

Stanford Law School's Grading System

In the fall of 2008, Stanford Law School adopted the following grading system for all courses:

H	Honors	Exceptional work, significantly superior to the average performance at the school
P	Pass	Representing successful mastery of the course material
MP	Mandatory Pass	Representing P or better work. (No Honors grades are available for Mandatory P classes.)
MPH	Mandatory Pass - Public Health Emergency*	Representing P or better work. (No Honors grades are available for Mandatory P classes.)
R	Restricted Credit	Representing work that is unsatisfactory
F	Fail	Representing work that does not show minimally adequate mastery of the material
L	Pass	Student has passed the class. Exact grade yet to be reported
I	Incomplete	
N	Continuing Course	
[blank]		Grading Deadline has not yet passed. Grade has yet to be reported.
GNR	Grade Not Reported	Grading Deadline has passed. Grade has yet to be reported.

In addition to the above grades, professors may award class prizes to recognize extraordinary performance in a particular course. These prizes are rare. No more than one prize may be awarded for every 15 students enrolled in the course. Outside of first-year required courses, awarding these prizes is at the discretion of the instructor. The five prizes, which will be noted on student transcripts, are:

- the Gerald Gunther Prize for first-year Legal Research & Writing,
- the Gerald Gunther Prize for exam classes,
- the John Hart Ely Prize for paper classes,
- the Hilmer Oehlmann, Jr Award for Federal Litigation or Federal Litigation in a Global Context, and
- the Judge Thelton E. Henderson Prize for clinical courses.

Interpreting Stanford's Grades:

Grading policies vary significantly from school to school. Other schools that have a similar system impose no limits on the number of Honors grades awarded. As a result, one might see 70-80% of a class receiving Honors. Stanford Law School, by comparison, imposes strict limitations on the percentage of Honors grades that professors may award. These vary slightly depending on the class, but employers should expect to see approximately one-third of our students receiving Honors in any exam class. For this reason, we strongly encourage employers who use grades as part of their hiring criteria to set standards specifically for Stanford students, and to consider grades in the context of other information about a candidate, such as faculty recommendations, pre-law school academic and professional experience, law school activities, and an interviewer's own impressions of the individual.

* The coronavirus outbreak caused substantial disruptions to academic life beginning in mid-March 2020, during the Winter Quarter exam period. Due to these circumstances, SLS used a Mandatory Pass-Public Health Emergency/Restricted Credit/Fail grading scale for all exam classes held during Winter Quarter 2020 and all classes held during Spring Quarter 2020.

For non-exam classes held during Winter Quarter (e.g., policy practicums, clinics, and paper classes), students could elect to receive grades on the normal H/P/Restricted Credit/Fail scale or the Mandatory Pass-Public Health Emergency/Restricted Credit/Fail scale.

Fall Quarter 2020, SLS also used the MPH/Restricted Credit/Fail grading scale for all first year classes.