

Section 4 Grading System

4.1 Grading System

The following numeric and letter grades are utilized by the College of Law and are shown on a student's official grade transcript:

A+	98-100	S+: Distinguished Satisfactory Work (hour credit only)
A	93-97	S, S-: Satisfactory (hour credit only)
A-	90-92	U: Unsatisfactory (no credit)
B+	86-89	I: Incomplete
B	80-85	
B-	77-79	AD: Administrative Disenrollment (no credit)
C+	74-76	AF: Administrative F (numeric grade = 60)
C	69-73	WD: Withdrawn from course by permission
C-	65-68	W: Withdrawn from College/University
D	62-64	
F	60-61	

The following numeric and letter grades were utilized by the College of Law prior to November 9, 2007 and may be reflected on a student's official grade transcript:

A+	98-100	S: Satisfactory (hour credit only)
A	93-97	U: Unsatisfactory (no credit)
B+	86-92	I: Incomplete
B	80-85	IE: Incomplete Expired (numeric grade = 60)
C+	74-79	AD: Administrative Disenrollment (no credit)

C	67-73	AF: Administrative F (numeric grade = 60)
D	62-66	WD: Withdrawn from course by permission
F	60-61	W: Withdrawn from College/University

4.2 Grade Point Average

A student’s official grade point average and class rank are determined using the student’s numeric grades, not letter grades.

4.3 Grade Normalization

All grades awarded in the College of Law are subject to the following grade normalization rules except as provided in section 4.3:

4.3.1 Mandatory curve. Except as otherwise provided in 4.3.2 or 4.3.3, in every class the median grade awarded must be between 79-81 and the distribution of the final grades awarded in the class must fall within the following percentages:

	{ 93-100	(5-15%, with < 3% for 98-100)
(45-55%)	{ 86-92	(10-25%)
	{ 80-85	(20-35%)

	{ 74-79	(20-35%)
(45-55%)	{ 67-73	(10-25%)
	{ 60-66	(5-20%, except 0-20% for Legal Writing)

The term “class” in this paragraph refers to a particular section of a course, and not to multiple sections even when an instructor teaches more than one section of a course, except

that a professor who teaches two sections of a course together as one class shall curve both sections together.

4.3.2 Class profile option. In any upper-level class that either (a) is classified as satisfying the Upper Level Writing Requirement, or (b) has an enrollment of 16 or fewer students, the instructor may elect to award final grades in the class under the class profile option in lieu of the curve. Under the class profile option, the mean (i.e., average) of the grades awarded in the class must not vary from the mean grade point average of the students enrolled in the class by more than six (± 6) points. In any other upper-level class that has an enrollment of 17 to 34, the instructor may elect to award final grades in the class under the class profile option in lieu of the curve. Under the class profile option, the mean (i.e., average) of the grades awarded in the class must not vary from the mean grade point average of the students enrolled in the class by more than three (± 3) points. The College registrar will, prior to each examination period, calculate the mean GPA of each class eligible for the class profile option and report it to the instructor.

4.3.3 Deviation for good cause. A deviation in the grades awarded in a class from those required under the curve or the class-profile option may be granted for good cause. The burden to

demonstrate good cause is on the instructor requesting the deviation. Requests for good cause deviations shall be submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. If the Associate Dean determines that the deviation from the curve or profile is de minimus, and is justified, he is authorized to approve the grades. If the Associate Dean determines that the grade deviation from the curve or profile is either not de minimus or not justified, the professor may either change the grades so that any deviation is de minimus and justified or ask the Curriculum Committee for approval of all the grades. All deviations must be approved before the grades are released. All Committee action on requests for a grade deviation, and the reasons therefore, shall be reported to the faculty, except for de minimus deviations.

4.3.4 Grade Normalization Exceptions. “Special students” (see Rule 16.2) and candidates for the College’s LL.M in American Law for Foreign Lawyers shall not be included in grade normalization.⁶ A “transient” student (a student who is currently in good standing and earning a J.D. or equivalent degree at an A.B.A.-accredited or provisionally accredited law school) shall be subject to the grade normalization process.

⁶ Effective Fall 2009. Prior to Fall 2009, special students were included in the grade normalization process.

4.4 Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grading Option

A student may elect to enroll in a law school course on an S/U basis subject to the following conditions:

- 4.4.1 The S/U option is not available to first-year students. An upper-level student may elect to take any course on an S/U basis, except a required course (i.e., Constitutional Law II or Professional Responsibility) or the course which is used to satisfy the upper-level writing requirement, other than a DIS project.
- 4.4.2 A student may elect only one course each semester under the S/U option, not including courses that are offered only on an S/U basis.
- 4.4.3 To exercise the S/U option, a student must complete and submit an S/U request form to the Records Office by the end of the fourth week of classes for the fall and spring semesters and by the end of the second week for the summer term. Once exercised, the S/U option is irrevocable.
- 4.4.4 The class instructor will not be informed of the identity of those students who have elected to take the course on an S/U basis, and the instructor will assign a numeric grade to those students on the same basis as all other students in the class. The numeric grades awarded to students electing to take the course on an S/U basis will be taken into account by the

instructor in normalizing the grades awarded by the instructor in the course.

- 4.4.5 A student electing the S/U option will receive a final grade of Satisfactory (S) in the course only if the student's numeric grade in the course is a 69 or better. A numeric grade of 68 or below will result in a final grade of Unsatisfactory (U) and no credit will be awarded for the course.⁷
- 4.4.6 For any course which students must take on a Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory basis (i.e., mandatory S/U course), a professor may award the grade S+ to indicate that the student work was significantly better than that needed for the student to pass the course, and may award the grade of S- to indicate that although the work was sufficient to pass the course, it was significantly worse than the work that the professor expected from students in the course.
- 4.4.7 Credit hours earned by a student for a Satisfactory grade under the S/U option will count toward the total hours required for graduation [see section 1.2.1], but will not count toward the graded hours required for graduation [see section 1.2.3].

⁷ Effective Fall 2009. A student electing the S/U option in a semester prior to Fall 2009 will receive a final grade of Satisfactory (S) in the course only if the student's numeric grade in the course is 67 or better.

4.5 Administrative F Grade

4.5.1 An Administrative F (AF) or U (AU) grade may, in the instructor's discretion, be awarded only in the following circumstances:

- 4.5.1.1 where a student is administratively disenrolled for chronic absences;
- 4.5.1.2 where an enrolled student (other than one who has properly withdrawn from the College or one who has properly withdrawn from the course) fails to complete previously announced course requirements;
- 4.5.1.3 where a student fails to make a bona fide attempt to write an acceptable paper or complete an examination;
- 4.5.1.4 where a student permits an "Incomplete" (I) grade to expire without a bona fide attempt to complete the course; or
- 4.5.1.5 where a student withdraws from a course or from the College without completing the proper procedures.

4.5.2 An Administrative F (AF) or U (AU) grade will be clearly so marked on the student's transcript. On written request to the

instructor, the student will be informed in writing of the nature of the grade and the reason why it was awarded

4.6 Incomplete Grades

4.6.1 An interim grade of Incomplete (I) may be assigned by the instructor if a student has not completed all assigned course work at the time that grades are submitted.

4.6.2 All incomplete coursework must be completed by the end of the next academic term (including summer term), unless an exception is granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to that time.

4.6.3 An Incomplete grade not otherwise changed will become an Administrative F (AF) and will result in a numeric grade of 60 in a graded course or an Unsatisfactory in an ungraded course.

4.7 Grade Appeal System

4.7.1 Grounds for appeal. The grade appeals system affords an opportunity for a student to appeal a final grade considered inequitably awarded because it involved a gross violation of the instructor's own specified standards. The system is not a basis for appeal of the instructor's grading standards, nor does it cover situations in which the judgment of the instructor is questioned as to a borderline grade decision. The system is also not a means of challenging whether a professor's grades met the curve, because the curve is an administrative

requirement to be enforced by the Dean or his designee, and is not part of a professor's grading standards.

4.7.2 Procedure. To appeal a final grade that the student believes was inequitably awarded on the basis of the instructor's own specified grading standards, a student must:

4.7.2.1 Step 1 Contact the instructor to discuss the grade and attempt to resolve any differences. A student unable to resolve the student's differences with the instructor, or a student not in residence for the succeeding term, must file a written appeal with the Dean or the Dean's designee within sixty (60) calendar days following the assignment of the disputed grade. The student may file the written appeal before finally determining that differences with the instructor cannot be resolved. The appeal should contain the facts and circumstances on which the student's claim is based. The student must furnish a copy of the appeal to the instructor.

4.7.2.2 Step 2 A student who is still dissatisfied may then request an appearance before a board composed of three students appointed by the

Dean or the Dean's designee (hereinafter the "student board"). This student board acts as a screening body only. It determines only whether the appeal satisfies the standard contained in section 4.7.1 by a preponderance of the evidence. The decision shall be determined by majority vote, with any abstention counting as a vote that the appeal lacks merit. In its discretion, the student board is empowered to solicit evidence and testimony from the appealing student and any other person or entity. A negative decision by the student board will end the appeal. A favorable decision will be referred to a Step 3 committee.

4.7.2.3

Step 3 A committee of three faculty members and two students appointed by the Dean or the Dean's designee (hereinafter "the committee") will review a favorable decision reached by the student board. The students appointed to the committee shall not include any student who served on the Step 2 student board. The committee shall conduct a de novo review of the appeal and conclude whether the appeal

satisfies the standard contained in section 4.7.1 by a preponderance of the evidence. In its discretion, the committee is empowered to solicit evidence and testimony from the appealing student and any other person or entity. A majority decision by the committee is final.

4.7.3 Administration.

4.7.3.1 Students appointed to the student board and the committee will be appointed from nominees selected by the SBA President or the President's designee.

4.7.3.2 The Dean or the Dean's designee will appoint a chairperson of both the student board and the committee. The Dean's office will furnish notice to the appealing student and to the instructor of the appointment of a grade appeal board or committee.

4.7.3.3 The chairperson will select a meeting time and place and furnish notice to both the appealing student and the instructor. Both parties have the right to appear at any step and be heard and to submit any materials for consideration of the

student board and/or committee that they deem appropriate. A student board or committee may determine its own procedures, except as otherwise prescribed herein. Copies of material(s) furnished to a student board or committee by the appealing student, the instructor, or any party or individual should, whenever practical, be furnished to the other party. The Dean's office will provide staff assistance as needed to the Step 2 student board and Step 3 committee.

4.7.3.4 At the conclusion of each step, the student board or committee shall furnish a written report of its decision to the Dean and to the parties.

4.7.3.5 In the case of a successful appeal at the Step 3 committee stage, the grade may be changed by the joint agreement of the student and the instructor, except that if the newly agreed upon grade will cause the grades for the class to deviate from the curve or the profile, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs must approve the agreement. In case of their failure

to agree in the context of a successful appeal, the appealing student may elect to keep his or her grade or to have the grade changed to Satisfactory (S). Hours of S resulting from a grade appeal are credited towards the hours required for graduation, but not towards the graded hours required, even if the course was initially a graded course.

4.8 Dean's List

For any semester in which a student's semester grade point average of 86.000 or better, the designation of "Dean's List" will be noted on the student's transcript for that semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List designation, a student must successfully complete 12 or more credit hours for the semester with at least six graded LAW hours.

4.9 Class Rank

4.9.1 Annual ranking. A class ranking for each law school class is calculated once a year.

4.9.2 Calculation of class rank.

4.9.2.1 The final class ranking of each graduating class is determined by taking into account all students who graduate with the J.D. degree between September of one year and August of the following year. All students, including joint

degree students, are ranked based on the class in which they graduate. Grades for any course work taken after the semester in which a student has satisfied all of the requirements for graduation are recorded on the student's transcript, but are not counted in calculating the student's final grade point average or class rank.

4.9.2.2 Unofficial class ranks. The unofficial class ranking for the first- and second-year classes is calculated based on final grades received for course work completed as of June of each year.

4.9.3 No publication. The College of Law does not publicly publish or display class rankings.