
Office of Undergraduate Education

Emergency Sat/ Emergency Unsat

In the spring of 2020, Harvard will use an alternate grading system: Emergency Sat (SEM)/ Emergency Unsat (UEM). [Dean Claudine Gay's letter to the faculty](#) explains why we are making this shift.

Transitioning to SEM/ UEM

An SEM is the equivalent of a C- or higher, and you should make it clear to your students what they will need to do in order to earn one. The particular requirements for an SEM will vary from course to course, and you may need to adapt those requirements to accommodate individual students, but in general academic continuity requires that students do the following things:

1. Complete all course assignments. We encourage you to adapt assignments and deadlines to accommodate students in challenging situations, but you should continue to expect students to complete all work.
2. Participate in all required course meetings. We encourage you to offer alternative modes of engagement for students having difficulties participating in real time, but you should continue to expect students to engage meaningfully with the course.

Once you determine what your students will need to do to earn an SEM, please communicate those expectations to them and post them on your course web site. That way, they'll have a clear sense of what they need to do.

Some of your students may find themselves unable, despite their best efforts, to meet the requirements for an SEM. In that case, please contact the student's resident dean, so that arrangements can be made for students to complete the course in some other way.

Giving Feedback

Feedback continues to be as important as ever. Your students need to know how they are doing on individual assignments (so they can monitor their own learning), and they will also need to know how they have done in the course as a whole (so they can make decisions about which courses they'll be prepared to take next). For that reason, academic continuity requires that you do the following:

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1. Continue to assess individual assignments as you ordinarily would have done. You may give grades on these assignments, or you may choose to replace grades with more qualitative assessments.
 2. Create a brief qualitative account of the student's performance in your course, to inform future advising conversations and letters of recommendation. Submit your assessments via the Advising Journal in my.harvard. Please review our [instructions](#) on how to submit your qualitative accounts, as well as additional methods for submission. For suggestions on how to offer meaningful qualitative assessments in a manageable way, please refer to our [FAQs](#).

Getting Ready for the Fall Semester

In the fall semester, faculty and advisers will not be able to rely on grades to determine whether a student is prepared for a specific course. The qualitative assessments in the Advising Journal will be helpful, but we would also encourage faculty teaching intermediate-level courses to offer pre-tests to determine what skills a student has mastered--and what that student would need to be ready for the course. The OUE is eager to work with you in devising these pretests.