Cornell Law School Grading Policy for JD Students

Faculty grading policy calls upon each faculty member to grade a course, including problem courses and seminars, so that the mean grade for JD students in the course approximates 3.35 (the acceptable range between 3.2 and 3.5). This policy is subject only to very limited exceptions. †

Class Rank

As a matter of faculty policy we do not release the academic rankings of our students. Interested individuals, including employers, have access to the top 10% approximate cumulative grade point cut off for the most recent semester of completion. In addition, at the completion of the students second semester and every semester thereafter the top the top 5% approximate cumulative grade point average is also available. In general students are not ranked however the top five students in each class are ranked and are notified of their rank.

Class of 2015 [six semesters]:
5% - 3.8277 10% - 3.8025

Class of 2016 [four semesters]:
5% - 3.8231 10% - 3.7575

Class of 2017 [two semesters]:
5% - 3.8762 10% - 3.7921

Dean’s List

Each semester all students whose semester grade point average places them in the top 30% of their class are awarded Dean’s List status. Students are notified of this honor by a letter from the Dean and a notation on their official and unofficial transcripts.

Myron Taylor Scholar

This honor recognizes students whose cumulative MPR places them in the top 30 percent of their class at the completion of their second year of law school. Students are notified of this honor by a letter from the Dean of Students and a notation on their transcripts.

Academic Honors at Graduation

The faculty awards academic honors at graduation as follows: The faculty awards the J.D. degree summa cum laude by special vote in cases of exceptional performance. The school awards the J.D. degree magna cum laude to students who rank in the top 10% of the graduating class. Students who rank in the top 30% of the class receive the J.D. degree cum laude unless they are receiving another honors degree. For the graduating Class of 2015, the gpa cut off for magna cum laude was 3.8025 and for cum laude was 3.6201. Recipients are notified by a letter from the Dean and a notation on their official and unofficial transcripts.

The Order of the Coif is granted to those who rank in the top 10% of the graduating class. To be eligible for consideration for the Order of the Coif, a graduate must take 63 graded credits at Cornell Law. (The Order of the Coif is a National Organization that sets its own rules.)

† Faculty who announce to their classes that they might exceed the cap are free to do so. If the 3.5 cap is exceeded in any class pursuant to such announcement, the transcript of every student in the class will carry an asterisk (*) next to the grade for that class, and for various internal purposes such as the awarding of academic honors at graduation, the numerical impact of such grades will be adjusted to be the same as it would have been if the course had been graded to achieve a 3.5 mean.

For detailed information about exceptions and other information such as grading policy for exchange students please go to the Exam Information & Grading Policies link at http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/registrar/.