

California Western School of Law

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the New Grade Scale

1. What is happening to the grade scale?

In the Spring 2014 trimester, CWSL transitioned from the previous grade scale (50-95) to a letter (A+ through F) grade and number-based (4.33 through 0) GPA system. This means that grades issued for the Spring 2014 trimester and thereafter appear using the new system.

2. When will this change take effect?

The new grade scale is now in effect. On March 20, 2014, CWSL began a "soft release" of the new grade scale online. Previously earned grades and GPAs were converted into the new system. On May 8, 2014, official transcripts using the new grade scale became available from the Registrar.

To receive official transcripts that use the old grade scale, students will need to make a request through the Registrar. (Only students who enrolled prior to Spring 2014 will have the option of requesting transcripts using the old grade scale.) Students will not be able to access or print out transcripts that show grades in the old grade scale.

3. How will individual course grades be calculated?

Faculty will first submit grades to the Registrar using the 50-95 grade scale. These grades will then be converted by the Registrar to the new letter grade scale.

The conversion from the current 50-95 point grade scale to the new letter grade scale will be as follows:

93-95	A+
90-92	A
87-89	A-
85-86	B+
80-84	B
77-79	B-
75-76	C+
74	C

69-73	C-
65-68	D+
60-64	D
55-59	D-
50-54	F

4. How will my GPA be calculated?

For each graded class, a student will receive a letter grade (A+ through F) and a corresponding point total (PTS) for that class. The PTS number for a course is determined by multiplying the original grade submitted by the faculty on the 50-95 grading scale with the number of graded units for that course. (For example, a three unit course with a grade of 85 would receive 255 points.) The PTS totals will eventually be used to determine class rank and GPA.

The GPA is determined by dividing the point totals (PTS) by the total number of units to determine the number grade equivalent on the 50-95 grade scale. This number is then converted to the corresponding grade point on the new grade scale.

The conversion from the current 50-95 point grade scale to the new GPA will be as follows:

93.00-95.00	4.17-4.33
90.00-92.99	3.84-4.16
87.00-89.99	3.51-3.83
85.00-86.99	3.33-3.50
80.00-84.99	2.80-3.32
77.00-79.99	2.42-2.79
75.00-76.99	2.12-2.41
74.00-74.99	2.00-2.11
69.00-73.99	1.46-1.99
65.00-68.99	1.17-1.45
60.00-64.99	0.70-1.16
55.00-59.99	0.01-0.69
50.00-54.99	0.00

Here is an example:

Total Points	1120
Total Units	14
1120 divided by 14 = 80	

In this example, a GPA of 80 is converted to a 2.80 GPA.

5. Why are faculty still using the 50-95 grade scale if we are converting to the new system?

In order to work with our existing student information technology system, faculty must continue to submit grades to the Registrar using the 50-95 grading scale. These grades will then be converted by the Registrar to the new letter grade scale.

6. How will this affect my previously earned grades?

Previously earned grades will be converted into letter grades and the corresponding GPA. Students who matriculated prior to Spring 2014 will still have the option of requesting transcripts using the old grading system.

7. Will I be disadvantaged by this conversion?

The Law School does not believe any student will be disadvantaged by this conversion. Any student who matriculated prior to Spring 2014 and who believes they have been disadvantaged by this conversion can choose to have their grades presented using the old system.

8. Will this change how students are ranked?

No. Class rank will still be determined by the grade points submitted by the faculty based on the 50-95 number scale. Like our current system, these points will be designated on the transcript as "PTS." The GPA, which is based on the 50 – 95 number scale, will be calculated by dividing total grade points by total units. Class rank for each student is then determined by reference to that GPA.

9. How will the Dean's List and academic honors be determined?

The Academic Policies have been revised to implement the new grade scale, which includes the provisions on the Dean's List and graduation with honors. Eligibility for the Dean's List (trimester GPA) and graduation with honors (cumulative GPA) is still based on a student's GPA.

10. Where can I review the new policy changes?

The new Academic Policies, which reflect these changes, are now available on the CWSL web page. Corresponding changes have also been made to all applicable law school forms, such as petitions and areas of concentration.

11. Why did CWSL making these changes?

After extensive study and deliberation, including interviews with students, alumni,

department heads, and faculty, the Law School determined that the new system was consistent with standard practices in legal education.

12. Why are we using a 4.33 - 0 scale rather than a 4.0 - 0 scale?

Many schools use the 4.33 – 0 grade scale. This offers more grade points than the 4.0 - 0 grade scale. The 4.33 designation represents an "A+," which is fairly common among law schools.

13. Will alumni be affected by the new grade scale?

The new grade scale will apply retroactively to alumni who enrolled beginning Fall 1991. For these alumni, grades will be converted into the new system. Class rank will not be changed. However, these alumni may request copies of their transcripts that use the grading system in place at the time they were enrolled.

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