

Requirements for the J.D. Degree: Students matriculating in the College of Law in 2015

REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE J.D. DEGREE

To graduate with a J.D. degree from the UNT Dallas College of Law, the following requirements must be met:

1. Credit hour requirement. Students must complete no fewer than 88 semester credit hours.
2. Residency requirement. Students must complete at least 53 credit hours in residence.
3. Completion of required courses. For the required courses, see required courses listed in Curricular Requirements.
4. Completion of the Writing Requirement, the Skills Requirement, the Research Requirement, the Experiential Requirement, and the Practice-Related Technology Requirement.
5. Maintain satisfactory academic progress.
6. Complete all requirements in no fewer than 24 months and in no more than 6 years after matriculating at the College of Law or at a law school from which the student has received transfer credit. The ABA Standards address the pace at which a student may complete his or her legal studies. Standard 304(c) requires that the course of study for a J.D. degree be completed “no earlier than 24 months and no later than 84 months after a student has commenced law study at the law school or a law school from which the school has accepted transfer credit.” The College of Law has adopted a maximum period of 6 years (72 months). In exceptional circumstances, the College of Law may extend this requirement but for no more than the maximum allowed by ABA Standard 304(c).

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

First-Year Required Courses

Note: some of these will occur in the fall semester of the second year for evening-division students.

- Fundamentals of Being a Lawyer (1 hour)
- Civil Procedure (2 semesters, 5 hours total)
- Contracts (4 hours)
- Criminal Law (3 hours)
- Legal Methods (1 hour)
- Legal Writing and Research (2 semesters, 6 hours total)
- Practice Foundation I: Interviewing and Counseling (3 hours)

- Property (4 hours)
- Torts (4 hours)

Second-Year Required Courses

- Constitutional Law (3 hours)
- Practice Foundation II: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (3 hours)

Other Required Courses

- Business Associations I (3 hours)
- Evidence (3 hours)
- Family Law (3 hours)
- Professional Responsibility (3 hours)
- Commercial Law (3 hours)
- Wills, Trusts, and Estates (3 hours)
- Texas Civil Procedure (2 hours)
- Texas Criminal Procedure (2 hours)
- Legal Analysis and Bar Readiness I (3 hours)
- Legal Analysis and Bar Readiness II (3 hours)

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to required courses, students must complete a number of “Requirements.” Each of the Requirements relates to an important skill, experience, or proficiency that students at the College of Law are expected to attain. The Requirements are not themselves “courses.” Rather, depending on the Requirement, the Requirements are satisfied through credit-bearing courses, not-for-credit courses or experiences, or demonstrated proficiency.

The Requirements are:

The Writing Requirement. The Writing Requirement is satisfied by (1) completion of six (6) writing segments, and (2) completion of a Major Writing. A writing segment is a writing assignment that correlates in scope and complexity with written work product that lawyers prepare; and on which the student receives assessment. A course may contain more than one writing segment, or may contain one or more writing segments along with a research or skills segment. The Major Writing (1) is an experience involving multiple, original writings or a single, lengthy writing, entailing significant synthesis and analysis; the sum total should generally be at least 25 pages; (2) includes the submission and assessment of at least two drafts of each writing (that is, at least one first-draft and a final draft); (3) must be taught (or supervised) by full-time faculty, or other faculty (such as part-time professor of practice, or adjunct professor) with demonstrated ability to supervise a legal writing experience entailing

significant synthesis and analysis. The Registrar will maintain a list of courses containing writing segments approved by the faculty, and writing segments satisfying the upper-level writing experience.

The Research Requirement. The Research Requirement is satisfied by completion of eight (8) research segments. A research segment requires the completion of at least one significant research assignment, which will include a research plan, a research trail, and a research bibliography. A course may contain more than one research segment, or may contain one or more research segments along with a writing or skills segment. To ensure that students become proficient in the foundational information and research abilities required in practice, multiple research segments will address and reinforce knowledge of sources, creation of a research plan, use of multiple platforms for research, maintaining a research trail, and storing information. The Registrar will maintain and publish a list of courses containing research segments approved by the faculty.

The Skills Requirement. The Skills Requirement is satisfied by completion of six (6) skills segments in addition to the skills provided in the required classes of Practice Foundations I and Practice Foundations II. A skills segment is a performance or activity on which students are assessed and which requires a student to engage in one or more of the following professional skills, or other skills recognized by the faculty as a possible basis for a skills segment: interviewing, counseling, negotiation, fact development and analysis, trial practice, document drafting, conflict resolution, organization and management of legal work, collaboration, cultural competency and self-evaluation. A course may contain more than one skills segment, or may contain one or more skills segments along with a writing or research segment. The Registrar will maintain and publish a list of courses containing skills segments approved by the faculty.

The Experiential Requirement. To satisfy this Requirement, a student must complete the following:

1. Completion of at least two courses from any of the following three categories: Practicum, Externship, and Clinic. Subject to approval, two courses can be from the same category;
2. Satisfactory completion of the Community Engagement Program; and
3. Satisfactory completion of the L.A. Bedford Mentorship Program.

The Practice-Related Technology Requirement. To satisfy this Requirement, students must demonstrate basic proficiency as to practice-related technologies, including case management and time-keeping software; trial and litigation software; word processing; and databases. The College of Law will provide means for necessary training and for demonstrating the required proficiencies.

The Practice-Related Technology Requirement ensures that students graduate with competence in practice-related technologies. Competent and effective law practice in all settings entails ability to use such technologies. Rule 1.1 of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct explains that the requirement of competent representation “requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation necessary for the representation.” New Comment 8 to this Rule notes that competent representation requires a lawyer to “keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology.”