

Stanford Law School's Grading System

Stanford Law School uses 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	Course is ongoing (typically across two quarters)
[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. 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 among law schools. Most of our peer schools that also award Honors/Pass grades impose no limits on the number of Honors grades, or they simply recommend a curve to instructors. As a result, one might see 70-80% of a class receiving Honors. Some graduates of those schools will earn an all-Honors transcript.

Stanford Law School, by comparison, imposes mandatory limitations on the percentage of Honors grades that professors may award in all classes, including first-year courses, clinics, seminars, and practice-focused experiences. Professors must award a majority or supermajority of Pass grades depending on the course type. Given these mathematical caps, most of our graduating classes do not have a single all-Honors transcript. Typically, only one or two students, at most, will compile an all-Honors record in their 1L year. Only about 10% of students will earn three-quarters Honors grades that year.

We strongly encourage employers who use grades as part of their hiring criteria to set standards specifically for Stanford students. We also encourage employers 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 interview impressions.

* The coronavirus outbreak caused substantial disruptions beginning in mid-March 2020, during the Winter Quarter exam period. 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.