

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW SPRING 2020 GRADING POLICY GUIDANCE

The University determined that all courses in the spring 2020 semester would be graded optional Pass/No-Pass.

Regarding the School of Law, the optional Pass/No-Pass includes all courses taught in the spring 2020 semester **except**:

- (1) courses that are already graded as “Pass/Fail;” and
- (2) any course for which all graded components were submitted prior to March 18, 2020, such as Legal Research & Writing II (LRW).

Choosing Pass/No-Pass

Students may elect a Pass for any grade that is a “C-” or above. For grades below a “C-,” students may elect to keep the grade or choose No-Pass.

After grades are released, students will have seven (7) days to convert any of their courses during this spring term from a letter grade to a Pass/No-Pass grade. The Registrar’s office is creating a process for students and will announce it at a later date.

All courses that are awarded Pass grades will count toward graduation and degree requirements and satisfy future course prerequisites. As previously announced, even if a student elects to keep a letter grade or the grade was received in a course like LRW, grades for the spring 2020 semester will **not** be calculated into students’ grade point averages.

If a student elects No-Pass for a course required for graduation, that course will need to be repeated during a future semester. For elective courses, students who opt for No Pass, **are not required** to retake an elective course, even if the actual grade received is a grade of “F.”

Clinics and Externships

All clinics receive letter grades, and students should make a good faith effort to complete fieldwork hours that professors make available; failure to do so could result in the lowering of the grade for a clinical course.

Regarding externships, students enrolled in externships must complete the following hours of externship work:

- 46 hours for 1 credit
- 93 hours for 2 credits
- 140 hours for 3 credits
 - Failure to make a good faith effort to complete the externship hours that field supervisors make available could result in a “no pass” for

students in externships. Students unable to receive work from their field supervisor are required to speak to Professor Grace Orsatti to create alternative assignments.

Class Rank

We will allow students to choose whether to keep their grades, and the grades will remain on the transcript (with an appropriate notation that this was during the COVID-19 outbreak), but we will not calculate spring 2020 semester grades into the class rank. Instead, class rank will be determined by the grades for the fall 2019 semester.

Upper-Level Writing

Policy and Procedure 1.02 requires that a paper being submitted for upper-level writing credit be analogous to at least a “C” on the law school grading scale. This rule will remain unchanged.

Co-Curricular Activities: Law Review, Appellate Moot Court, and Trial Advocacy

The co-curricular activities will modify their membership criteria to consider the spring 2020 semester grading policy. Separate announcements will be made about those procedures.

Academic Dismissal and Probation

There are a number of specific rules regarding academic dismissal, and they are outlined in more detail in the chart that follows. Please read them and, if necessary, seek clarification from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Under ordinary circumstances, all students are evaluated for compliance with grade point average standards at the end of each academic year. Grades for this semester will not be included in GPA calculations, so, with the exception noted in the chart below for students who twice fail the same course, determinations regarding academic dismissal will not be considered until the end of the fall 2020 semester. Determinations regarding academic probation will be made after the fall 2020 semester.

Please note that determinations for enrollment in Advanced Legal Reasoning and Core Competencies will be based on the fall 2019 semester grades; however, the School of Law reserves the right to review spring 2020 grades, regardless of whether a student elected Pass or No-Pass and use that data to recommend or excuse enrollment.

Merit Scholarships

No student will lose a merit scholarship at the end of the spring 2020 semester. A student must obtain a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher at the end of the fall 2020 semester to retain a merit scholarship.

Fall On-Campus Interviews (OCI)

On-Campus Interviews are usually held in August, prior to the start of school, but they will likely now be held in January and February 2021. Maria Comas, Director of Career Services, will be providing more details soon.

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Current Requirement</u>	<u>Proposal Under Optional Pass/No Pass</u>
1.01: Graduation Requirement	Students are currently required to attend a commencement ceremony to be awarded their degree.	Change. This will not be a requirement for students graduating in the spring 2020 semester.
1.02: Upper-Level Writing Requirement	The paper demonstrates the type of high quality writing that would be expected of a new associate in a law firm or similar position in which the faculty member was a supervising attorney; the analogous level of quality corresponds to a grade of at least “C” on the law school grading scale.	No change. A student has to receive a letter grade of “C” in order to choose “Pass.”
1.05: Grade Point Average	Except as provided in Section 2.09.1, a candidate for the degree of Juris Doctor must maintain a cumulative grade point average of no less than 2.00, and must have a grade point average of no less than 2.00 for course work attempted in the last year of study.	Grades for spring 2020 semester will not be included in this calculation.
2.04: Honors	Academic Honors are determined by a ranking of the graduating class <i>based on overall cumulative grade point average</i> , as follows: the Summa Cum Laude designation to the top 5%; the Magna Cum Laude designation to the next 5%; and the Cum Laude designation to the next 10%. These percentages are subject to the following limitation: No student shall graduate Summa Cum Laude unless his/her cumulative grade point average is a least 3.5, and no student shall	Grades for spring 2020 semester will not be included in this determination.

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	graduate Magna Cum Laude unless his/her cumulative grade point average is at least 3.25.	
2.08: Treatment of Failing Grades for Required Courses	A student who receives a final grade of “F” in a required course, based on the professor’s assessment and grading of the quality of the student’s work, must retake the course when next offered.	No change. If a student receives a grade of “F” and opts for the “No Pass,” the student will still need to retake the course.
2.08: Treatment of Failing Grades for Elective Courses	A student who receives a final grade of “F” in an elective course must retake the course when next offered or, if the course will not be offered in the next academic year, petition the Academic Status Committee (c/o of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs) to take a substitute elective course, or Directed Research on the same topic.	Changed. Students who opt for “No Pass,” are not required to retake an elective course, even if the actual grade received is a grade of “F.”
2.09.1: Academic Dismissal for First-Year Students	To maintain good academic standing and proceed to the second year of study, a student must achieve a grade point average of at least 2.00 at the conclusion of his/her first year.	Any student who has a grade point average below a 2.00 after the fall 2019 semester must obtain a cumulative 2.00 after the first semester of the second year, or be subject to dismissal.
	A first-year student whose cumulative grade point average at the end of his/her first year is at least 1.67, but is less than 2.00 may petition the Academic Status Committee to return for the second year on a probationary status.	This determination will be made at the end of the fall 2020 semester.
	A first-year student who fails to achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least 1.67 shall be dismissed from school.	This determination will be made at the end of the fall 2020 semester. Spring 2020 semester grades will not be used in this calculation.

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2.09.2: Upper-Level Students	<p>An upper-level student shall be dismissed for academic reasons upon the occurrence of any of the following:</p> <p>a. Where the student fails to achieve a yearly grade point average of at least 2.00 in his/her coursework in any academic year.</p> <p>b. Where the student fails to achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00 in any year.</p>	<p>Any student who has a grade point average below a 2.00 the fall 2020 semester will be subject to dismissal.</p> <p>Spring 2020 semester grades will not be used in this calculation.</p>
2.09.3: Academic Dismissal – Principles Applicable to All Students	A student who twice fails the same course shall be dismissed from the School of Law.	No Change. This will still apply to a “No Pass” grade if the actual grade is “F.”
	A student’s grade point average is computed by multiplying the number of credit hours for each graded course by the number of grade points assigned to the letter grade earned in the course, then adding the products of these multiplications and dividing the sum by the number of credit hours of graded courses taken in the relevant period.	Spring 2020 semester grades will not be included in calculating the GPA.
	All students are evaluated for compliance with GPA standards at the end of each academic year. With the exception of internal/external transfer students and part-time day division students, all students are ranked at the end of each semester. Part-time day division students are not ranked until the fall of their final year of study.	<p>For the first sentence, it would be at the end of the fall 2020 semester.</p> <p>For the second sentence, all students have been ranked after the fall 2019 semester, so no ranking will be conducted after the spring 2020 semester.</p> <p>The last sentence is not implicated.</p>

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Current Requirement</u>	<u>Proposal Under Optional Pass/No Pass</u>
4.03.2: Required Course Registration Sequence – Second-Year Day	<p>Students who were ranked in the bottom quarter of their first-year class are required to take Advanced Legal Reasoning, a 2-credit course, in the fall semester of their second year of study, regardless of whether they are on probationary status.</p> <p>Application of the rules of this Section to part-time day students and to students who are unranked shall be determined based on the student’s presumptive rank at the end of their first year, i.e. on the Registrar’s estimate of what the student’s rank would have been at the end of the first year if the student had been ranked with the class with which he or she matriculated.</p>	<p>Determination for enrollment in ALR will be based on the fall 2019 semester grades; however, the School of Law reserves the right to review spring 2020 grades, regardless of whether a student elected “Pass” or “No Pass” and use that data to recommend or excuse enrollment.</p>
4.03.3: Required Course Registration Sequence – Third-Year Day	<p>Additionally, any student ranked in the bottom third of their class at the end of the first year of Law School is required to take Core/Applied Competencies I and II, and additional at-risk students will also be registered for these courses at the discretion of the Director of Bar Services. Students ranked in the bottom half of the class may petition the professor to take Core/Applied Competencies I and II, which is graded A-F, but is not subject to the curve.</p> <p>Application of the rules of this Section to part-time day students and to students who are unranked shall be determined based on the students’ presumptive rank at the end of their first year, i.e. on the Registrar’s estimate of what the students’ rank would have been at the end of the first year if the students had been ranked with the class with which they matriculated or, in the case of</p>	<p>Determination for enrollment in Core/Applied Competencies will be based on the fall 2019 semester grades; however, the School of Law reserves the right to review spring 2020 grades, regardless of whether a student elected “Pass” or “No Pass” and use that data to recommend or excuse enrollment.</p>

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	students who transfer division, the class into which they transferred.	
4.03.5: Required Course Registration Sequence – Second-Year-Evening and Part-Time Day	Students who are ranked in the bottom quarter of their first-year class are required to take Advanced Legal Reasoning, a 2-credit course, in the fall semester of their second year of study, regardless of whether they are on probationary status.	Determination for enrollment in ALR will be based on the fall 2019 semester grades; however, the School of Law reserves the right to review spring 2020 grades, regardless of whether a student elected “Pass” or “No Pass” and use that data to recommend or excuse enrollment.
4.10: Clinical Course Registration and Limitations	Students who are on probationary status due to a failure to achieve a grade point average of 2.00 after their first year of study may not register for any Clinical Program in their second year.	Registration for Clinics will be based on the fall 2019 semester grades.
4.11 Trial Ad and Appellate Moot Court	To be eligible to compete in a trial advocacy or appellate moot court competition, students must be in good academic standing. Students with a GPA below 2.0 will not be eligible to compete until the GPA is a 2.0 or higher. The professors coaching the trial and appellate moot court teams may impose more stringent academic standards.	Spring 2020 semester grades will not be included in the calculation for the GPA.
4.12: Concentrations	To have a Concentration Track verified, a student must complete the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive a grade of “C” or better in each of the four courses 	Changed. A “Pass” during the spring 2020 semester (“C-”or higher) will satisfy this requirement.
4.16: Cross-Registration for Courses Offered in Other Graduate	All of the following criteria must be met before the School of Law will accept transfer credits. <p>b. The grade earned in any course for which transfer credits are sought must be at least a “B.”</p>	Changed. For the spring 2020 semester, a grade that has been converted to a “Pass” by other departments will satisfy this policy.

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Current Requirement</u>	<u>Proposal Under Optional Pass/No Pass</u>
Programs at the University		
4.17: Course Credit Transfer Policy for Courses Offered at Other Law Schools	The grade earned in any course for which transfer credits are sought must be, at a minimum, the equivalent of the School of Law's grade of "C"	During the spring 2020 semester, a grade that the law school offering the course has converted to the equivalent of the School of Law's "Pass" ("C-" or above).
6.07: Class Attendance	A student who misses more than 20% of scheduled classes for a course in any semester without good cause, as determined by the faculty member, will receive a grade of "F" in that course and receive no credit, regardless of whether the course grade is based on one or more quizzes, exams, papers, or projects. A student's late arrival or lack of preparation for class may be counted by the faculty member as an absence.	Changed. Attendance standard is relaxed, given the world health crisis.