Message on Spring 2020 grading policy option

Dear Undergraduate Students,

As MSU responds to the novel coronavirus pandemic, two values have guided our decisions: our promise to help support our community’s health and wellness and our commitment to student success. MSU fully recognizes that the pandemic has created obstacles unlike any our community has ever faced. This is particularly true for you, our undergraduate students, as the university has moved all face-to-face instruction to remote learning and the vast majority of you have had to leave campus.

To help you cope with the many challenges you are facing right now, MSU will offer most of you the option to have your final grades in each of your courses transcribed on a binary S/NS (satisfactory/not satisfactory) scale. For undergraduate students, the threshold between S and NS will be 1.0. Faculty will submit their grades as usual to the Registrar’s Office at the end of the semester, and you will have two weeks to view your grades and decide on a class-by-class basis if you would prefer to have your grades recorded on your transcripts with the numerical 0.0-4.0 grade or with S/NS.

We strongly encourage you to work with academic advisors to help determine if this option is right for you. The following page provides information about Academic Advising Resources [https://remote.msu.edu/learning/academic-advising-resources.html](https://remote.msu.edu/learning/academic-advising-resources.html).

Please note that all MSU transcripts that have any grade reported for Spring 2020 semester will include a statement explaining that the COVID-19 outbreak and the university’s decision to switch to remote-only instruction in the course of the Spring 2020 semester caused unusual disruptions.

Ultimately, we hope that this option will help alleviate some of the stresses you are experiencing during this very unusual time. [Here](#) is where you can find more detailed information regarding this reporting option. In addition, a specific set of FAQs has been developed to help you navigate this decision.

Very truly yours,

Teresa A. Sullivan
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dear MSU Graduate Students,

As MSU responds to the novel coronavirus pandemic, two values have guided our decisions: our promise to help support our community’s health and wellness and our commitment to your success. MSU fully recognizes that the pandemic has created obstacles unlike any our community has ever faced, particularly for you, our graduate students, many of whom are not only taking courses but also helping to deliver our courses to others.

To help you cope with the many challenges you are facing right now, MSU will offer most of you the option to have your final grades in a course transcribed on a binary S/NS (satisfactory/not satisfactory) scale. For graduate students, the threshold between S and NS will be 2.0. Faculty will submit their grades as usual to the Registrar’s Office at the end of the semester, and you will have two weeks to view your grades and decide on a class-by-class basis if you would prefer to have your grades recorded on your transcripts with the numerical 0.0-4.0 grade or with S/NS.

You are strongly encouraged to work with your advisor and program to determine possible implications of your choices.

Grades recorded as S/NS will not be calculated into your official cumulative GPA, but your program and college may use your numerical 0.0-4.0 grade to apply degree progression policies such as whether or not a course will count toward your degree. Your program and college have been strongly encouraged to take into consideration this semester’s unusual circumstances when making such decisions.

Eligibility limitations: The binary S/NS grading system cannot be used by graduate or professional students in the College of Human Medicine, College of Law (which has a separate binary grading system), or the College of Osteopathic Medicine, except in limited cases. The binary S/NS grading system cannot be used in a limited number of courses designated by the offering college.

Please note that all MSU transcripts that have any grade reported for Spring 2020 semester will include a statement explaining that the COVID-19 outbreak and the university’s decision to switch to remote-only instruction in the course of the Spring 2020 semester caused unusual disruptions.

Ultimately, we hope that this option will help alleviate some of the stresses you are experiencing during this very unusual time. Here is where you can find more detailed information regarding this reporting option. In addition, a specific set of FAQs has been developed to help you navigate this decision.

Very truly yours,

Teresa A. Sullivan
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dear MSU Graduate Program Directors,

In recognition of the unprecedented circumstances created by the current pandemic, MSU is adding a parallel grading option of S/NS (Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory) that may alleviate stress that our graduate students may be experiencing. Faculty will submit their grades as usual to the Registrar’s Office at the end of the semester, and students will have two weeks to view their grades and decide on a class-by-class basis if they would prefer to have their grades recorded on their transcripts with the numerical 0.0-4.0 grade or with S/NS. For graduate students, the threshold between S and NS will be 2.0.

*We are strongly encouraging our students to work with their advisors and you, their graduate program directors, to determine possible implications of their choices.*

Grades recorded as S/NS will not be calculated into their official cumulative GPA. However, you in your role as Graduate Program Director may use these to administer degree progression policies. We strongly encourage you to take into consideration this semester’s unusual circumstances when making such decisions.

Decisions that program directors may face are, for example: *If your program does not normally allow courses with grades of 2.0 or 2.5 to count toward a degree: will you allow courses where the student has elected to take an S to count toward their degree regardless of the initial numeric grade?*; or *If your program limits the total number of courses below 3.0 that can count toward a degree, will courses graded as S be exempt from that count?* Please always be mindful of possible implications for accreditation (where applicable) when making these decisions.

Eligibility limitations: The binary S/NS grading system cannot be used by students in the College of Human Medicine, College of Law (which has a separate binary grading system), or College of Osteopathic Medicine. The binary S/NS grading system cannot be used in a limited number of courses designated by the offering college.

All MSU transcripts that have any grade reported for Spring 2020 semester will include a statement explaining that the COVID-19 outbreak and the university’s decision to switch to remote-only instruction in the course of the Spring 2020 semester caused unusual disruptions.

Please work closely with your students as they decide whether or not to take advantage of the S/NS grading option. [Here](#) is where you can find more detailed information regarding this reporting option. In addition, a specific set of [FAQs](#) has been developed to help you navigate this decision.

Very truly yours,

Teresa A. Sullivan
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dear MSU Faculty,

As MSU responds to the novel coronavirus pandemic, two values have guided our decisions: our promise to help support our community’s health and wellness and our commitment to your success. MSU fully recognizes that the pandemic has created obstacles unlike any our community has ever faced, particularly for you, our faculty, as the university has moved all face-to-face instruction to remote learning.

To help students cope with the many challenges they are facing right now, MSU will offer most students the option to have their final grades in a course be transcribed on a binary S/NS (satisfactory/not satisfactory) scale. This system is designed to help minimize the crisis’s disruptive effects on our students. This does not mean that opting for a S/NS grade is to every student’s advantage; specifically, it may not be to the advantage of graduate students. To help navigate these decisions, students are encouraged to speak with their academic advisors and graduate program directors. You may find students consulting you about this critical decision as well.

For undergraduate students, the threshold between S and NS will be 1.0. Faculty will submit their grades as usual to the Registrar’s Office at the end of the semester, and students will have two weeks to view their grades and decide on a class-by-class basis if they would prefer to have their grades recorded on their transcripts with the numerical 0.0-4.0 grade or with S/NS. Undergraduate students should direct questions about this new option to their academic advisors, who can be identified and contacted here. Should you have any questions regarding this as it relates to undergraduate students generally, please contact Mark Largent at largent@msu.edu.

For graduate students, the threshold between S and NS will be 2.0. Faculty will submit their grades as usual to the Registrar’s Office at the end of the semester, and graduate students will have two weeks to view their grades and decide on a class-by-class basis if they would prefer to have their grades recorded on their transcripts with the numerical 0.0-4.0 grade or with S/NS. Graduate Programs will evaluate whether and how the underlying numeric grade is used to determine degree program requirements, and they are encouraged to take into consideration the special circumstances of this semester. Should you have any questions regarding this as it relates to graduate students, please reach out to your graduate program director.

Eligibility limitations: The binary S/NS grading system cannot be used by students in the College of Human Medicine, College of Law (which has a separate binary grading system), College of Osteopathic Medicine, and among the College of Veterinary Medicine’s undergraduate courses. The binary S/NS grading system cannot be used in a limited number of courses designated by the offering college.

All MSU transcripts that have any grade reported for Spring 2020 semester will include a statement explaining that the COVID-19 outbreak and the university’s decision to switch to remote-only instruction in the course of the Spring 2020 semester caused unusual disruptions.

Please work closely with your students as they decide whether or not to take advantage of the S/NS grading option. Here is where you can find more detailed information regarding this reporting option. In addition, a specific set of FAQs has been developed to help you navigate this decision.

Very truly yours,

Teresa A. Sullivan
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs