

Faculty Message #002 from the Interim VP for Academic Affairs
Sunday, April 19, 2020



Dear Faculty Members:

Academic Leadership has been continually monitoring and assessing the needs and impact of the current crisis response on academic operations. In this process, it has been determined that the circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 crisis require us to **continue with online classes through the end of the semester. Furthermore, it has been determined that the summer session will also be completed online.**

Several schools across the World are instituting “compassionate grading policies” in light of changes made to course delivery amid this pandemic. At KAUST and after discussions with Associate Deans and responding to student surveys, we agreed to also allow for a similar model where **students taking classes which were originally to use the Letter grade format will have the option of having a traditional Letter grade or a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade (corresponding to Pass/Fail) recorded on their transcript.**

Letter grades should be completed by faculty and communicated to students within 36 hours of the final exam or if there is no final exam, within 36 hours of the last lecture. Students will then be given until 20th of May (the Wednesday before Eid) to notify their professor of their final choice, either retain the letter grade received from their professor or change to an S or U grade* (see below). Faculty should then make all changes and finalize all grades in Blackboard by 21st of May only after all changes have been made. Once they are finalized in Blackboard, they are sent to student record and no further changes can be made.

Faculty should note that research, graduate seminars and 100 level courses are not affected by this as they are S/U grades only and are all due to be finalized within 36 hours of the last day of semester.

I encourage you to consult with your Divisional colleagues and Associate Deans to share tips and better practices of what worked and what did not.

I want to remind you again to be mindful of the hard times that most of the students are going through at a personal level and ask you to be tactful and flexible in deadlines and personal arrangements. **Furthermore, I encourage you to proactively reach out to students who are struggling or having academic difficulties and explore with them if additional supports are needed and encourage them to use the resources in place.**

With my best wishes,

Yves Gnanou
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs

* The table below shows the GPA value for a letter grade and how this would convert to an S or U grade if a student so chooses this option. The S/U grade has no GPA value.

GPA	Grade	S or U
4.00	A	S (satisfactory)/ Pass
3.67	A-	
3.33	B+	
3.00	B	
2.67	B-	
2.33	C+	U (unsatisfactory)/ Fail
2.00	C	
1.67	C-	
1.33	D+	
1.00	D	
0.67	D-	