

**Texas Tech University School of Law**  
**Academic Standards**  
**Temporary Rules for Spring 2020**

**Introduction**

This policy establishes temporary rules for Spring 2020 as accommodations to the Law School's academic standards, including probation and dismissal rules. These temporary rules are necessary in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Law School's midsemester shift to online instruction, a new final exam format, and optional Credit/No Credit grades.

These temporary rules are part of the Law School's flexible and compassionate response to the many challenges students face this semester. These rules also reflect recent ABA guidance indicating that notwithstanding ABA accreditation standards, schools may make "reasonable accommodations" to their probation and academic dismissal rules under the unprecedented circumstances of the global pandemic, but may not "waive" or "abandon" these rules.

The following temporary rules provide additional flexibility for students during this difficult time and also harmonize with the optional Credit/No Credit grading system in place this spring. The Law School reserves the right to modify these rules in response to unanticipated and evolving circumstances.

**Students Currently on Probation**

Students currently on probation, as a reasonable accommodation, will *not* need a cumulative GPA of 2.25 or higher to avoid automatic academic dismissal after the Spring 2020 semester. Subject to the rules stated below on academic success review, probation students instead will have an extended timeline through the Fall 2020 semester to improve their GPAs and return to good standing. Alternatively, students currently on probation can return to good standing at the end of the Spring 2020 semester if (i) their cumulative GPA is 2.25 or higher at the end of the spring semester, and (ii) they elect to retain letter grades in 14 credit hours or more of their courses.

This policy supplements and partially supersedes the policy stated in probation notice letters sent following the fall semester of 2019.

Probation for the fall of 2020 will not result in the loss or reduction of scholarships.

## **All Students--Academic Success Review**

Even under a Credit/No Credit grading system, grades of No Credit are a sign of academic concern requiring review under some circumstances.

Students will have an individualized academic success review if (i) the student receives 6 or more credit hours of No Credit (or F) grades in Spring 2020, and (ii) the student's cumulative GPA before the spring semester of 2020 was 2.75 or lower.

Regardless of the student's cumulative GPA following the Fall 2019 semester, a 1L student will also have an individualized academic success review if the student receives 10 or more credit hours of No Credit (or F) grades in Spring 2020.

In either situation described above, a review will not be necessary if the student has a cumulative GPA above 2.25 as determined at the end of Spring 2020 before election of Credit/No Credit grades.

The academic success review process will be conducted by the Academic Standards Committee and will involve an individual assessment of the student's circumstances, including the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the totality of the student's academic record, and the likelihood of the student's ultimate success in law school. The review process, depending on the individual assessment of the student's case, may result in no action, probation, reentry as a 1L student for first-year students, or dismissal from law school.

No action will be appropriate if the review process determines that there are reliable indicia of likely ultimate academic success. These indicia would include the fact that extraordinary circumstances unlikely to reoccur, such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic, were the primary cause of the student's performance issues. Probation will be appropriate if the review process determines that there are some indicia of likely ultimate academic success but also substantial ongoing concerns about the student's academic performance.

For 1L students, required reentry as a 1L will be appropriate if the review process determines that there are indicia of likely ultimate academic success but only with reentry as a 1L—based upon the student's continued need to master foundational materials to succeed in the 2L year and beyond. (Reentering students may reenter in fall 2020 and the usual rule requiring a reentering student to sit out for at least a year is suspended.) Academic dismissal will be appropriate if the review process determines that there are no reliable indicia of likely ultimate academic success.

## **Conclusion**

These temporary rules for spring 2020 are an important part of the Law School's compassionate and reasonable accommodations to our academic standards and grading system to both support students facing unprecedented challenges and to fully satisfy ABA requirements for operational academic probation and dismissal rules. They also provide the Law School with the flexibility to promote the well-being of all students through extended timelines and individualized determinations of likely academic success.