

Southern Illinois University School of Law

Grades, Grading, and Ranking

[Excerpted from the School of Law Rules for AY 2022-2023]

ARTICLE III - ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

1. Grades and Grading System

- (a) Grading Scale. Except when specifically provided otherwise in these Rules, grades at the School of Law shall be awarded on the following scale:

A+/A	(4.000)
A-	(3.667)
B+	(3.333)
B	(3.000)
B-	(2.667)
C+	(2.333)
C	(2.000)
C-	(1.667)
D+	(1.333)
D	(1.000)
F	(0.000)

No more than two grades of “A+” shall be awarded per course to designate the highest grade in the course. No instructor is required to award a grade of “A+.” [amended 2/20/07; 4/15/08; 5/1/17; 5/10/21]

- (b) Mean Grades. When awarded on the scale set forth in subsection (a), grades at the Law School shall conform to the means set forth in this subsection (b). [amended 2/20/07; 4/15/08; 5/10/21]
- (i) Instructors Teaching Multiple Sections. An instructor who has more than one section of the same course may combine those sections for purposes of setting the mean.
- (ii) Graduate Students. An instructor shall exclude any graduate student(s) taking the course for credit in the Graduate School when: (A) setting the mean for a course or section of a course, or (B) calculating the size of the course (or section of the course) for purposes of selecting the proper mean range.

- (iii) Required First-Year Courses. The mean grade in each section of each required first-year course shall be no lower than 2.7 and no higher than 2.9.
- (iv) Upper-Level Courses. All upper-level courses (except for clinics and courses approved to be graded on an S/U basis) will have a mandatory mean between 2.8 and 3.2.
- (v) Courses or Sections with GPAs Outside the Mean Range. In any upper-class course, or section of a course, in which the mean cumulative GPA of students enrolled in and examining in such course is above or below the prescribed range noted above, the permissible mean grade range in such course may be expanded upward or downward to include the grade number closest to the mean cumulative GPA for students enrolled in and examining in such course.
- (vi) Exceptions. The Associate Dean may grant individual exceptions to these requirements upon a satisfactory showing by the instructor that (1) student performance in a particular course deviated significantly from the norm or (2) application of the ranges would create an arbitrary result. Any such request from a faculty member must be in writing and all granted requests shall be published by the Associate Dean after grades are posted.

Examples that warrant the use of the exception include situations where: strict application of the grading curve would require students receiving the same points awarded in the course to be awarded different grades; operation of the mean would result in significant inflation or deflation of awarded grades, such as inflating otherwise failing performance to achieve a mean; and the size of the class necessitates drawing non-meaningful distinctions between students to achieve a grade distribution.

- (c) Grade Distribution. Grades at the Law School shall conform to the grade distributions set forth in this subsection.

The Associate Dean may grant individual exceptions to the grade distribution requirements upon a satisfactory showing by the instructor that (1) student performance in a particular course deviated significantly from the norm or (2) application of the ranges would create an arbitrary result. Any such request from a faculty member must be in writing and all granted requests shall be published by the Associate after grades are posted.

Examples that warrant the use of the exception include situations where: strict application of the grading curve would require students receiving the same points awarded in the course to be awarded different grades; operation of the mean would result in significant inflation or deflation of awarded grades, such as inflating otherwise failing performance to achieve a mean; and the size of the

class necessitates drawing non-meaningful distinctions between students to achieve a grade distribution.

First-Year Grade Distribution

GRADE	GPA	RANGE	AVERAGE (for guidance)
A+/A	4.000	6–10%	8%
A-	3.667	8–12%	10%
B+	3.333	15–21%	18%
B	3.000	17–23%	20%
B-	2.667	9–15%	12%
C+	2.333	7–13%	10%
C	2.000	4–10%	10%
C-	1.667	3–7%	7%
D+	1.333	2–6%	4%
D	1.000	0–5%	3%
F	0.000	0–5%	3%

Upper-level Grade Distribution for Courses with 21 or More Students

GRADE	GPA	RANGE
A+/A	4.000	6–20%
A-	3.667	9–25%
B+	3.333	15–30%
B	3.000	17–35%
B-	2.667	9–25%
C+	2.333	9–25%
C	2.000	9–25%
C-	1.667	3–15%
D+	1.333	0–10%
D	1.000	0–5%
F	0.000	0–5%

- (d) Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading. [amended 10/17/07; 5/11/10; 5/6/16]
 Students may earn academic credit for a grade of “S” in courses graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (“S/U”) basis only in one or more of the following circumstances. A student who matriculates at the School of Law on or after August 1, 2016, may earn no more than a total of 22 hours of academic credit for courses described in subsections (d)(i)–(d)(v) and for “credit/no credit” courses transferred under Rule II(3)(c)(ii); a student matriculating before August 1, 2016, may earn no more than 30 hours of such academic credit. All credit awarded for courses graded on an S/U basis shall be excluded in calculating the student’s semester and cumulative GPAs.

- (i) Courses Approved for S/U Grading. Except as otherwise provided in subsections d(ii)–(d)(v), a student may only enroll in a course for S/U grading if the faculty has approved the course for S/U grading for all students prior to the beginning of the registration period for that course. [amended 5/5/11]
- (ii) Required S/U Grading of Students with Special Relationship to Instructor. S/U grading of a student shall be required if the instructor has an extremely close personal or family relationship with the student. This provision is to be invoked sparingly and only in cases where the relationship is of such nature that the awarding of a high grade in the course may give the appearance of impropriety or an unfair competitive advantage. This rule should not be construed to apply to the normal student-faculty friendship that frequently develops through a course of communication over a three-year period of time.
- (iii) Special S/U Grading in Legal Clinic and Field Placement Courses. [amended 5/5/11] Legal Clinic and Field Placement courses shall be graded according to the following special grade scale:

Satisfactory +	Outstanding Work
Satisfactory	Meets all Requirements Satisfactorily
Satisfactory -	Meets Requirements Minimally
Unsatisfactory	Does Not Meet Minimal Requirement
- (iv) Courses Outside the School of Law. The student may receive S/U credit for one or more courses taken in the Graduate School or at the undergraduate level at SUIC or SIUE satisfying all the requirements of Rule IV.7.
- (v) Transfer Students. The Registrar shall assign students who have been admitted to the Law School as transfer students a grade of “S” for courses taken at another law school for which the student receives academic credit at this Law School in accordance with Rule II.3.
- (vi) Summer School/Transient Students. The Registrar shall assign students who have been approved to take summer school courses at another ABA/AALS approved law school, or are transient students, a grade of “S” for courses taken at another law school for which the student receives academic credit at this Law School in accordance with Rule III.5(b).
- (vii) Extraordinary Circumstances. The Dean, after appropriate consultation, may approve a course for S/U grading in extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to, the death, disability, or discharge of the instructor in the course.

- (e) Incomplete. [amended 10/17/07; 5/10/21] An instructor may, but is not required to, award a grade of Incomplete in a course where a student fails to complete all course requirements prior to the end of the semester in which the course is offered. When an incomplete is given to a student, the student must satisfactorily complete all course requirements as specified in an Incomplete Grade Agreement within one year from the last day of the semester in which the student received the Incomplete grade, and the instructor shall submit a grade change card assigning the student a grade in the course to remove the Incomplete grade. If the student fails to satisfactorily complete all course requirements within such time, the Registrar shall enter a grade of “F” for the student in a course offered during or after the fall 2021 semester or 0.0 for the student in the course offered prior to the fall 2021 semester. This one-year period may only be extended with prior approval of the faculty for good cause shown.
- (f) Withdrawal. [amended 10/17/07] W is to be used to designate withdrawal from a course.
- (g) Release of Grades. [amended 10/17/07; 5/11/10] The Registrar shall make grades available to the students enrolled in a course in such manner as required by University rule or as otherwise approved by the Associate Dean after consultation with the faculty. The Registrar shall not make grades available to students prior to the end of the examination period, unless the Associate Dean approves, for good cause shown, earlier release of such grades.
- (h) Timely Submission of Grades. [amended 10/17/07; 5/11/10] The timely submission of grades in all Law School courses is important to the Law School’s educational endeavors. To this end, and subject to any waiver as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Dean, all grades shall be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for all courses taken in the School of Law on or before the earlier of the following: four weeks from the date of the scheduled examination or the due date of the last graded exercise or activity in the course or the Wednesday immediately preceding the first day of regularly scheduled classes for the next semester. For summer courses, grades must be submitted no later than the latter of three weeks from the date a final was given, three weeks from the due date of the last graded exercise or activity in the course, or the first day of fall classes.
- (i) Grades Assigned to Graduate Students. [added 2/20/07; amended 10/20/09; 5/10/21] A faculty member teaching a law school course may determine the grade of a graduate student taking the course for Graduate School credit by a method of assessment that is the same as, different from, or additional to the method of assessment used by the faculty member to determine the grade of law students enrolled in the course. Regardless of the method of assessment, the faculty member shall report the graduate student’s grade to the Registrar on the same grade scale as for law students enrolled in the course, which the Registrar shall report to the Graduate School. In the case that the graduate student earns an “A+,” the Registrar shall report it as an “A” to the Graduate School.

- (j) Changing Grades After Submission to Registrar. [added 10/17/07; amended 5/11/10] After an instructor has submitted final course grades to the Registrar and the Registrar has confirmed that the instructor's course grades conform to the requirements of subsections (a)–(c), the instructor may change a student's grade only if all the requirements of subsections (j)(i)–(j)(iii) are satisfied.
- (i) An instructor may change a grade only if the instructor made an arithmetic or clerical error in calculating a student's grade or if the instructor failed to read a substantial portion of a student's answer. An instructor may not change a grade based on a reassessment of the quality of all, or any part, of the student's answer.
 - (ii) The instructor must submit a written explanation of the nature and effect of the error (or failure to read an answer) to the Associate Dean. Absent compelling circumstances, the written explanation must be submitted to the Associate Dean no later than the first Monday in April with respect to a grade awarded in a course held in the preceding fall semester and no later than the first Monday in November with respect to a grade awarded in a course held in the preceding spring semester or summer session. The written explanation shall be accompanied by all available documentary evidence of any arithmetic or clerical error, such as spreadsheets, grading sheets, etc.
 - (iii) The Associate Dean must find clear evidence that the instructor made a mistake of the type described in subsection (j)(i) and that the error can be corrected only by a change in the grade. Upon a finding of such clear evidence, the Associate Dean shall instruct the Registrar to change the grade.

The Associate Dean shall annually report to the faculty about all grade changes made pursuant to this subsection (j).

...

6. **Class Ranking** [amended 5/11/10]

- (a) Class Ranking. At the end of each semester, the Registrar shall rank students in each class according to their cumulative GPA. There are two categories of ranking: regular and index.
- (b) Regular Ranking. Students not described in subsection (c)(i)–(iv) shall be regularly ranked according to their cumulative GPA in relation to other regularly-ranked students in their class.

(c) Index Ranking

- (i) Purpose of Index Ranking. Index ranking is designed to reflect the relative academic performance of students who do not qualify for regular ranking, without displacing any regularly-ranked student. To this end, index ranking is a shadow ranking in that a student assigned an index rank is not included in the regular class ranking.
- (ii) Students Subject to Index Ranking. Students shall be index ranked if:
- (A) they have transferred to this law school from another law school;
 - (B) they do not graduate in or before the third May following their date of entering law school;
 - (C) at the end of their first year in law school, they have not completed every required course in the first-year curriculum; or
 - (D) at the completion of their law school work, they have fewer than 69 graded credit hours earned at this law school.
- (iii) Calculating Index Rank. Index-ranked students shall receive the rank of the regularly-ranked student in their class that their cumulative GPA equals or exceeds without equaling the cumulative GPA of the next highest regularly-ranked student. (See illustration below.)

(iv) Illustration of Class Ranking Rule

Student's Name	GPA	Regular Ranked Students	Indexed Students
A	3.8	First	
B	3.6		Second
C	3.2	Second	
D	3.0	Third	
E	2.9	Fourth	
F	2.8		Fifth
G	2.7	Fifth	
H	2.65	Sixth	
I	2.65		Sixth
J	2.5	Seventh	

- (d) Graded Hours Only. Only graded hours earned at this law school shall be used in determining class ranking.

- (e) Class Rank. An individual student's class rank may be given to that student at the student's request and will not be available until a reasonable time after release of grades under Rule III.1(g). [amended 2/22/11]

7. Dean's List [moved and amended 2/22/11]

The top 15% of students in their class in each semester who earned at least twelve credit hours during the semester shall be on the Dean's List. Students who have earned a minimum of eight hours are also eligible for consideration if they have a GPA no less than that of any student in the top 15% who earned at least twelve credit hours, but shall not displace any such student.

8. Graduating Honors [amended 5/11/10; renumbered and amended 2/22/11]

- (a) Regularly-Ranked Students. The diploma, the university transcript, and the law school transcript shall reflect the following graduating honors:
 - (i) Summa cum Laude. The top 3% of the graduating students who are regularly ranked;
 - (ii) Magna cum Laude. The next 7% of the graduating students who are regularly ranked;
 - (iii) Cum Laude. The next 10% of the graduating students who are regularly ranked.
- (b) Indexed-Ranked Students. Graduating seniors who are ranked in the indexed ranking list shall have their diploma, law school transcript, and university transcript reflect graduating honors if their cumulative GPA is equal to or higher than the cumulative GPA of a regularly-ranked student who has graduated with honors.