

# Thompson Rivers University Faculty of Law

## Grading and Ranking Policy

### General

In order to achieve a uniform standard and comparability across courses the Faculty of Law has adopted this Grading and Ranking Policy.

The Policy shall come into force on 1 September 2014, (amended June 20, 2018), and shall be used in all final assessments at the Faculty, provided that the spirit of the Policy shall inform other forms of assessment at the Faculty.

Except in courses graded according to Credit/Marginal/Fail, the Faculty uses the 12-band letter system: A+ (Outstanding), A and A- (Excellent), B+, B and B- (Good), C+, C and C- (Satisfactory), D+ and D (Marginal) and F (Fail).

### A Range Rule

This rule applies to the award of A+, A and A- (hereinafter 'A range'). Separate rules shall apply to classes with 18 students and above, and classes with less than 18 students. Directed Research courses, the Moots and the Journal are not subject to the A range rule.

In any class of 18 or more students, no more than (fifteen) 15 percent of the grades shall be in the A range. No minimum A range grade is required (i.e. there is no minimum number of A range grades that must be given in any course).

In any class of less than 18 students, no more than (twenty five) 25 percent of the grades shall be in the A range. No minimum A range grade is required (i.e. there is no minimum number of A range grades that must be given in any course).

The Academic Status Committee shall ensure that the A range rule is adhered to and professors who deviate from it shall be invited to adjust their grades prior to the Committee's approval of the grades. Grades which are recommended to be changed at the Academic Status Committee meeting requires the approval of the Associate Dean.

There shall be no rounding up of the number of grades in the A range such that the percentage exceeds 15 or 25 percent, as the case may be.<sup>1</sup>

### The B Median Rule

While the Faculty does not employ a grading curve as such, it does require a 'B median' in all courses with more than 15 students. This means that the middle grade in a course must be a B. For example, in a class of 31 students the 16th grade, from the top and from the bottom, must be a B, while in a class of 30 students the 15th grade from either the top or the bottom must be a B.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. in a class of 49 only 7 grades (14.29%) can be in the A range because 8 will be 16.32%.

It is acknowledged that application of the B median rule has limitations and may not necessarily lead to an appropriate distribution of grades. <sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the following shall complement application of the B median rule: Professors are encouraged to ensure that no more than 50% of the total grades in a class are a B and approximately 10 to 15% of the grades in a course should fall below a B-.

The Academic Status Committee shall enforce the B median rule and professors who deviate from it shall be invited to adjust their grades prior to the Committee's approval of their grades.

### **Exemptions of Courses from Grading and Ranking Policy Rules: A Range and B Median (Amended: June 20, 2018)**

1. The A range and B median rules currently do not apply to the following courses:

- directed research courses
- the moots
- the journal

The A range and B median rules do not apply to the following additional categories of courses:

- internships
- clinical courses
- such other categories of courses as may be determined by Faculty Council from time to time when the Council is approving new courses.

2. The A range rule and the B median rules do not apply to courses which have 15 or fewer student registrants by the time the grades are due to be submitted.

3. A Faculty member may apply in writing to the Academic Planning Committee to request an exemption from the A range and B Median rules with respect to the following categories of courses:

- courses in which the primary mode of assessment is experiential in nature (i.e. not exams/term paper)
- courses in which registration depends on success in a competitive selection process

In assessing such applications, the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee shall be guided by the substantive content, delivery method, learning outcome, and whether the engagement process and assessment strategy for such a course requires the faculty member to conduct a grading process different from that for traditional courses.

The application shall be made in the academic term preceding the term in which the course will be administered.

In making an application, the faculty member shall be guided by the above factors to be considered by the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee.

4. Notwithstanding the preceding rules, at the meeting of the Academic Status Committee, a faculty member may make a written request for minor deviations from the A range or B median rule in respect of any course with 30 registrants or fewer by the time the grades are due to be submitted.. Such a minor deviation will be allowed if supported by a vote of 75% of the members of the Academic Status Committee present at the meeting.

## Ranking of Students

Generally speaking, the Faculty of Law does not rank its students, either by course or by year. That said, the top 10% of students in each year are placed on the Dean's List and notified of this individually. However, there is no specific ranking of students inside the Dean's List and no ranking at all of students outside it. Neither is there any aggregate ranking of the graduating class, except that a Gold Medal is awarded to the graduating student ranking first overall during his or her three years.

The Dean's List is determined as follows:

The top 10% of students completing each Year of the JD program, including incoming Letter of Permission students who take a full credit load under our Regulations, shall be on the Dean's List

The top 10% of students are determined by weighted grade point average. Where more than one student achieves the same weighted grade point average and that average would make one of those students eligible for the Dean's List, all such students shall be included on the Dean's List.

Part-time students are eligible in the year in which they complete a Year of the program.

Students who receive more than four credits in a Year for courses taken outside the Faculty of Law shall not be eligible for the Dean's List in that Year.

Where, in any given year, 10% of the class is not an even number, the number of students eligible for the Dean's list shall be rounded up or down accordingly (e.g. 10% of 75 students will be rounded to 8 students and 10% of 74 students will be rounded to 7 students)

## Grades Submission Form

To ensure compliance to this Policy and to facilitate the work of the Academic Status Committee, grades submitted to the Committee by a professor shall be accompanied by Form A.

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<sup>2</sup> Examples include in a class of 66 all the students are getting a B, or 34 students are awarded a B and the rest of the grades are above B, or 34 students are awarded a B and the rest of the grades are below B.

## Dean's Course Prizes

Without prejudice to such other prizes as may from time to time be announced, at the meeting of the Academic Status Committee the top student in each course (including pass/fail courses) shall be declared.

Where a course is offered in sections in the same year or offered in different semesters there shall be an award for each section.

Where a course is offered for a whole year (e.g. most first year courses) the winner of the course prize shall be declared only at the end of the year.

The named student shall receive a certificate signed by the Dean recognizing their achievement.

## TRU Law Grading Matrix

Professors are encouraged to use the TRU Law Grading Matrix to ensure consistency and uniformity in converting numerical grades to letter grades and vice versa.

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Numerical Grade</i>	<i>Grade points (TBD)</i>	<i>Letter Grade Definition</i>
<b>A+</b>	90 – 100		Outstanding. Exceptional performance.
<b>A</b>	85 – 89		Excellent. Superior performance showing comprehensive, in-depth understanding of subject matter.
<b>A-</b>	80 – 84		
<b>B+</b>	77 – 79		Very good knowledge of subject matter.
<b>B</b>	73 – 76		Good knowledge of subject matter.
<b>B-</b>	70 – 72		
<b>C+</b>	66 – 69		Satisfactory. Basic understanding of subject matter.
<b>C</b>	62 – 65		
<b>C-</b>	58 – 61		Basic understanding of subject matter but with definite deficiencies.
<b>D+</b>	54 – 57		Minimal Pass. A passing grade indicating marginal performance.
<b>D</b>	50 – 53		
<b>F</b>	0 – 49		Fail. Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Form A (Grades Submission Form)



Grades Submission Form

Semester:

Date:

Course Name:

Course Acronym:

Number of Students:

Median Grade:

Number of A's (incl. A+, A and A-):

Percentage of A's:

Number of B's:

Percentage of B's:

Number of grades under a B-:

Percentage of grades under a B-:

Dean's Course Prize Winner:

Name of Faculty:

Signature of Faculty \_\_\_\_\_

Date: