

Notice of VLGS Amendment to the Academic Regulations

Effective:	Thursday, May 1, 2025
Students Effected:	Effective immediately upon approval by faculty.
Amendment Type:	Revised Academic Regulations
Academic Regulation:	Vermont Law Review Course
Amendment Description:	

In sum, the proposed amendments change the Vermont Law Review Course, which includes both the Vermont Law Review and the Vermont Journal of Environmental Law journals, from a Pass/Fail grading structure to a Pass-Honors/Pass/Low-Pass/Fail grading structure.

The proposed amendments were approved by the Curriculum Committee on April 17, 2025. The Committee on Standards approved this proposal on April 29, 2025; because there are no regulatory problems with implementing this change. However, the Committee on Standards noted that this change significantly expands the student assessment role (limited by ABA standard 305) by evaluating levels beyond a threshold “pass” and could introduce personal or peer influence into the more granular recommended scores.

The specific rationale for the proposed change is as follows:

In conjunction with the faculty advisors, the Editors-in-Chief for both journals recently implemented a rubric system as an objective grading system to determine who passes and the reasons why. The rubrics analyze journal members’ skills, professionalism, and engagement. Members fill these rubrics out at the end of each semester and the rubrics are reviewed by the Editors-in-Chief and faculty advisors, who provide their own feedback and recommendation of pass or fail. These rubrics give members an opportunity to advocate for their success and take ownership of their shortcomings and provide the graders a holistic view of their growth on journal for the semester and year.

The faculty advisors and Editors-in Chiefs believe the HP/P/LP/F system is a better grading system for the journal because while most members earn a passing grade, some members deserve recognition of a higher level of passage than others. The faculty advisors and Editors-in Chiefs would like to reward members that really excel in journal. They have observed that some members need the incentive that comes from grading that is not currently present in a simple pass/fail. The HP/P/LP/F system would incentivize members to avoid the low pass.

The faculty advisors and Editors-in Chiefs came to this realization while reviewing the rubrics from the 2024 fall semester. While most members earned a passing grade, some went above and beyond, and some did the bare minimum. Currently, there is no distinction between those types of members. The rubrics are intended to motivate members to do the best they can because they have to review themselves and receive feedback from upper-level staff. The faculty advisors and Editors-in Chiefs believe this small change in grading will improve the

output of journal product and benefit members.

NEW LANGUAGE

Append academic regulation section II.C by moving the Vermont Law Review course, which includes both the Vermont Law Review and the Vermont Journal of Environmental Law journals, from section II.C.4 to section II.C.3.

Proposed adopted date: immediately upon approval by faculty

Proposed effective date: fall 2025