

Stanford Law School Grading System

Current Grading System

In Autumn, 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.)
R	Restricted Credit	Representing work that is unsatisfactory
F	Fail	Representing work that does not show minimally adequate mastery of the material
I	Incomplete	
N	Continuing Course	
*	No Grade Reported	

In addition to the above grades, professors may award class prizes to recognize extraordinary performance in a particular course. The four prizes, which will be noted on student transcripts, are:

Hilmer Oehlmann, Jr Award for Legal Research & Writing

Gerald Gunther Prize for exam classes.

John Hart Ely Prize for paper classes.

Judge Thelton E. Henderson Prize for clinical courses.

No more than one prize may be awarded for every 15 students in a course. Outside of first-year required courses, awarding these prizes is at the discretion of the instructor.

Also, effective beginning Autumn Semester 2009-2010, the units earned by Stanford Law School students are quarter units. Units earned prior to 2009-2010 are semester units.

Interpreting Stanford's Grades

Stanford Law School imposes strict limitations on the percentage of Honors grades that professors may award. These vary a bit depending on the type of class, but employers should expect to see approximately a third of students receive honors in any exam class and approximately 2/5th in other classes. This means that students who, under the former numerical system, would have received a grade on the mandatory mean (3.4), or even a 3.5 or 3.6, would receive a Pass under the current grading system. It is not unusual, especially if looking at students only after the first year, for someone in the middle of the class, or even in the top 40%, to have all P's on his or her transcript.

We, thus, strongly encourage employers who use grades as part of their hiring criteria to set standards specifically for Stanford students. Grading policies vary significantly from school to school. Other schools that have a similar system impose no limits on the number of Honors grades that can be awarded in all or in certain categories of classes, and it is not uncommon at those schools for over 70 or 80 percent of a class to receive Honors. Students, in turn, often select classes for precisely this reason: to load up the number of H's on their transcript (which is why Stanford enforces strict limits on *all* classes). As a result, imposing the same grade requirements on Stanford students as is used on candidates from other schools may result in the inadvertent elimination of highly-qualified Stanford candidates.

Grades should be considered 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.

Grading System Prior to Autumn, 2008

Prior to August, 2008, Stanford Law School had a numerical grading system with grades ranging from a 2.1 to a 4.3. These numerical grades corresponded to letter grades as follows:

A+ (4.3 - 4.2)	B+ (3.4 - 3.2)	R (2.2)
A (4.1 - 3.9)	B (3.1 - 2.9)	F (2.1)
A- (3.8 - 3.5)	B- (2.8 - 2.5)	

Between Autumn, 2001 and Spring, 2008, the mandatory mean in all examination courses was a 3.4. As Directed Research, writing courses, and many very small classes were off-mean, the mean grade among students in that particular class is listed after the grade given to the student.

Transcripts of alumni in the Classes of 2009 and earlier will have grades under this old system. Transcripts for students in the Class of 2010 will show first-year grades under the old system, but subsequent classes under the new grading system described above.

Students under the system used prior to 2008 could elect to take a limited number of courses on a credit/no-credit system (identified on the transcript as K/NK). In the first term of the first year, students could elect to take any or all of their classes K/NK. Thereafter, students could exercise the option in no more than two other courses. K was awarded for work that was comparable to numerical grades 4.3 to 2.5; RK for R-level work; and NK for F-level work. A small number of courses were mandatory K/NK, either as school policy or at the discretion of the faculty member. These grades appear on the transcript as KM.

Graduate Level, Non-Law School Grades from Stanford

Law students also have the option of taking classes throughout the university. Our transcripts list those grades as they are reported by the individual graduate school or department. The different grading systems are:

General University:

A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Satisfactory
D	Minimal Pass
NP	Not Passed
CR	Credit (student-elected satisfactory. A, B or C equivalent)
S	No-option Satisfactory (A, B, or C equivalent)
NC	No Credit (unsatisfactory performance. D+ or below equivalent)
I	Incomplete
L	Pass, letter grade to be reported
N	Continuing course
RP	Repeated course
*	No Grade Reported
W	Withdrew

Graduate School of Business:

H	Honors
HP	High Pass
P	Pass
LP	Low Pass
U	Unsatisfactory;
EX	Exempt (does not affect grade point calculations).
N	Continuing course.
+	Pass (LP or better)

School of Medicine:

+	Pass. Indicates that the student has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the department or teaching group responsible for the course that s/he mastered the material taught in the course.
EX	Exempt. Course exempted by examination. No units granted.
N	Continuing course.
I	Incomplete.