

Spring 2020 Grading FAQ

Q: *How will the College of Law grade classes during the Spring 2020 semester?*

A: The faculty of the College of Law (CoL) has determined that all CoL classes offered during the Spring 2020 semester shall be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. If a CoL student is taking a class during the Spring 2020 semester at another college at WVU (e.g., a class taken at B&E for purposes of the JD/MBA program), that class will be graded in accordance with the standards adopted by that college. This grading system applies for Spring 2020 only; it does not apply to “incomplete” Fall 2019 classes or Summer 2020 classes.

Q: *Are there any exceptions to this rule?*

A: No. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Q: *What does a “Pass” mean?*

A: A Pass is equivalent to any grade that is not a Fail; a Fail is an “F” in our traditional grading scale and is worth 0.0 quality points on a 4.0 scale.

Q: *I received an incomplete for a class from Fall 2019. What happens to that?*

A: Fall 2019 classes for which an Incomplete was awarded – specifically including the first half of many clinics – will be graded using the normal 4.0 scale. The Spring 2020 half of such classes (including clinics) will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Q: *Does Pass/Fail affect my GPA?*

A: A pass is worth no points and does not affect your GPA in any way. Under University rules, however, a Fail is treated as giving the student 0.0 quality points for those class credits, which will reduce the student’s GPA.

Q: *How will Pass/Fail affect my class rank?*

A: Second- and third- year students will be ranked on the basis of their GPA at the end of the Spring 2020 semester in accordance with standard CoL procedures (*i.e.*, only the top half of the class will be ranked and non-CoL classes will not be counted toward GPA.) A student’s GPA for purposes of ranking will include any Fall 2019 Incompletes for which grades are subsequently awarded and any Fails in Spring 2020. First-year students will not be ranked at the end of the Spring 2020 semester.

Q: *How will Coif be awarded?*

A: Coif will be awarded on the basis of third-year GPAs at the end of the Spring 2020 semester, calculated as described above.

Q: *Are professors going to grade us under the normal curve and then convert those to Pass/Fail?*

A: Professors will not be required to grade on the 4.0 scale and the curve will not apply. Rather, professors will only be required to assign a pass or a fail to a student. The CoL is discouraging its professors from assigning “shadow grades” on the 4.0 scale. Given the changes to the semester and the effect of the announcement of the pass/fail system itself, it will be impossible to determine what grades an individual would have received under normal circumstances in a competitive law school grading system. Accordingly, a “shadow grade” cannot be an accurate reflection of a student’s performance.

Q: *I am in an upper-level class required for graduation that has a minimum “C” grade requirement (such as Appellate Advocacy, a seminar, or Trial Advocacy used as a capstone)? Will I get credit for graduation if I pass?*

A: Yes. The faculty has determined that if a student receives a Pass in any class with a minimum grade requirement, then that student will be deemed to have fulfilled that graduation requirement.

Q: *Does this count for first year Legal Writing as well?*

A: Yes. If a student passes the second semester of first year Legal Writing, then that student will be deemed to have fulfilled the minimum average-grade requirement for both semesters of Legal Writing and will not be required to repeat either the first or second semester.

Q: *Can professors award CALIs for Spring 2020 classes?*

A: Yes. Under the CALI rules, a professor may award one CALI for the best performance in the class, or two co-CALIs in the extraordinary case of a tie. The awarding of CALIs is in the discretion of each professor, and a professor is not required to award a CALI.

Q: *Can students be placed on academic probation for the first time at the end of Spring 2020?*

A: Yes, but under limited circumstances. A student will be placed on probation for the Fall 2020 semester if the student fails a majority of their credits during the Spring 2020 semester. Unlike prior years, a student who fails a majority of their credits in Spring 2020 will not be automatically dismissed, but instead will have until the end of the Fall 2020 semester to establish both a cumulative GPA and semester GPA of at least a 2.3.

In addition, a first-year student who received a warning letter at the end of Fall 2019 shall be placed on academic probation after Spring 2020, but the student will have until the end of Spring 2021 (or two regular semesters) to return to good standing.

Q: *What happens to students who are currently on academic probation?*

A: Under our standard rules, a student who is placed on academic probation has one semester to return to good standing. Students on probation during Spring 2020 will receive one additional semester (for a total of two) to earn both a semester GPA and cumulative GPA of 2.3.