

FOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS AND THE NEW S/U OPTION: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The Senate has passed a motion to allow students to take up to 6 credits Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) across the Fall and Winter semesters, in addition to courses students might have S/U'ed under normal circumstances.

The normal S/U policy allows electives to be taken S/U if they are declared by the S/U deadline early in the semester (For the normal S/U policy, see this link:
<https://www.mcgill.ca/students/courses/plan/s-u>

The new S/U policy allows students to S/U up to 6 credits whether or not they are electives, and allows them to see the final grade before deciding to S/U. (The details of the policy, including deadlines for choosing the S/U option, can be found in this link:
https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2020-2021/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/gi_course_info_regulations#booknode-1339

The new S/U option is over and above the S/U credits normally allowed in your degree (which was up to 10%). This option was created to help students who have been struggling with on-line education and are concerned that their GPA's will take a major hit during the pandemic. If you have a grade that is not reflective of your general ability and will seriously impact your GPA, you should consider the S/U. However, students should understand that readers of a transcript may interpret the S/U in a way that is less positive than the grade you actually achieved.

Graduate Fellowships and Graduate/Professional School Applications:

NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR consider the last two years of grades in determining who will get graduate fellowships. Graduate and professional schools generally expect courses in the proposed field of study to be completed with grades. Both fellowships and admissions are competitive. S/U's in the proposed field of study may impact consideration by external bodies and by potential graduate supervisors.

Honours Psychology:

Normally students applying for Honours are required to have 27 graded credits in the Fall and Winter semester of U1 or, if they are applying for U3 Honours, 27 graded credits in two semesters of U1 or U2. **Exceptionally, this year, the required number of graded credits for Honours applicants will be reduced to 24.** If you are in U1 and applying to Honours, you can S/U courses that are required for Honours to protect your transcript. However, the grade you obtained in these courses, along with cumulative GPA, PSYC GPA, research experience to date and an application essay will all be considered when reviewing applications for admission.

Faculty of Science FAQ on the New S/U Option:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/science/covid-19/undergrads/satisfactoryunsatisfactory-su-option>

SOUSA guide to the New S/U Option:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/science/undergraduate/advice/su-option-decision-guide>

NEW S/U OPTION FAQ's

1. **If I already have S/U'ed 3 credits this fall, can I S/U 6 more credits, or only 3?**
 - You can S/U 6 additional credits, but check if it will impact your scholarship standing, Honours application, your eligibility for Dean's Honours list, graduate applications etc. before deciding to S/U.
2. **Does a D convert to an S or a U?**
 - D's and F's convert to U's. Grades above D convert to S's. A U is worse than a D when you need the credits because a D in a non-required course will give you 3 credits toward your degree, whereas a U will give you none. However, a U will not hurt your GPA and a D likely will.
3. **Will the U appear on my transcript or will the course just not appear at all?**
 - The U will appear on your transcript
4. **If I get a U on an S/U course, what happens to my GPA?**
 - Your GPA on your transcript is unaffected by courses taken S/U. However, some agencies, for instance the Law School Admission Council, will recalculate your GPA and convert U's to F's.
5. **Will taking an S/U in my major be perceived negatively by graduate schools?**
 - a. S/U'ing a course in the field of study to which you are applying for graduate school may be perceived negatively. However, if you are struggling in a course and your grade will deviate largely from your other grades, an S/U may be a better option.
 - b. S/U'ing a course in U0 and U1 is less likely to impact graduate school applications as both graduate schools and fellowship agencies weight the grades in the last two years more.
6. **Will taking an S/U in a major course impact Honours admission?**
 - a. Potentially; you need to have **24 graded credits** in the Fall and Winter semester to apply to Psychology Honours.
 - b. Strong research backgrounds and essays, along with your PSYC GPA, your cGPA and the actual grades you obtained in required courses, whether or not they are S/U'ed, will be considered in Honours admissions,
7. **Will S/U'ing an elective, complementary or minor course be perceived negatively by graduate schools?**

We cannot know how fellowship agencies and different graduate schools will interpret S/U's or if they will convert them to grades. If you are struggling in a course and the grade is likely to be significantly different from the grades you will obtain -- or have obtained -- in in-person semesters, S/U may be a good option since most graduate schools are concerned primarily with your potential in your proposed field of study, not in electives or minors.
8. **Does the new S/U option allow me to take more courses S/U than the previous option?**
 - a. Yes, the 6 S/U credits allowed across the Fall and Winter are **in addition** to the S/U credits you may have already opted for under the old S/U rules.
 - b. Yes, you can now S/U **different** courses than you could have previously since you can S/U required and complementary courses.
9. **Can I undo an S/U that I already opted for and move my S/U to a different course?**

You cannot, but in most cases you would not need to. Since the new S/U option is in addition to the old S/U option, you can just add new S/U courses. **However**, if you have already S/U'ed a course, and decide to S/U two additional courses, you

will not be eligible to apply for Honours in Psychology and may will not be eligible for awards like Dean's Honours List, because of the requirement for a minimum of 24 graded credits across the Fall & Winter terms.

10. Once I choose the new S/U option, can I change my mind?

You can change your mind up until the deadline to submit the S/U option (e.g. January 19th for Fall semester courses). Once that deadline has passed, you cannot change your mind.

11. Last semester I could have S/U'ed an A- and gotten on the continuing student Dean's Honour List since the rest of my grades were A's but I didn't ☹ I don't want to make the same mistake again. Should I S/U an A-?

- a. If the grade is in a program you plan to pursue in graduate or professional school, then S/U'ing the course is risky. An A- is an excellent grade and is seen far more positively than an S/U.
- b. If the course is not in your major, and you have all A's on your transcript except for an A-, then S/U'ing the course could put you on the DHL, which is concrete recognition of stellar performance. However, it has not been decided how S/U's will be dealt with for the DHL. To make an informed decision, you'll have to wait until that information is released.