

# GRADES

## Grade Reporting

Students have access to their academic records via the Student Information System (SIS) (<http://www.stolaf.edu/sis>).

See St. Olaf College Guidelines for the Release of Student Information under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/registrar/ferpa>) for St. Olaf's policy on release of students' academic information to third parties, including parents.

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/registrar/ferpa>), under no condition can grades be reported by telephone or to third parties, including parents, without specific written and signed authorization by the student.

## Graded and Ungraded Credits

A minimum of 24 graded credits out of 35 credits is required for graduation. "Graded credits" are credits awarded via courses taught by St. Olaf faculty. In most cases, these courses are taught on campus or through approved St. Olaf off-campus programs. A course taught at another institution by a St. Olaf faculty member also counts as a graded credit.

The graded credit requirement is reduced by scale in the following instances:

1. A student is admitted and matriculates at St. Olaf as a transfer student; see scale below.
2. Credits are transferred into St. Olaf from another institution following matriculation at St. Olaf. Exception: Credits taken on an off-campus program through another institution will not reduce the number of graded course credits required for graduation.
3. Credits transferred from PSEO, CIS, AP, IB, Cambridge A Level do not reduce the number of graded credits required.
4. Credits earned on St. Olaf off-campus programs that total two semesters in length.
  - One semester-length St. Olaf off-campus program will not reduce the number of graded credits required.
  - A course taught by a St. Olaf instructor on an off-campus program is considered a graded course and counts toward the 24 required if taken for a letter grade.
  - The letter grades from a full-year St. Olaf off-campus program or the combination of two semester-length St. Olaf off-campus programs are not computed in the grade point average unless taught by a St. Olaf instructor. In both circumstances, the 24-graded-course requirement is reduced as follows:
    - Nine courses earned — four graded courses reduced
    - Eight courses earned — four graded courses reduced
    - Seven courses earned — three graded courses reduced
    - Six courses earned — three graded courses reduced
  - Interim Exchange courses do not reduce the number of graded courses required for graduation.

The following reduction scale by course quantity is used if not all course work is taken at St. Olaf:

St. Olaf Courses Taken	St. Olaf Graded Required
34	23
33	22
32	22

31	21
30	20
29	20
28	19
27	18
26	18
25	17
24	16
23	16
22	15
21	14
20	14
19	13
18	12
17	12

## Grade Requirements for a Major

Of the full (1.00) course credits counting toward the minimum requirements for a major, six (6.00) must be completed with a grade of C or higher.

## Grade and Marking System

Final letter grades and their corresponding grade point values are listed below along with short descriptions at each grade level. The descriptions give students, faculty, graduate schools, and employers of St. Olaf graduates a general sense of the gradation of academic expectations at a glance.

In the leftmost column below, one can link to a list of grade benchmarks that is meant only as a guideline for St. Olaf faculty and students. Individual faculty members are free to grade according to their own systems; students should consult with their professors for accurate information about course requirements and expectations.

Benchmarks	Description	Grade	Grade Point
Superior Achievement	Outstanding	A/A+	4.0
	Excellent	A-	3.7
	Very Good	B+	3.3
	Good	B	3.0
Adequate Achievement	Generally Good	B-	2.7
	Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	Sufficient	C	2.0
Limited Achievement	Marginal	C-	1.7
	Poor	D+	1.3
	Very Poor	D	1.0
Inadequate Achievement	Extremely Poor	D-	0.7
	Failure	F	0.0
For P/N courses	Meets course expectations	P	no grade points

	Fails to meet course expectations	N	no credit
For S/U courses	C- or higher	S	no grade points
	D+ or lower	U	no credit
Withdrawals		W	no credit
Incomplete		I	no credit
Audits	Successful Audit	AU	no credit
	Unsuccessful Audit	UA	no credit

## Grade Benchmark Achievement Levels

### Superior achievement (A level)

*The grade of A recognizes exceptional performance and achievement that exceeds course expectations and consistently demonstrates, where applicable, many of the following characteristics:*

- Thorough, deep, and mature understanding.
- Genuine comprehension, insight, and synthesis.
- Significant mastery of challenging topics and issues.
- Extensive familiarity with relevant literature and previous work.
- Highly developed communication skills.
- Thorough preparation and extensive, thoughtful class participation.
- Integration of knowledge, concepts, and principles across disciplines.
- Originality of analysis and interpretation.
- Technical competence in skills and procedures.
- Precision of ideas and clarity of expression.
- Thinking that is independent, creative, and focused.
- Understanding of nuance and subtlety.
- Consistent coherence in argument and discussion.

*Students who receive the grade of A consistently demonstrate, where applicable, the ability to:*

- Analyze arguments using specific examples and original sources.
- Think logically, draw inferences, and make predictions in complicated situations.
- Communicate reasoning clearly and concisely.
- Think abstractly.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in arguments, policies, and practices.
- Integrate information to draw well-founded conclusions.
- Connect course content to issues of other courses and world affairs.

- Use models appropriately; recognize their strengths and accommodate their inherent limitations.
- Foresee and evaluate consequences of proposed policies and actions.
- Use technology creatively and effectively.

### Good Achievement (B level)

*The grade of B recognizes work that meets course expectations and typically demonstrates, where applicable, many of the following characteristics:*

- Clear understanding without much originality.
- Competent grasp of course materials and subject matter.
- Familiarity with relevant literature.
- Competence in communication skills.
- Regular preparation for and participation in class.
- Integration of course knowledge, concepts and procedures.
- Some evidence of critical and creative thought.
- Clear connections between inferences and evidence.
- Care in the use of evidence and quotations with only occasional thinness in argument, detail, or precision.

*Students who receive the grade of B typically demonstrate, where applicable, the ability to:*

- Extend ideas by connecting with personal experiences, reading, or world events.
- Analyze data in various forms and from varied sources.
- Utilize information to explain events, draw conclusions, and apply results.
- Present comprehensive answers in a clear and logically correct style.
- Understand and compare various models.
- Distinguish inputs from outputs, and causes from effects.
- Recognize consequences of complex interactions.
- Use technology effectively.

### Adequate Achievement (C level)

*The grade of C recognizes work that is sufficient to prepare for continued study in the field and generally demonstrates, where applicable, some of the following characteristics:*

- Adequate grasp of course concepts.
- Partial mastery of knowledge and skills required for understanding.
- Incomplete familiarity with relevant readings or references.
- Writing that lists facts rather than develops well-reasoned arguments.

- Frequent neglect of important information.
- Partial appreciation of the meaning or implications of a question.
- Answers that are insufficiently developed.
- Minimally complete assignments with many areas for improvement..

*Students who receive the grade of C generally demonstrate, where applicable, some ability to:*

- Assimilate and communicate simple knowledge and procedures.
- Extend ideas by making simple inferences.
- Make connections among and draw conclusions from course concepts.
- Interpret simple information provided in various formats.
- Organize and display data in tables and graphs.
- Use technology competently.

**Limited Achievement (D level)**

*The grade of D indicates a lack of readiness to continue in the field. Students' work usually demonstrates, where applicable, some of the following characteristics:*

- Minimal understanding of the subject matter.
- Poorly developed communication skills.
- Inability to apply subject matter understanding in other contexts.
- Little evidence of critical or creative thinking.
- Lack of apparent seriousness.
- Frequent carelessness in fulfilling assignments.

**Inadequate Achievement (F)**

*The grade of F indicates that course work is insufficient to merit academic credit. Students who receive an F usually demonstrate some of the following characteristics:*

- Inadequate understanding of subject matter.
- Inadequate or inconsistent preparation.
- Frequent failure to complete assignments in a timely manner.
- Little evidence of critical thought.
- Very poor communication skills.
- Frequent misunderstanding of facts or references.
- Little or no analysis.
- Confused or incomprehensible writing.
- Little or no work offering evidence that course objectives have been met.

**Grade Point Average**

A grade point average of C (2.00) is required for graduation.

The grade point average (GPA) is based upon final grades for all course work taken at St. Olaf as well as for grades earned through inter-registration at Carleton College.

Grades and grade points for courses transferred from other institutions are not computed in the St. Olaf grade point average. Graded courses from St. Olaf off-campus programs are not computed in the grade point average except for courses taught by St. Olaf instructors.

Grades earned S/U or P/N and scores earned through Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge A Level Exams, International Baccalaureate (IB), College in the Schools (CIS), Post-Secondary Education Option (PSEO), or other pre-college credit are not computed in the grade point average.

The grade point average shows two decimal places (3.15, 2.36, etc.) and is never rounded up or down. It is determined by dividing the total number of St. Olaf and Carleton graded courses into the total grade points.

If a student takes additional St. Olaf courses after s/he graduates, the rank in class remains based on the GPA at the time of graduation, even though the GPA may change with the additional coursework. A course taken prior to graduation but repeated following graduation does not change the student's GPA at graduation.

**Grade Points by Course Credit**

Grade/ Credit	1.00	0.75	0.50	0.25
A	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00
A-	3.70	2.77	1.85	.92
B+	3.30	2.47	1.65	.82
B	3.00	2.25	1.50	.75
B-	2.70	2.02	1.35	.67
C+	2.30	1.72	1.15	.57
C	2.00	1.50	1.00	.50
C-	1.70	1.27	.85	.42
D+	1.30	.97	.65	.32
D	1.00	.75	.50	.25
D-	.70	.52	.35	.17

**Grade Changes**

A student has one year to notify the Registrar's Office of a grade error on the transcript. A grade error is a recording mistake made by the Registrar's Office.

Grade changes, on the other hand, are initiated by the instructor issuing the original grade, either because the instructor notices the error or following a student inquiry. The intended purpose of the grade change procedure is to correct an instructor's computational or other error in reporting a grade, not to represent additional work on the part of the student. The only allowable grade changes based on additional student work require formal approval of an incomplete (p. 4). The instructor (both instructors of a team-taught course) submits a grade change request to the registrar for consideration. If the request

is approved, the Registrar's Office informs both the student and the instructor.

After determining that a grade was not posted in error, students wishing to appeal a grade must write a letter of appeal to the chair or director of the instructor's department or program.

## P/N Courses (Pass/No-Pass)

P/N credits are earned in courses that are offered only P/N. In other words, every student taking the course is doing so on an ungraded basis. This differs from S/U grades where each student in a course may elect to take the course graded or ungraded. Courses offered only on the P/N basis, if so designated, may fulfill general education requirements.

## S/U Option (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)

The intent of the S/U option is to allow students to explore areas in which they have an interest, without the grade counting in their grade point average.

All graded courses are open to the S/U option as distinguished from P/N (pass/no pass) courses where the ungraded option is mandatory. Neither an S nor a U figure into the grade point average. An S is awarded for a grade of C- or higher; a U is assigned for any grade of D+ or lower. A student earning a grade of D+ to F in a course taken S/U receives a U, which carries no course credit. A U cannot be assigned another type of grade at a later date.

Students should exercise caution in choosing to take courses on an S/U basis. Some graduate schools, for example, assume that a grade of S replaces a C or C-.

### The S/U Provisions for All Students Are:

In completing the minimum of 35 full credits required for graduation, students may take up to six full-course equivalents (6.00 credits) on an S/U basis.

Of courses taken to meet general education requirements, only .25 credit courses may be taken on an S/U basis. Such courses are counted toward the six full-course equivalents allowed. Full (1.00) or .50 credit courses taken S/U **do not fulfill** general education requirements.

A maximum of one full-course equivalent (1.00 credit) taken S/U may count toward the minimum requirements for a major or an interdisciplinary concentration. Individual departments/programs may have stricter rules.

The 24-graded-course graduation requirement (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/curriculum/graduate-requirements-degrees/general-graduation-requirements-ba/#graded>) must be observed.

Students may elect to change the grading option from graded to S/U or from S/U to graded through the deadlines designated at the Registrar's Office as posted on the registrar's calendar.

Courses taken S/U on St. Olaf off-campus programs count toward the six full-course equivalents allowed. This use of S/U is distinguished from off-campus courses offered P/N only.

Students transferring to St. Olaf, or transferring work taken at other institutions after entering St. Olaf, may be subject to additional S/U restrictions and should consult with the registrar in advance.

A course completed on an S/U basis may not be assigned another type of grade at a later date. If a student receives an S credit in a course, that course may not be repeated regardless of the actual reported grade.

No indication of S/U registration is made on a professor's class list.

Some courses are offered on the P/N basis only upon previous approval of the Dean of the College; announcement is made in the class and lab schedule. (<http://www.stolaf.edu/sis/public-aclasslab.cfm>)

## Incompletes

An incomplete in a course is rarely granted and only if there is a distinct possibility of, and a commitment to, finishing the course in a timely manner.

A request for an incomplete is initiated by the student and submitted to the Dean of Students Office. Incompletes are granted primarily for documented medical reasons and may not be issued by an instructor without prior approval of the dean of students or one of the associate deans of students.

An incomplete for which a grade is not recorded by the extended deadline set at the time of approval of the incomplete automatically becomes an F. The incompleted course cannot be dropped from the record at a later date to avoid a failing grade. Once the course is completed with the assignment of a letter grade and credit, an asterisk is entered beside it on the permanent transcript indicating that the course was once incomplete. A student may not apply for an incomplete in a course added after the posted deadline because of insufficient time to complete the assigned work. A student who has been granted an incomplete in a course cannot subsequently finish the course with similar course credit transferred from another college.

A student with an incomplete on his/her academic record may participate in commencement (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/academic-regulations-procedures/graduation-commencement/#commencement>) if all other requirements for graduation have been met. Only after a final grade has been recorded for the course, however, will a degree be conferred and a diploma issued.

Only in the most extraordinary circumstances are incompletes allowed on St. Olaf abroad programs not led by a St. Olaf faculty member. Many non-U.S. colleges and universities are not familiar with the practice of giving incompletes, and constraints having to do with distance and time make it very difficult to follow up on incompletes. Consequently, students studying abroad should not anticipate being able to avail themselves of this option.