



December 10, 2020

Dear Deans, Department Chairs, Head Graduate Advisors and GSAOs,

I hope this email finds you and your loved ones safe and well. We are writing to inform you that the Graduate Council has approved the following graduate academic policies for the 2020-21 academic year regarding satisfactory grades, extensions to change grading options, and the conduct of remote milestone exams.

### **S/U Grades**

The Graduate Council encourages graduate programs to enact flexible measures similar to [those outlined for undergraduate grades by DIVCO](#), including the acceptance of Satisfactory grades for courses that meet degree requirements.

Some programs may, however, be limited in their ability to accept S/U grades due to accreditation or other requirements. Additionally, students who matriculated in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 can only take up to 1/3 of their total units on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis. The Berkeley Division has authorized DIVCO to temporarily suspend or amend Berkeley Division regulations to support student needs related to COVID-19 during this academic year. If the faculty of a graduate program believes that suspension of this limit is necessary to support their students, a request can be made to DIVCO. Please contact Graduate Division Assistant Dean Linda Song ([lhsong@berkeley.edu](mailto:lhsong@berkeley.edu)) for more information.

### **Extension to Change Grading Option**

The Graduate Council has also approved an extension of the deadline for students to change their grading option for a course.

- **Fall 2020 Semester:** The fall deadline has passed, but late or retroactive changes may be requested according to Graduate Division procedures ([see Procedure to Change Grade Option](#)).
- **Spring 2021 Semester:** Graduate students may change the S/U grading option themselves via CalCentral. **The deadline for spring 2021 has been extended to April 29, 2021.** Graduate Student Affairs Officers may change a student's course enrollment, unit count, and grading option as well. Instructors must continue to maintain and submit records of letter grades earned. Please direct any questions to Linda Song ([lhsong@berkeley.edu](mailto:lhsong@berkeley.edu)), Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate Division.



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Graduate Division

### **Conduct of milestone exams**

Through Summer 2021, the Graduate Council has extended [its blanket exception](#) to the rule that all members of milestone exams must attend in person; all members can attend remotely.

These milestones include qualifying exams in Ph.D. programs, comprehensive exams in master's programs, and the defense of position or field papers required in certain programs. These exams can be conducted using Zoom or similar video conferencing software following [established best practices](#). Given the concerns about proctoring exams, this policy has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.

You may reference this memo online here. Please continue to visit the Graduate Division's [COVID information hub](#) for the latest information.

With best wishes,

Lisa García Bedolla  
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate Division

Michael Boots  
Chair, Graduate Council