

WRITING RESOURCE CENTER

The “U” Notation in Writing

What is the “U” notation in writing?

Any instructor may submit a “U” (unsatisfactory writing) notation along with the regular final grade in any course (including courses taken credit/no entry, even though credit may not have been earned and the course may not have been entered on the record). Students whose performance in a course is satisfactory, even exemplary, may still have problems with effective writing; hence, some students may earn B’s or A’s in courses and still be given “U”s in writing. The “U” notation does not alter the course grade in any way, nor does it comment on poor attitudes, missing work, or other indicators of poor performance. A “U” notation only indicates the professor believes the student’s writing skills need work. Students who are given “U” notations are required to meet with an instructor in the Writing Center for weekly professional instruction in writing in the following semester.

How does the Writing Center tutoring program work?

We focus on teaching transferable skills, not on correcting or “fixing” papers. We work with students on all aspects of writing, from organizing and drafting, to revising and proofreading, as well as documenting and citing sources. Using writing samples and a student questionnaire, we identify two or three main areas on which to focus instruction. A typical program involves writing and revising several papers, or working on a few longer papers through all stages of the writing process, along with instruction and exercises. Usually, students work on writing assignments in their current courses, but if they have little or no writing in the first half of the semester, they will be assigned writing projects by their Writing Center instructors. We notify the instructor who gave the “U” and the Registrar when students have progressed sufficiently to have the “U” notation removed from their records. The Registrar erases all “U” notations from the students’ transcripts once the “U”s are cleared. Most students complete the program to remove the “U” within eight weeks. If students fail to complete the tutoring program during the semester following the receipt of a “U,” the Committee on Academic Status will review their records, and those students may be academically dismissed. Students cannot graduate until all “U”s are cleared from their records.

For more information, please see our website or contact the Writing Center.