nd at 11:59PM.

- II. For all students except graduate students (GRAD career) who had elected to take a course under the traditional Pass/Fail option for Spring 2020 at the 4th week deadline, their grading basis was converted back to a regular letter-graded basis to allow them to elect the DGO at the end of the semester. Graduate students who elected the traditional Pass/Fail option for Spring 2020 courses were left in that grading basis and did not have the DGO option for courses for which they had previously elected traditional Pass/Fail.
- III. For undergraduates, the Dean's Lists was run with the regular criteria. Courses that receive an SD or UD grade would not count toward the minimum number of graded credits required for the Dean's List.
- IV. The transcript legend was modified to add text to explain SD/UD grades.
- V. Multi-semester courses were subject to the grading options effective during the semester in which they were completed. Students beginning a first-in-sequence grade course (e.g. senior thesis) in Spring 2020 received a Progress grade in May 2020 that would be replaced by a letter grade when the thesis was complete. Students who completed a last-in-sequence grade course in May 2020 and received a letter grade were eligible to elect the DGO. If they did, the SD/UD grade would apply to both semesters.
- VI. Students receiving grade changes after the DGO window closed at the end of the semester have 8 days from the completed grade change being posted to their record to request conversion of a letter grade to SD/UD. This includes incomplete grades converting to letter grades. For Spring 2020 incomplete grades, the window to use the DGO for incompletes that are changed to a letter grade closes on Dec 31, 2020.
- VII. The DGO was designed and implemented in such a way that elements of this approach and SD/UD may be applied should the university face disruption events in the future.

Related UW-Madison Documents

Website to provide detailed information to students, advisors, and other stakeholders about the Disruption Grading Option: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/disruptiongrades/>

Student Center - Disruption SD/UD Grading. Detailed information on applying the SD or UD grade to replace a letter grade: <https://kb.wisc.edu/registrar/101311>

Pass/Fail Option - information on the regular Pass/Fail option for undergraduates: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/pass-fail-option/>