



University at Buffalo Law School
The State University of New York

Office of the Dean

TO: Classes of 2011 and 2012

FROM: James Gardner, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs
James Newton, Vice Dean for Administration

DATE: June 18, 2010

RE: UB Law School Class Rank/GPA Policies

Please be advised that the faculty has approved the following changes to our class rank/GPA policies. These policies are effective immediately and apply to all members of the classes of 2011, 2012 and 2013. Attached please find a FAQ sheet for your reference and information. We will also host a brief informational seminar in the beginning of next semester to address any questions you might have on the new grading policy.

Use of GPA

Students are now permitted to calculate and publicize their GPAs for any purpose, including employment, internship and scholarship applications. Please see the FAQ sheet for instructions on how to calculate your GPA. In addition, please note that the University is in the midst of a major overhaul of its student services software. Once this is completed next summer, your GPA will automatically be included on your transcript.

Class Ranking

Consistent with past policy, the Law School will not provide students with an individualized class rank. However, the faculty has decided to furnish information that will enable students to determine for themselves whether their GPA places them in the top quarter of their class. In addition, within the top quarter, the Law School will also provide information that allows students to determine whether their GPA places them in the top 5%, 10 %, 15%, 20% or 25% of their law school class. The Registrar will calculate these “benchmarks” using historical data averaged over the last three years. Separate calculations will be made for each law school class. Different sets of ranking benchmarks will therefore be provided for students who (1) will be graduating, (2) have completed two years, and (3) have completed their first year. This is necessary to take account of the fact that GPAs are not always comparable across all Law School classes.

The benchmarks for students now beginning their second and third years are as follows:

3Ls (Class of 2011)		2Ls (Class of 2012)	
Top 5%	3.68	Top 5%	3.84
Top 10%	3.60	Top 10%	3.74
Top 15%	3.56	Top 15%	3.66
Top 20%	3.50	Top 20%	3.59
Top 25%	3.47	Top 25%	3.49

You may use this information in the following way. Suppose you are a member of the Class of 2011 just beginning your third year. In accordance with the instructions provided here, you calculate your GPA to be 3.52. Go to the left column of the chart above, which corresponds to your class. Read down the chart. You will see that a GPA of 3.52 places you below the benchmark for top 15% of your class and above the benchmark for top 20% of your class. Accordingly, you are entitled to report that you are in the top 20% of your class. Prior to the time of your graduation, you will be provided with a new set of benchmarks reflecting class ranks for students who have completed all three years of law school. You will then use those figures to determine your class rank at the time of graduation.

Latin honors are awarded in the discretion of the faculty. However, the faculty has not made any changes to the current system.

UB Law GPA and Ranking Policy FAQs

How do I calculate my GPA?

Your UB Law School Grade Point Average (“GPA”) is computed by dividing the grade points (quality points x credit hours) assigned to each grade by the credit hours attempted. For example, earning a “B” grade in a 4.00 credit hour course would yield $(4.00 \times 3.00) / 4.00 = 3.00$ GPA.

If you earn an “F” these grades count as hours attempted and therefore are used to calculate your grade point average.

Grades of “S,” “P,” and “U” count toward total hours (hours completed) required for the degree but not in the computation of your grade point average.

Grades of “R,” “W” and “Z” are not included in the hours attempted or the hours completed; they are neutral transcript indicators.

Grades of “I/default” and “J” are temporary grade substitutes and do not count in either hours attempted or hours completed until they default to their final grade.

*Grades carrying quality points are “A,” “A-,” “B+,” “B,” “B-,” “C,” “D,” “F.”

This chart of grades lists the respective quality points assigned each.

A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C	2.00
D	1.00
F	0

To help you with your calculation, we recommend the following online calculator, which is a very straightforward tool:

http://www.college-scholarships.com/online_college_gpa_calculator.htm

Which grades count towards my GPA?

For Transfers: Only grades earned while at UB Law will apply to your GPA and ranking.

For Dual Degree Students: Only grades from courses that count towards your JD requirements may be used to calculate your GPA and rank for the law school.

Please consult the Registrar's Office if you have any questions about your circumstances or need assistance with your GPA calculation.

How should I report my class rank to employers?

If your GPA falls above any of the benchmarks listed in the table relevant to you, then you may report that your "class rank" is in the top 25%, 20%, 15%, 10%, or 5%. If you would like a copy of the summary sheet which explains our class ranking system, you can obtain one from the Career Services Office. The Career Services Office will routinely provide this summary sheet to our employer partners so that they understand the methodology of our system.

Can I estimate a class rank if I am below top 25%?

No. You do not have the data to permit an accurate estimated ranking outside the top 25%, and the Registrar is authorized neither to calculate nor to provide it. Moreover, in our experience, providing a class ranking outside the top quarter of the class is not likely to offer any advantages in seeking employment. It is important to note that many legal employers are not as focused on these ranking designations as they are on your particular qualifications and individual record of success, and we encourage you to highlight these strengths accordingly.

Under the prior system, I had a better rank. Can I still use it?

No. The current system will completely replace the old system. However, you are encouraged to use your GPA as an indication of academic achievement. Please consult the Career Services Office if you have any questions about whether to list your GPA on your resume.

Do I have to list my GPA on my resume and applications?

No. Listing your GPA is always a choice. You should highlight qualifications that demonstrate your best strengths and are most valued by a particular employer.