



## **Emergency Grading Policies and Procedures for the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Stetson University College of Law recognizes that the COVID-19 Pandemic has uniquely altered the Spring 2020 semester experience for its students, faculty, and staff. In light of this, and in recognition of the potential challenges and hardship this change in circumstances places on our students in particular, the College of Law has voted to implement the following procedures and policies. These changes to the policies of the College of Law are intended to ameliorate these concerns while continuing to provide valuable assessment guidelines and evaluation of student achievement in the Spring 2020 semester. This policy may be extended to subsequent academic semesters, if circumstances warrant its continuation or reinstatement beyond the Spring 2020 semester.

### **I. Grading for the Spring 2020 Semester**

- A. For all J.D. students, including 2-year J.D. students, J.D./Grado students, International LL.M. students enrolled in J.D. classes, and any other students enrolled in courses that would normally meet in person, the following adjustments to grading apply to the Spring 2020 semester:
  - 1. Courses that are normally graded on the 4.0 scale, the S/U scale, or High Honors/Honors/Pass/Credit (HH/H/P/Cr) scale will be graded using a Pass/Fail scale. Courses completed on or before March 13, 2020 will be graded under the grading system initially anticipated for the course.
  - 2. A grade of Fail is the qualitative equivalent to a 1.0 or 0.0 on the 4.0 scale, a grade of U on the S/U scale, and a grade of Fail on the HH/H/P/Cr/F scale.
  - 3. For International LL.M. students enrolled in J.D. courses, the Registrar will convert a Pass under Section I.A.1. to S-LL.M and a Fail under Section I.A.1. to U-LL.M.
  - 4. Students in the online LL.M. and online Masters programs will continue to be graded as normal.
- B. The Registrar will denote on student transcripts the change in the Spring 2020 grading policy due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- C. Faculty will continue to engage in rigorous student assessment as part of the Pass/Fail grading system and should offer meaningful individualized qualitative feedback to students on Spring 2020 assessments. The means of assessment

may change from that which was identified in the syllabus. For purposes of assigning a failing grade on the Pass/Fail system, a grade of Fail can be considered the qualitative equivalent to a 1.0 or 0.0 on the 4.0 scale, a grade of U on the S/U scale, and a grade of Fail on the HH/H/P/Cr/F scale. Faculty, however, are strongly discouraged from giving to students any advisory grade or numerical conversion of a Pass grade to a 4.0 scale. Informally providing grades to students or employers defeats the purpose of moving to a Pass/Fail grading system.

- D. For Seminars and Independent Research Papers, faculty will be asked to designate the student's grade under the Pass/Fail system and to separately designate whether the student's work qualifies for advanced writing credit. Per the [Policy on Independent and Directed Research Projects and Seminar Papers](#), a student may receive a passing grade but not receive advanced writing credit. While a grade of 2.25 or S, normally suffices to presume that the student receives advanced writing credit, under the Pass/Fail system, faculty will instead verify that a student receiving a passing grade also receives advanced writing credit. A student receiving a failing grade will not receive advanced writing credit.

## **II. Probation, Exclusion, and Academic Intervention**

### **A. Probation**

Absent circumstances discussed in Section II.C., no J.D. or J.D./Grado student shall be placed on academic probation for grades received in the Spring 2020 semester. Students currently on academic probation will remain in that status until grades are released at the end of the Fall 2020 semester when the Academic Probation Policy will again be in effect. All students currently on academic probation must continue to meet with the Director of Academic Success as required. Although not all goals in approved individual Academic Plans can be met in any semester with emergency mandated Pass/Fail grades, students on academic probation must otherwise continue to make satisfactory progress.

### **B. Exclusion**

1. This emergency policy temporarily supersedes the Academic Exclusion and Readmission Policy and Grading, Academic Exclusion and Readmission, and Honors for LL.M. and M. Jur. Policy.
2. A student will be excluded from the College of Law subject to a readmission proceeding if:

- A. The student took in the Spring 2020 semester (1) twelve or more credits and failed two or more classes or (2) fewer than twelve credits and failed one class, and
    - B. Prior to the Spring 2020 semester, the student had a cumulative grade point average of 2.3 or below.
  3. If a student is eligible for exclusion, the Academic Exclusion and Readmission Policy, and Grading, Academic Exclusion and Readmission, and Honors for LL.M. and M.Jur Policy shall apply, with the exception that all meetings shall occur by telephone or video conference.
- C. Academic Intervention
1. This policy recognizes that the College of Law will have no formalized grade point average for the Spring 2020 semester by which to identify students who may be falling behind their peers academically and may benefit from the help of the Academic Success to move forward. The lack of a formalized grade point average also prevents the law school from determining who should be placed on academic probation in order to require them to avail themselves of our Academic Success offerings. (See the [Academic Probation Policy](#)).
  2. To identify those students who may be struggling academically without the use of grade point averages in the Spring 2020 semester, faculty will be asked by the Registrar to identify and report the lowest performing students (approximately the bottom 10%), regardless of what grade they were awarded, in each of the courses that faculty member is teaching in the Spring 2020 semester. Faculty may use performance in final examinations, overall performance in the course, quality of final written products, performance on mid-term assessments and other performance objectives throughout the course, or any other indicators faculty believes may be appropriate to measure academic performance to approximate which students may fit into this category.
  3. Based upon these reports, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will work with the Registrar's Office and Academic Success to determine which students may be referred to Academic Success for intervention outside of the College of Law's normal Academic Probation and Further Required Curriculum Policies. The determination of who may ultimately be referred to Academic Success for intervention will be in the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will consider factors such as the student's grade point average in the Fall 2019 semesters, exam distress, personal illness, illness

of family members, familial responsibilities, the number of referrals made to the Registrar's Office under this policy, and any other factors the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs deems necessary when determining which students will be referred to Academic Success for intervention.

4. While a student identified for intervention will not be formally placed on probation under the Academic Probation Policy, the student is required to meet with Academic Success as soon as practicable, by video teleconferencing if necessary, for at least one meeting. A student who fails to engage in the required meeting will be placed on probation.

### III. Graduation

#### A. Honors

For students graduating in the Spring or Summer of 2020, the [Scholastic Honors](#) policy will apply, but the cumulative grade point averages for calculating graduation honors are modified as follows:

*Summa Cum Laude:* 3.75-4.0  
*Magna Cum Laude:* 3.55-3.74  
*Cum Laude:* 3.25-3.54

#### B. Graduation Awards

The Registrar will notify faculty and ask them to designate top performer(s) in any Spring 2020 class for which [graduation awards are available](#).

### IV. Academic Programs and Co-curricular Activities

#### A. Selection to Law Journals and Advocacy Boards

Faculty Policies do not regulate the selection of students to Stetson's law journal editorial and advocacy boards. However, the faculty requests that, if Spring 2020 grades are to be considered in board selection processes, then journal and advocacy board faculty advisors and members modify their selection processes as soon as possible to account for the Spring 2020 Pass/Fail system. The faculty recommends that the boards consider modifications that include (1) asking for faculty recommendations based on students' qualitative performances (not grades) on assessments in Spring 2020 and (2) expanding the number of students eligible for selection or consideration where criteria include GPA minimums. For the student-edited Stetson Law Review, the faculty requests that that any constitutional modifications that faculty may need to approve be forwarded to the faculty for consideration as soon as possible.

B. Successful Completion of Certificate Programs

The [Certificate Programs](#) Policy is temporarily amended as follows.

1. Specific Course Grade Requirements: A “Pass” grade received in any course in Spring 2020 required for successful completion of a Certificate Program will satisfy that requirement.
2. Other Certificate Requirements: Any student who was admitted to a Certificate Program prior to Spring 2020 who is unable to meet the minimum requirements to successfully complete a Certificate Program (other than total credit hours required) because of the Pass/Fail grading system or other circumstances associated with the Coronavirus Pandemic in Spring Semester 2020 is encouraged to petition the Academic Standards Committee, prior to graduation, for consideration of an exception to the minimum requirements. The Committee requests that the exception petition include an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the request.

C. Selection to Honors Program

The [Honors Program Policy](#) is temporarily amended as follows.

1. Invitations to the Honors Program: Honors Program invitations for the 2020-21 academic year will be extended to students who are ranked in the top 25% of any category listed in the [Policy](#) (rather than the top 15%).
2. Remaining in the Honors Program: Students who are admitted to the Honors Program for the 2020-21 academic year may remain in the program so long as they stay in the top 25% (rather than the top 20%) of their class.

V. Honors, Book Awards, and Class Rank

No students will be awarded non-graduation [Scholastic Honors](#) (including Honor Roll or Dean’s List) for the Spring 2020 semester. Book awards (other than graduation awards named book awards) will not be awarded during the spring 2020 semester. New [class ranks](#) will not be calculated for students, other than those graduating in May or August of 2020, until completion of the Fall 2020 semester.

VI. Electronic Education Plan

Courses changed to online courses during Spring 2020 are not subject to the Electronic Education Plan and will not count toward the credit limits contained within the

Electronic Education Plan. Any Spring 2020 courses that were already designated as electronic/online courses will count toward the limit.

*Approved by the College of Law on April 1, 2020.*