

To: Faculty, Full-time and Adjunct

From: Office of the Registrar

Date: July 22, 2016

Re: Grading Graduate Students

Introduction

Over the past few years, the law school has diversified its degree offerings. In addition to the JD, the law school offers the following degrees:

1. Doctor of Juridical Science (“JSD”)
2. Master of Laws – Taxation (“Tax LLM”)
3. Master of Laws – Foreign Students (“LLM – FTA”)
4. Master of Science in Legal Studies (“MLS”)
5. Master of Taxation (“MT”)

This memo will introduce you to these programs and flag some issues of which you should be aware in the event they enroll in your course.

Doctor of Juridical Sciences (JSD) Students

Who are they?

The JSD is equivalent to a U.S. PhD, hence these students are doctoral students. Generally, they are students who have earned their law degrees from non U.S. institutions and need the JSD to pursue an academic career in their home countries. Some have practiced law in their home countries.

How will I know if a JSD student is enrolled in my course?

The Office of the Registrar (OTR) will notify you via email following the last day to drop a course without a ‘W’ (Approximately the fourth week of the semester/term).

Do I have to create a different assessment mechanism for them?

Faculty are not required to administer a different assessment mechanism (e.g. exam or paper) for JSD students. You may evaluate them using the same form of assessment you use for JD students.

What grading rules apply to JSD students?

JSD students are not subject to the grading scale, standard deviations or means that govern the grading of JD students. The grading scale for JSD students is based on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest grade:

5 = Excellent

4 = Very Good

3 = Good

2 = Fair

0 = No Pass

Grades for JSD students need not be normalized. They constitute their own cohort, and their performance should be compared to one another rather than being compared to the performance of JD students.

How should JSD grades be computed?

There is no mandatory curve for JSD students; grades for these students are not subject to the JD rules governing means and standard deviation. However, the JD scale should act as a point of reference when assigning grades to these students. To that end the administration strongly recommends that JSD grades be computed by employing the following steps:

1. Professors should enter the raw scores for just the JD students using the regular EasyNorm provided by OTR. These scores should then be normalized according to the JD normalization rules.
2. Once the grades for JD students have been calculated, the professor should enter the raw scores of all students, including the JSD students, into a new

spreadsheet, called EasyNorm Lite.(Instructions and EasyNorm Lite can be found here: <http://www.lls.edu/academics/officeoftheregistrar/LFG2435/grading/>)

3. Initially, the professor should use the same mean and standard deviation used to calculate the grades for JD students. This will produce the grade the JSD students would have received had they been graded on the same curve as the JD students.
4. Once the grade has been determined by EasyNorm Lite, the professor has the discretion to assign a final grade that is the same as the JD grade or a grade that is higher or lower.
5. The professor will then need to convert the grade to one of the following:

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Fair

No Pass

A conversion table is attached to this memo.

6. Upon completion, the Final Grades are to reported to OTR at grades@lls.edu.

Should the inclusion of JSD students have an impact on the grades earned by JD students?

No. When determining the appropriate mean and standard deviation to use for JD students, graduate students should not be included as members of the course. Thus, in an upper division course with 30 JD students and 4 graduate students, the mean and standard deviation for computing JD grades should be based on 30 students, not 34.

Master of Laws in Taxation (Tax LLM) Students

Who are they?

Tax LLM students have earned their JDs and most have passed a bar exam. Many are part-time students.

How will I know if there are Tax LLMs enrolled in my course?

The Office of the Registrar (OTR) will notify you via email following the last day to drop a course without a 'W' (Approximately the fourth week of the semester/term).

Do I have to create a different assessment mechanism for Tax LLMs?

Faculty are not required to administer a different assessment mechanism for Tax LLM students. You may evaluate them using the same form of assessment you use for JD students.

What grading rules apply to Tax LLM students?

Tax LLM students are not subject to the grading scale, standard deviations or means that govern the grading of JD students. The grading scale for Tax LLM students is based on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest grade:

5 = Excellent

4 = Very Good

3 = Good

2 = Fair

0 = No Pass

Grades for Tax LLM students need not be normalized. They constitute their own cohort, and their performance should be compared to one another rather than being compared to the performance of JD students.

How should Tax LLM grades be computed?

While the Tax LLM grading scale has no mandatory distribution, we recommend that 40-45% of the LLM grades should be Very Good, 40-45% should be Good, 0-10% should be Excellent, and 0-10% should be Fair. This is merely a suggestion. A good

guideline is for the grades to be roughly divided between Very Good and Good, with Excellents for high outliers and Fair for low outliers. With small numbers of Tax LLM students, their grades may not adhere to this guideline, and a greater or smaller number of Excellents or Fairs may be warranted. Prospective Tax LLM grades are reviewed by Jennifer Kowal, Graduate Tax Program director, for consistency with the grading scale.

Should the inclusion of Tax LLM students have an impact on the grades earned by JD students?

No. When determining the appropriate mean and standard deviation to use for JD students, graduate students should not be included as members of the course. Thus, in an upper division course with 30 JD students and 4 graduate students, the mean and standard deviation for computing JD grades should be based on 30 students, not 34.

Master of Laws for Foreign-Trained Attorneys (LLM–FTA) Students

Who are they?

LLM-FTAs are students who have completed their first law degree outside of the U.S. Many are planning on sitting for a U.S. bar exam. Some will have practiced law in their home countries.

How will I know if there are LLM-FTAs enrolled in my course?

The Office of the Registrar (OTR) will notify you via email following the last day to drop a course without a 'W' (Approximately the fourth week of the semester/term).

Do I have to create a different assessment mechanism for LLM-FTAs?

Faculty are not required to administer a different assessment mechanism for LLM–FTA students. You may evaluate them using the same form of assessment you use for JD students.

What grading rules apply to LLM–FTAs students?

Unlike other graduate students, LLM–FTA students **are** subject to the grading scale, mean and standard deviation rules applicable to JD students. They are, however, their own cohort within each course. Thus, the mean and standard deviation for these students is based on the number of these type of students within a course. Their performance is compared to other LLM-FTA students, not to JD students. In

accordance with the JD rules, if there are fewer than seven LLM-FTAs in a course, their grades are not subject to any mean or standard deviation, even if they are in a course with more than seven students enrolled.

How should LLM-FTA grades be computed?

If there are 8 or more LLM-FTA students enrolled in your course, they are subject to the rules governing grading for JD students. However, these students form their own cohort, separate and distinct from the JD students. Thus, OTR will provide you with a separate EasyNorm to grade the LLM-FTA students as their own cohort; only LLM-FTA students will be included in the relevant grading curve. For courses in which there are 8 or more LLM-FTA students the mean is between 82-85 with no mandatory standard deviation.

If there are 7 or fewer, LLM-FTA students enrolled in your course, there is no mandatory curve, meaning that you are not bound by any particular mean or standard deviation. However, the JD scale should act as a point of reference when assigning grades to these students. To that end the administration strongly recommends that LLM-FTA grades be computed by employing the following steps:

1. Professors should enter the raw scores for just the JD students using the regular EasyNorm provided by OTR. These scores should then be normalized according to the JD normalization rules.
2. Once the grades for JD students have been calculated, the professor should enter the raw scores of all students, including the LLM-FTA students, into a new spreadsheet, called EasyNorm Lite.(Instructions and EasyNorm Lite can be found here: <http://www.lls.edu/academics/officeoftheregistrar/LFG2435/grading/>)
3. Initially, the professor should use the same mean and standard deviation used to calculate the grades for JD students. This will produce the grade the LLM-FTA students would have received had the LLM-FTA students been graded on the same curve as the JD students.

4. Once the grade has been determined by EasyNorm Lite, the professor has the discretion to assign a final grade that is the same as the JD grade or a grade that is higher or lower.

Should the inclusion of LLM-FTA students have an impact on the grades earned by JD students?

No. When determining the appropriate mean and standard deviation to use for JD students, graduate students should not be included as members of the course. Thus, in an upper division course with 30 JD students and 4 graduate students, the mean and standard deviation for computing JD grades should be based on 30 students, not 34.

Master of Legal Studies (MLS) Students

Who are they?

MLS students have earned a BA or BS. They do not have any prior degree in law or legal studies. They are in fields or positions closely related to the law, such as contract administration and law enforcement.

How will I know if there are MLS students enrolled in my course?

The Office of the Registrar (OTR) will notify you via email following the last day to drop a course without a 'W' (Approximately the fourth week of the semester/term).

Do I have to create a different assessment mechanism for MLS students?

Faculty are not required to administer a different assessment mechanism for MLS students. You may evaluate them using the same form of assessment you use for JD students. However, you may wish to consider crafting a different mechanism, as these students are not lawyers, and generally will not be required to draft legal documents. As a general rule, MLS students are allotted additional time to complete exams.

What grading rules apply to MLS students?

MLS students are not subject to the grading scale, standard deviations or means that govern the grading of JD students. The grading scale for MLS students is based on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest grade:

5 = Excellent

4 = Very Good

3 = Good

2 = Fair

0 = No Pass

Grades for MLS students need not be normalized. They constitute their own cohort, and their performance should be compared to one another rather than being compared to the performance of JD students.

How should MLS grades be computed?

There is no mandatory curve for MLS students; grades for these students are not subject to the JD rules governing means and standard deviation. However, the JD scale should act as a point of reference when assigning grades to these students. To that end the administration strongly recommends that MLS grades be computed by employing the following steps:

1. Professors should enter the raw scores for just the JD students using the regular EasyNorm provided by OTR. These scores should then be normalized according to the JD normalization rules.
2. Once the grades for JD students have been calculated, the professor should enter the raw scores of all students, including the MLS students, into a new spreadsheet, called EasyNorm Lite. (Instructions and EasyNorm Lite can be found here: <http://www.lis.edu/academics/officeoftheregistrar/LFG2435/grading/>)
3. Initially, the professor should use the same mean and standard deviation used to calculate the grades for JD students. This will produce the grade the MLS students would have received had they been graded on the same curve as the JD students.
4. Once the grade has been determined by EasyNorm Lite, the professor has the discretion to assign a final grade that is the same as the JD grade or a grade that is higher or lower.

5. The professor will then need to convert the grade to one of the following:

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Fair

No Pass

A conversion table is attached to this memo.

Should the inclusion of MLS students have an impact on the grades earned by JD students?

No. When determining the appropriate mean and standard deviation to use for JD students, graduate students should not be included as members of the course. Thus, in an upper division course with 30 JD students and 4 graduate students, the mean and standard deviation for computing JD grades should be based on 30 students, not 34.

Master of Tax (MT) Students

Who are they?

MT students have earned a BA or BS. They do not have any prior degree in law or legal studies, but plan careers in taxation and want to study tax at a law school rather than a business school.

How will I know if there are MT students enrolled in my course?

The Office of the Registrar (OTR) will notify you via email following the last day to drop a course without a 'W' (Approximately the fourth week of the semester/term).

Do I have to create a different assessment mechanism for MTs?

Faculty are not required to administer a different assessment mechanism for JSD students. You may evaluate them using the same form of assessment you use for JD students.

What grading rules apply to MT students?

MT students are not subject to the grading scale, standard deviations or means that govern the grading of JD students. The grading scale for MT students is based on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest grade:

5 = Excellent

4 = Very Good

3 = Good

2 = Fair

0 = No Pass

Grades for MT students need not be normalized. They constitute their own cohort, and their performance should be compared to one another and to Tax LLM students rather than being compared to the performance of JD students.

How should MT grades be computed?

While the MT grading scale has no mandatory distribution, we recommend that 40-45% of the grades (including Tax LLM students) should be Very Good, 40-45% should be Good, 0-10% should be Excellent, and 0-10% should be Fair. This is merely a suggestion. A good guideline is for the grades to be roughly divided between Very Good and Good, with Excellents for high outliers and Fair for low outliers. With small numbers of MT students, their grades may not adhere to this guideline, and a greater or smaller number of Excellents or Fairs may be warranted. Prospective MT grades are reviewed by Jennifer Kowal, Graduate Tax Program director, for consistency with the grading scale.

Should the inclusion of MT students have an impact on the grades earned by JD students?

No. When determining the appropriate mean and standard deviation to use for JD students, graduate students should not be included as members of the course. Thus, in an upper division course with 30 JD students and 4 graduate students, the mean and standard deviation for computing JD grades should be based on 30 students, not 34.