



9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/ 704.687.5503 f/ 704.687.1668 www.graduateschool.uncc.edu

To: Dr. Concepcion Godev, Chair, Graduate Council

From: Sandy Krause, Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Services

Date: September 8, 2020 **REVISED**

RE: New grade type for continuing research

We ask that Graduate Council 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.
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, a student’s progress is 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, when a student receives a grade of UP = unsatisfactory progress, they will be told why and how to improve progress in the next term. The UP will not trigger an additional sanction.



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/UP is assigned to graduate research courses that extend over more than one semester, typically dissertation or thesis research. In these cases, the work is on-going so only the progress made in that term can be evaluated. SP (Satisfactory Progress) indicates the student made acceptable progress. A grade of UP (Unsatisfactory Progress) indicates the student did not make agreed upon progress. These grades do not factor into a student's GPA. However, a grade of UP means the course will be excluded from the student's degree audit and will not count towards the degree although the credit would apply to the total number of hours earned on their transcript. It is possible that a student registered for multiple sections of research in a given semester could earn both SP and UP grades that term, thereby making partial progress. A student earning a UP should expect written feedback from the faculty advisor detailing what "satisfactory" progress entails.

A second grade of UP should trigger a discussion with the student about lack of progress in the program. This discussion may 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 should 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.