

PENN STATE DICKINSON LAW

Student Academic Handbook

2022-2023

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Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

This handbook is intended to serve as a collection of major Dickinson Law policies and procedures. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to familiarize themselves with these policies.

Please do not consider this handbook as a substitute for speaking directly to members of the law school administration. Dickinson Law encourages you all to reach out with questions. You can find a [complete directory of faculty and staff](#) on our website.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Dodge, Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services

Amy C. Gaudion, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Pamela R. Knowlton, Registrar

New for 2022-23:

- Creation of a Policy on Taking the Bar Exam in the Sixth Semester: Page 12
- Updated Academic Standing Rules: Page 12
- Inclusion of the Study Abroad Policies: Page 24
- Addition of a Summer Enrollment Policy: Page 41
- Inclusion of Inclement Weather Policies: Page 46
- Revision of Mental Health Resource Information: Page 50

Certain provisions of the Student Academic Handbook require the permission of either the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services. To seek such approval, please complete the [Associate Deans' Approval Request Form](#).

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1. Sources of Information and Rules

A. **Learning Outcomes:** The Learning Outcomes set forth here are the faculty's description of the aims of a comprehensive legal education for each student. The overarching goal of the faculty is to vest in our students the entire range of concrete lawyering skills necessary to most effectively perform as legal professionals at the local, state, national, transnational, and international levels in the 21st century. Every course in the Law School's curriculum is designed to achieve some but not all of the Learning Outcomes. Categories 1, 2 and 3 address knowledge outcomes, and categories 4, 5, 6 and 7 address skills outcomes. Category 8 addresses professional values outcomes.

I. KNOWLEDGE

- a. Category 1 — Substantive rules of law. Each graduating student must have demonstrated knowledge of the basic rules of law and the diversity of law practice as contained in:
 - i. the first-year required curriculum: Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Law Practice: Contexts & Competencies, Law Practice: Critical Skills, Legal Analysis & Writing I: Objective, Legal Analysis & Writing II: Persuasive, Legal Research I, Legal Research II, Property, Race and Equal Protection of the Laws, and Torts.
 - ii. the upper-level required curriculum: Professional Responsibility, one seminar course, and one course designated as having subject matter focused on civil rights, equal protection, or social justice; and
 - iii. at least 12 credit hours of experiential learning coursework, 6 credits of which must be earned in a "real" setting as opposed to a simulated setting (see below for an explanation).
- b. Category 2 — Preparation for the bar examination. Each graduating student must take a minimum number of courses covering subjects and skills typically tested on the bar examination. The minimum coursework for bar preparation is the first-year curriculum and Professional Responsibility.
- c. Category 3 — Sources of law and the process of law creation and evolution. Each graduating student must understand:
 - i. the roles and differing characteristics of sources of law: the common law; legislation, administrative regulations; treaties and judicial interpretation of legislation, and constitutions;
 - ii. the processes through which law is made and changed, and how those processes differ from one source of law to another; and
 - iii. the different roles that state and federal law play in the process of lawmaking.

II. SKILLS

- a. Category 4 — Research. Each graduating student must have demonstrated the ability to:
 - i. devise and implement a coherent research plan to effectively resolve specific legal issues.
 - ii. identify and employ the fundamental tools of legal research, whether in print or electronic format.
 - iii. evaluate different types of resources and assess their appropriate use as reference or authorities.
- b. Category 5 — Writing. Each graduating student must have demonstrated the ability to:
 - i. write analytically and persuasively; and
 - ii. draft legal documents such as contracts, legal memoranda, client communications, opinion letters and briefs.
- c. Category 6 — Basic legal analysis, fact development and law-finding. Each graduating student must have demonstrated satisfactory or better performance in the following:
 - i. extracting rules and policy from cases, statutes, and administrative regulations and analyzing, applying, interpreting, and arguing differing interpretations of rules and statutes;
 - ii. conducting investigation of facts;
 - iii. identifying legal issues in fact patterns, and applying rules and policy to facts;
 - iv. weighing evidence to reach factual inferences;
 - v. constructing arguments and identifying flaws in an argument;
 - vi. presenting analysis orally; and
 - vii. using policy to analyze and persuade.
- d. Category 7 — Entry-level lawyer capabilities. At the level of proficiency required for effectiveness as an entry-level lawyer and in a manner appropriate to a student's professional goals, each graduating student must have demonstrated satisfactory or better performance in most of the following learning outcomes:
 - i. strategic legal research and strategic planning regarding research;
 - ii. problem solving in light of a client's objectives: anticipating consequences and assessing risks;
 - iii. recognizing the most common ethical and professional liability dilemmas and resolving them with high professional standards;
 - iv. recognizing how international and foreign law can affect a client's rights and knowing how to respond;
 - v. negotiating in dispute, transactional, or regulatory contexts;
 - vi. communicating with clients and others;
 - vii. interviewing;
 - viii. performing basic trial or other dispute resolution system tasks (including using the rules of evidence);

- ix. using procedural tools such as motions and discovery;
- x. knowing how to read transactional and financial documents, including financial statements;
- xi. utilizing experts and expert knowledge;
- xii. working collaboratively;
- xiii. learning from experience through self-critique;
- xiv. managing projects within time and resource limitations;
- xv. presenting orally outside of litigation; and
- xvi. using technology in legal practice.

III. PROFESSIONAL VALUES

- a. Category 8 — Professional Identity and Perspectives. Each graduating student will understand:
 - i. the structure of the legal profession and the role of lawyers in the profession;
 - ii. how to conduct oneself in accordance with standards of professional conduct. For example, knowing how to apply the principles and policies reflected in the law governing lawyers, including a lawyer’s duty of loyalty to clients, fiduciary duties, and obligation of competent representation;
 - iii. the important role that cultural competency plays in a lawyer’s ability to deliver competent legal services to clients;
 - iv. the expectations of employers and others with respect to lawyers’ knowledge, skills, qualities, and behavior; and
 - v. a lawyer’s commitment to and expanding access to justice to those who lack the resources to hire a lawyer.

B. The Code of Conduct

- I. The Penn State University Code of Conduct outlines the standard procedures and practices of the University conduct process. The Code describes behaviors that are inconsistent with the essential values of the University community (integrity, respect, responsibility, discovery, excellence and community) and that are inconsistent with Penn State’s Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- II. All students should be fully aware of their individual and organizational rights and responsibilities, as they will be held accountable for all aspects of the [Code of Conduct](#) and associated guidance.
- III. Dickinson Law students are subject to the behavioral provisions in the Penn State University [Code of Conduct](#) and, as a complement, the provisions contained in the Dickinson Law [Honor Code](#).

C. The Honor Code

- I. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the Dickinson Law’s Honor Code exists to

safeguard and promote the ideals of honor and integrity by prohibiting lying, cheating, stealing, and other dishonorable conduct of an academic nature.

- II. Any person affiliated with the law school may report a violation by submitting a memorandum to the Honor Code Administrator, currently Assistant Dean Laura Williams. View the [Honor Code on our website](#) for more information.

D. Statement of Nondiscrimination

- I. The University is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University's educational mission, and will not be tolerated.
 - II. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Office, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901, Email: aao@psu.edu, Phone: 814-863-0471.
 - III. The Statement of Nondiscrimination is enforceable through the Code of Conduct. Sanctions may be imposed upon any student or student organization found to have violated the Code, including warnings and probation or through to loss of privileges and suspension.
- E. **Report Bias:** Penn State and Dickinson Law take great pride in fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through the Office of Academic & Student Services or via the [Educational Equity Report Bias webpage](#).
- #### **F. Title IX Policy**
- I. Title IX is a federal law prohibiting sexual harassment and sex discrimination in education. Penn State's Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response, along with the Office of Academic & Student Services, addresses Title IX reports involving students, as well as other reports of student sexual misconduct otherwise prohibited by University policy. On- and off-campus behaviors including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and stalking, as well as retaliation for reporting any of these acts violate University policy and/or Title IX and are not tolerated. Learn more about the Title IX policies and procedures here: <https://titleix.psu.edu/psu-title-ix-procedures/>.
 - II. Sexual or gender-based discrimination, harassment or misconduct may be reported through the Office of Academic & Student Services or via the [Title IX Response Incident Report Form](#). Also visit the [Dickinson Law Title IX resource webpage](#).

- G. **FERPA Rights and Confidentiality:** The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 identifies the rights of students and their families with respect to student educational records kept by institutions. Learn more about the operational procedures for certain aspects of FERPA-related policies at Penn State and your rights on the [University Registrar's website](#).
- H. **Campus Security Crime Statistics Clery Act:** The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act and Pennsylvania Act of 1988 require that crime statistics for Pennsylvania colleges and universities be made available to applicants upon request. Penn State's combined Annual Security and Annual Fire Safety Report includes statistics for the previous three years concerning reported crimes that occurred on campus, in certain off-campus buildings owned or controlled by the University, and on public property within or immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus. The report also includes institutional policies concerning campus security, such as those concerning alcohol and drug use, crime prevention, the reporting of crimes, sexual assault, and other matters. You may obtain this information for the Penn State campus to which you are applying by accessing the [Clery website](#). A printed copy of the report may be obtained by writing to University Police & Public Safety, The Pennsylvania State University, Eisenhower Parking Deck, University Park, PA 16802-6703 or by calling 814-865-1864.

2. Juris Doctor (J.D.) Degree Requirements

A. **J.D. Degree Requirements:** Each student is responsible for fulfilling the J.D. degree requirements. Students should track their academic record and progress by consulting with their assigned faculty advisor, the Registrar's Office, and other administrative personnel.

I. To earn the Dickinson Law J.D. degree, a student must:

- a. Earn at least 88 credits;
- b. Complete with a passing grade all first-year required courses;
- c. Complete with a grade of at least C the course labelled Legal Analysis and Writing I: Objective;
- d. Complete with a grade of at least C the course labelled Legal Analysis and Writing II: Persuasive;
- e. Complete with a grade of at least C one course designated as a Seminar course ("SEMNR");
- f. Complete with a grade of at least C the course in Professional Responsibility;
- g. Complete with a grade of at least C, one course beyond the first-year required courses, designated as having subject matter focused on civil rights, equal protection, or social justice;
- h. Complete, with a grade of at least C, or a grade of Credit in Credit/No Credit courses, 12 credits in Experiential Learning from the upper-level curriculum.

The student must earn at least 6 of the required 12 credits in an in-house legal clinic ("EXPCL"), an externship ("EXPIN"), or a semester-in-practice ("EXPIN"). The student may earn the remaining experiential learning credits in an in-house legal clinic ("EXPCL"), an externship ("EXPIN"), a semester-in-practice ("EXPIN"), or in courses designated as simulation courses ("EXPSK");

- i. Comply with the Semesters-in-Residence Requirement; and
- j. Comply with the Academic Standing Rules.

II. Contingent J.D. Degree Requirements:

- a. Students who rank in the bottom quarter of their law school class after the second semester of law school and who earned a grade below C in any first-year course, have the following additional requirements for graduation:
 - i. must take and pass at least six substantive doctrinal bar courses ("BAR") in order to graduate; and
 - ii. must take and pass the Fundamental Skills for the Bar Examination course during the final semester of law school.
- b. Waiver. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs has discretion to waive the Contingent J.D. Degree Requirements for students that have demonstrated strong academic performance after the first year of law school.

- III. J.D. Degree Requirements for Transfer Students: Students transferring to Dickinson Law from another law school must satisfy all requirements for graduation beyond the Dickinson Law first year curriculum.
- B. **J.D. Degree Audits:** Each student is responsible for fulfilling the J.D. degree requirements. Students should track their academic record and progress by consulting with their assigned faculty advisor, the Registrar's Office, and other administrative personnel. The Registrar's Office will conduct degree audits for all graduating students in the summer between your second and third year and again at the start of your final semester. If you have any questions about your progress toward graduation, contact the Registrar's Office.
- C. **Semesters-in-Residence J.D. Degree Requirement & Taking a Bar Exam in the Final Semester:** Students who begin the full-time J.D. program at Dickinson Law must be in residence for 6 semesters.
 - I. "Resident" semesters are fall and spring. Summer is not considered a semester of "residence."
 - II. "Resident" semesters are also characterized as semesters of full-time enrollment, which is 12+ credits. Summer is not considered a semester of "residence" even if the student is enrolled in 12+ credits during the summer.
 - III. Students who transfer from another institution to Dickinson Law must be in residence for 4 semesters.
 - IV. Students seeking to take a bar exam in February of their final semester while concurrently completing their remaining degree requirements must take at least six substantive doctrinal bar courses ("BAR") by the end of the fall semester of their third year; be ranked in the top half of their class after the spring semester of their second year; and meet with the Director of Academic Success by the first Friday in April of the spring semester of their second year to declare their intentions. Students are also required to complete the administrative requirements of the state bar exam they seek to take early. Students pursuing the New York Pro Bono Scholars program should refer to the Dickinson Law procedures on myDL for additional instructions.
 - V. More detailed information on residency may be found in the section on Earning Credits from Another ABA-Accredited Law School.

D. Academic Standing Rules & Academic Dismissals

- I. Standard:
 - a. Good Academic Standing: In order to enjoy continued enrollment at the law school and, ultimately, graduate, students must maintain good academic standing. To maintain good academic standing, each student must earn a first semester of the first-year grade point average of at least 1.7 and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 at the end of each semester thereafter.
 - b. Earning a grade below C in Legal Analysis and Writing I: A student must earn a grade of C or better to earn credit for the Legal Analysis and Writing I course. If a student earns a grade below C in Legal Analysis and Writing I, the student will not be permitted to enroll in Legal Analysis and Writing II in the subsequent semester but must retake the Legal Analysis

and Writing I course at the earliest possible time. Once a student earns a grade of C or better in Legal Analysis and Writing I, they will be permitted to enroll in Legal Analysis and Writing II. A student required to retake Legal Analysis and Writing I may, with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, enroll in experiential learning course work prior to successful completion of the Legal Analysis & Writing I course.

- c. Earning a grade below C in Legal Analysis and Writing II: A student must earn a grade of C or better to earn credit for the Legal Analysis and Writing II course. If a student earns a grade below C in Legal Analysis and Writing II, the student must retake the course at the earliest possible time. A student required to retake Legal Analysis and Writing II may, with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, enroll in experiential learning course work prior to successful completion of the Legal Analysis and Writing II course.
- d. Earning a grade below C in Legal Research I: A student must earn a passing grade of C or better to earn credit for the Legal Research I course. If a student earns a grade below C in Legal Research I, the student will not be permitted to enroll in Legal Research II in the subsequent semester but must retake the Legal Research I course at the earliest possible time. Once a student earns a passing grade of C or better in Legal Research I, they will be permitted to enroll in Legal Research II. A student required to retake Legal Research I may, with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, enroll in experiential learning course work prior to successful completion of the Legal Research I course.
- e. Earning a grade below C in Legal Research II: A student must earn a grade of C or better to earn credit for the Legal Research II course. If a student earns a grade below C in Legal Research II, the student must retake the course at the earliest possible time. A student required to retake Legal Research II may, with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, enroll in experiential learning course work prior to successful completion of the Legal Research II course.

II. Procedure:

- a. Notice to Student. As soon as practicable after grades are due each semester, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall notify a student in writing that they failed to meet the minimum standard of academic performance.
- b. Academic Success Plan. Students who rank in the lowest quarter of their law school class after the first semester of law school will be notified by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that they have the following additional requirements in order to maintain good standing: must meet with the Director of Academic Success at least three times in the second semester of law school; attend the Academic Success workshops and programs; and provide a certificate signed by the Director of Academic Success to the Registrar affirming completion of this requirement by April 1.

- c. Petition for Reinstatement to Good Standing. The student may submit to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs a written petition seeking reinstatement to good standing within five business days after the student receives notice. A student may request an extension of the five-day period upon written request to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs delivered before expiration of the five-day period. A student may include as part of the petition a written personal statement and written statements from faculty members or other persons whose views may be relevant on the issue of grounds for reinstatement to good standing.
- d. Effect of Failure to Submit a Petition. A student who does not submit a written petition seeking reinstatement within five business days (or an authorized longer period) will be dismissed from the law school as of the last date for submission of a petition.
- e. Right to Hearing. A student may request a hearing before the Academic Rules Committee in the petition. If so requested, the Academic Rules Committee shall schedule a hearing as soon as practicable following receipt of the student's petition. The purpose of the hearing is to permit the student to make a statement based on issues raised in the written petition and to answer questions of the Academic Rules Committee. The student must appear alone. Counsel, witnesses or other observers are not permitted.

- III. Presumption Based on Academic Performance: To merit reinstatement to good standing, the student must present evidence sufficient to overcome the presumption that arises from the student's academic performance that:
 - a. The student is unable or unwilling to undertake the discipline of study to succeed in law school and the legal profession; or
 - b. The student's failure to meet the minimum standards of academic performance was substantially attributable to inability or unwillingness to meet minimum academic standards and not to disabling circumstances which the student reasonably could not have anticipated or rectified. (In no case will employment during the semester be considered a disabling circumstance).

In addition to the student's petition, the Academic Rules Committee must request information related to the student's academic performance from all instructing faculty. Following this request, the faculty may choose whether or not to provide the requested information related to their course.

- IV. Finality: The decision of the Academic Rules Committee on a petition for reinstatement is final and not appealable to the Academic Rules Committee for reconsideration.
- V. Effect of Academic Dismissal: The transcript of a student dismissed for failure to maintain minimum academic standards under this rule will show that the student was dismissed on academic grounds. ABA Standard 501(c) applies to students dismissed on academic grounds who subsequently seek admission to another law school.

3. J.D. Degree Requirements Explained and Course Planning

A. Required First Year and Upper-Level Courses

I. Fall 1L Required Courses

- a. Civil Procedure (4 credits)
- b. Criminal Law (3 credits)
- c. Law Practice: Contexts and Competencies (2 credits)
- d. Legal Analysis & Writing I: Objective (2 credits)
- e. Legal Research I (1 credit)
- f. Race and the Equal Protections of the Laws (0.5 credit)
- g. Torts (4 credits)

II. Spring 1L Required Courses

- h. Constitutional Law I (3 credits)
- i. Contracts (4 credits)
- j. Law Practice: Critical Skills (2 credits)
- k. Legal Analysis & Writing II: Persuasive (2 credits)
- l. Legal Research II (1 credit)
- m. Property (4 credits)
- n. Race and the Equal Protections of the Laws (0.5 credit)

III. Upper-Level Required Courses

- o. Experiential Learning (12 credits)
- p. Professional Responsibility (3 credits)
- q. One course that meets the Seminar requirement (2-3 credits)
- r. One course that meets the Civil Rights, Equal Protection, or Social Justice requirement (2-3 credits)

B. Faculty Advisors: All Dickinson Law students are assigned a full-time faculty member as an academic advisor. Information on your academic advisor is available on LionPath in the Advisor Information section. The Associate Deans for Academic Affairs and Academic and Student Services are available to advise any student, but in particular, students should consider the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs as their advisor when their assigned faculty advisor is on sabbatical or other leave. In addition, the Offices for Academic and Student Services and the Law School Registrar are available for academic advice.

C. Experiential Learning J.D. Degree Requirement

- I. To graduate from Dickinson Law, students must earn 12 credits in experiential learning courses.
 - a. 6 of the 12 required experiential learning credits must come from a law practice setting. Courses that satisfy this requirement are labeled EXPCL or EXPIN. To meet this requirement, you may combine credits from an in-house clinic, from an externship program, from a Semester-in-Practice program, or from another faculty approved program.
 - b. The remaining 6 experiential learning credits may be earned by taking courses in an in-house clinic (EXPCL), an externship (EXPIN), a Semester-in-Practice program (EXPIN), from a classroom course

designated as an experiential learning course (EXPSK), or from another faculty approved program.

II. Experiential Learning Credit Caps:

- a. Students may enroll in no more than 12 credits total for in-house clinical courses (EXPCL).
- b. Students may enroll in no more than 12 credits of general externship courses (EXPIN); however, a Semester-in-Practice does not count toward the 12-credit limit).
- c. Credit hours earned through externships including the externship credits in the Semester-in-Practice programs count towards the co-curricular credit cap of 22 credits.

III. Experiential Learning Enrollment Limitations:

- a. Because of the potential for conflicts of interest and the difficulty managing law practice in two different contexts while undertaking classroom course work, a student is not permitted to enroll in:
 - i. a clinic and an externship in the same semester;
 - ii. more than one externship in the same semester; or
 - iii. more than one clinic in the same semester.
- b. Due to equitable considerations or education necessity, each of the foregoing rules regarding same-semester enrollment in clinics and externships may be waived by written permission of the Associate Dean of Experiential Education. (Adopted February 29, 2016).

IV. Please reference the Experiential Learning and Externship Handbooks for more information on the program specific requirements. You may also contact the Associate Dean of Experiential Education with questions.

D. Clinical Programs: In order to be eligible for a clinic, a student must submit a timely application to the clinic and demonstrate that the student satisfies the requirements of that clinic. Enrollment in clinics is selective and not guaranteed. Clinical faculty select students for enrollment in their respective clinic based on the following criteria:

- I. the student's academic record;
- II. the student's demonstrated interest in clinical legal education;
- III. the student's demonstrated interest in the practice area of the clinic;
- IV. the student's ability to obtain any required court certification, and pass background checks, or other clearances required by the clinic;
- V. the student's ability to undertake clinic work; and
- VI. whether the student has been afforded a clinical opportunity previously and would displace a student who has not yet had a clinical course.

Dickinson Law currently operates the following clinics:

- I. Children's Advocacy Clinic (CAC): Protecting the Most Vulnerable; The CAC was established in 2006. It is an innovative interdisciplinary clinical program under the direction of founder and director Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Assistant Professor of Law, where law students and graduate social work students represent children in the legal system and work to address problems in the child welfare

system. Students work together as a team, serving children who have been victimized as well as those involved in other civil court actions such as adoption, domestic violence, and custody matters. Students gain valuable hands-on training in some of the most intense, high-emotion situations a law practitioner will face. Clients are represented by both a law student and a graduate social work student who use a team approach to address children's needs. Social work students are supervised by a clinic social worker. Additionally, students will have the chance to work with pediatric residents and child psychiatry fellows from Penn State Hershey, deepening their understanding of the child advocacy landscape.

Requirements to Participate in the Children's Advocacy Clinic:

- Complete three semesters of law school
- Prerequisites preferred
 - Professional Responsibility
 - Evidence
- Taking one of the following courses is strongly encouraged:
 - Juvenile Law
 - Child Welfare Law & Policy Seminar

- II. Community Law Clinic: Equal Justice Under the Law; For those underserved populations living near or below the poverty line, the Community Law Clinic represents the way forward in matters of family law, disability law, and other areas where they need legal assistance. As a member of the Clinic and under the supervision of Clinical Professor of Law and Director Megan Riesmeyer, students have the opportunity to represent clients through every level of the state common pleas court system or the requisite federal court system. Students not only gain valuable hands-on training, but they become difference-makers for those who have nowhere else to turn. Students advocate in family law matters such as divorce, support, custody, adoption, and protection from abuse; and in disability law matters such as ability discrimination, special education, Americans with Disabilities Act claims, and Social Security Disability Claims.

Requirements to Participate in the Community Law Clinic:

- Complete Three Semesters of Law School
- Taking one of the following courses is strongly encouraged:
 - Family Law
 - Law of Individuals with Disabilities
 - Administrative Law
- In selecting students for the Community Law Clinic, preference will be given to students who have completed the courses listed below because these students are eligible to become certified legal interns under Rule 322 of the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners:
 - Professional Responsibility
 - Evidence

- III. Medical Legal Partnership: Making Lives Whole; Every day, low-income families in central Pennsylvania encounter legal issues that have a negative impact on their health. Under the supervision of Assistant Professor of Law and the founding director

Medha D. Makhoul, students in the Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) Clinic work with health care providers and advocates from Penn State Health, Hamilton Health Center in Harrisburg, Sadler Health Center in Carlisle, and other community organizations to detect, prevent, and address health-harming legal issues through joint advocacy. The ultimate goal of the Clinic is to reduce health disparities and improve health in underserved communities through medical-legal advocacy. Here, you can take a lead role in providing holistic legal representation to low-income patients. The Clinic focuses on access to public benefits and limited immigration matters.

Visit the [Legal Clinics website](#) to learn more about these opportunities.

- E. **Externship Program:** Dickinson Law is conveniently located near Harrisburg, the center of state government and home to federal government offices and judges in the Middle District of Pennsylvania, and six county seats which permits students to pursue a wide range of externship possibilities while maintaining a full course load.
- I. Under the guidance of an experienced supervisor, second- and third-year law students can step out of the classroom and gain practical experience working in a legal office in one of Dickinson Law's externship programs. In order to receive academic credit for working at an externship placement site, students must:
 - a. complete legal work at their externship site for a required number of hours per credit (typically 140 hours per semester for three credits);
 - b. attend and participate in the academic companion course; and
 - c. complete assigned readings and required reflective assignments and self-evaluations.
 - II. General externships allow students to continue taking courses while working with federal judges, state or federal government agencies, and public interest or nonprofit organizations. Private sector placements with corporate in-house counsel are approved on a case-by-case basis by the Associate Dean of Experiential Education and externship coordinator.
 - III. Students who have completed at least two semesters of legal education and are in good academic standing are eligible to apply for an externship. Some placements require students to be eligible for Certified Legal Intern Status (see Pennsylvania Bar Admission Rules 321 and 322 for more details), which may require enrollment in the *Professional Responsibility* course. Students should consult with the Associate Dean of Experiential Education and externship coordinator to determine the specific requirements of their externship placement.
 - IV. Externships for academic credit may be paid or unpaid (see revised ABA Standard 304 which removed the prohibition on paid externships for academic credit). Paid externships must be approved by the Associate Dean of Experiential Education and externship coordinator.
 - V. Visit the [Externship Program website](#) to learn about placement opportunities.
- F. **Semester-in-Practice Programs:** Students who wish to participate in the Semester-in-Practice Programs in an approved federal or state government, nonprofit, or public interest office must request a degree audit from the Registrar's Office to confirm that they meet the program eligibility requirements listed below:

- I. The student is in good academic standing and is not the subject of an Honor Code investigation or proceeding;
- II. The student will complete the third year of law school with at least 88 credits required to graduate; and
- III. The student will not exceed the limit on co-curricular credits with inclusion of the semester-in-practice externship.

Visit the [Semester in Practice Program website](#) to learn about placement opportunities.

G. The International Justice Program: Students who wish to participate in the International Justice Program in their third year should begin planning in the spring of their first year. To be eligible to apply for the program, students must meet the requirements set forth below no later than the end of their second year and before beginning the externship. Students interested in the program must file separate applications with the court they wish to work in and with Dickinson Law. Students interested in applying should request from the Registrar's Office certification of the following program eligibility requirements at least two weeks before the program application deadline.

- I. The student is in good academic standing (not on academic probation) and is not the subject of an Honor Code investigation or proceeding;
- II. The student will complete the third year of law school with at least 88 credits required to graduate; and
- III. The student will not exceed the limit on co-curricular credits with inclusion of the full semester externship.

**Spring semester may be considered with permission from the program director.*

For more information on the International Justice Program, contact Professor Dermot Groome and visit the [Semester in Practice Program website](#).

H. Seminar Writing J.D. Degree Requirement: A major academic purpose of a Seminar is to develop and test the student's research and writing skills. The following rules should be interpreted with this purpose in mind. Each course faculty member may issue instructions or interpretive guidelines to supplement these rules.

- I. To graduate, a student must complete, with a grade of at least C, one course designated as a Seminar course (SEMNR).
- II. A Seminar must be at least 2 credits and ordinarily is 2-3 credits. Credits are subject to the Academic Rule on the "Meaning of a Credit Hour."
- III. In accordance with ABA regulations, a Seminar will be a rigorous writing experience that includes multiple opportunities for feedback, and individualized assessment of the student's writing.
- IV. A Seminar is ordinarily taught by a member of the resident faculty and no more than 20 students may enroll in the course.
- V. Ordinarily, absent special arrangements by the faculty member and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Seminars are expected to meet weekly.
- VI. A Seminar paper must comply with the following submission and formatting requirements unless the faculty member directs otherwise: ten double-spaced, typed pages per credit, excluding footnotes, with the maximum length to be set by the course faculty member; one-inch margins; and twelve-point font.

- VII. Citations shall conform to "The Bluebook," unless the faculty member has established a different citation system.
- VIII. Students must submit an original manuscript.
- IX. A paper submitted in a Seminar is due no later than the last day of classes for the semester unless a student has an accommodation through the Penn State Student Disability Resources that provides for an extension of time, or the faculty member has established a different due date.
- X. Students shall not engage in plagiarism or other dishonesty or deception in a Seminar paper. Students guilty of such conduct will receive a failing grade, will be denied credit for the course, and will be subject to other sanctions pursuant to Dickinson Law's Honor Code.
- XI. Students shall not receive excessive assistance or make excessive use of the work of someone else in preparing a Seminar paper, regardless of whether they give credit to that person.
- XII. With the faculty member's permission, a student can build on work previously done, but to receive credit the student must add new material and satisfy the "Meaning of a Credit Hour" requirement.

I. **Enrolling in Other Upper-Level Courses:** This information is intended to offer some general advice to you as you are planning and selecting courses for your second and third years of law school. Many factors are relevant to your selection of upper-level course work, including your interest in developing professional knowledge and skills, developing expertise in a specialized field, and passing a bar exam. In addition to considering the guidance below, you should not hesitate to contact your faculty advisor, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services, the Director of Academic Success, or other members of the faculty for more personalized guidance.

I. **Developing General Knowledge and Skills:** Consider the following courses because they are valuable in almost any field of practice and will help prepare you for the Uniform Bar Exam: Business Entities I: Unincorporated Business Entities, Business Entities II: Corporations, Conflicts of Law, Constitutional Law II, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Family Law, Real Estate Transactions, Remedies, Sales, Secured Transactions, and Wills, Trusts, and Estates. Students are also encouraged to take Fundamental Skills for the Bar Examination in their final semester.

You should also consider courses that will enhance your professional skills. There are many such courses offered in our curriculum, including in-house clinics, externships, and classroom-based skills courses. In addition, consider the following courses that are not tested on the Uniform Bar Exam, but are important in practice and tested in other jurisdictions: Administrative Law and Basic Federal Income Taxation.

II. **Developing Expertise in a Specialty Field:** Many students are interested in specializing in a particular field of law. When considering a particular field of law, we encourage you to seek advice from faculty members who have expertise in the specified field of interest as well as those that oversee Certificate offerings.

[Certificates](#) are a unique way to distinguish yourself through a structured course of study.

Students can find a variety of planning resources and guides on the [Registrar's website](#). These include a graduation checklist, lists of seminar courses, lists of skills courses, and other course selection materials, on the Registrar's website in myDL. In addition, the Registrar creates a semester-specific webpage each semester to help students with registration and enrollment questions.

J. Taking Courses at Another Penn State Academic Unit

J.D. students who are not enrolled in a joint degree program may apply up to 6 credits of Penn State University graduate-level courses, or undergraduate-level foreign language courses, toward their J.D. degree.

I. Eligible Graduate-Level Courses:

- a. 500-level or higher courses; or
- b. 400-level courses, but only with the advanced approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs upon a showing that the course is sufficiently rigorous to justify credit toward the J.D. degree.

II. Eligible Undergraduate-Level Foreign Language Courses:

- a. A student must obtain the advanced approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs upon showing that they intend to use the undergraduate-level course to acquire proficiency in a foreign language as part of their legal career objective.

III. Generally Applicable Rules:

- a. Both graduate-level course credits and undergraduate-level foreign language course credits are considered co-curricular credits.
- b. Students may not apply less than all the credits earned in a course toward the six credits permitted under this rule.
- c. Students may take non-law courses at Penn State University Park, Penn State Harrisburg or other Penn State Commonwealth Colleges.
- d. Credits a student earned prior to matriculation to the J.D. program are not eligible (see exceptions below).
- e. Graduate-level Individual Studies (596) credits will not be applied to the J.D. degree.
- f. Credits will count towards the J.D. degree only if the student earns a grade of at least a B. Credits earned are not calculated into a student's GPA.

IV. Pre-Matriculation Credit: Academic credit earned prior to matriculation into the Dickinson Law J.D. program may not be applied toward the J.D. degree unless:

- a. The credit is awarded pursuant to the Dickinson Law "Rules Governing Transfer from the LL.M. to the J.D. Degree Program;" or
- b. The credits were earned in a J.D. program at another ABA approved law school, the student seeking recognition of those credits left that law school in good standing, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs determines that some or all of the credits should be imported and applied toward the J.D. degree at Dickinson Law.

- K. **Distance Education:** A student may apply no more than a total of 15 credit hours of distance education credits toward the 88 credits required for the J.D. degree. Distance education credits are credits earned in a distance education course. A distance education course is one in which students are separated from the faculty member or each other for more than one-third of the instruction and the instruction involves the use of technology to support regular and substantive interaction among students and between the students and the faculty member, either synchronously or asynchronously.
- L. **Double Counting of Course Work:** Unless as part of an approved joint degree program, course work may not be double counted to satisfy the J.D. or LL.M. graduation requirements. For example, a course cannot satisfy both the Seminar requirement and the Experiential Learning requirement. Courses that count toward the requirements for a certificate may also count toward a graduation requirement. For example, the Advocacy course may count toward a certificate as well as the experiential learning requirement for graduation. For additional information, see the section below on the “Meaning of Credit Hour.”
- M. **Co-Curricular Credit Rules:** Certain courses in the Dickinson Law curriculum have been designated as co-curricular courses. The credits students earn in these courses are referred to as co-curricular credits. Dickinson Law’s academic rules about co-curricular credits reflect the requirements found in Standard 311 of the accreditation standards adopted by the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. Because the co-curricular credit rules are based on accreditation Standard 311, waivers from the co-curricular credit rules will not be granted.
- I. **Definition:** Co-curricular credits are credits earned in ungraded settings or settings that do not involve attendance during a semester in regularly scheduled Dickinson Law classroom sessions, or settings that lack direct faculty instruction. Credits earned in the following types of courses are co-curricular credits:
- a. Credit hours earned through externships, the Semester-in-Practice programs, and the International Justice Program (e.g., LionPath codes EXPIN);
 - b. Credit hours earned in a unit of Penn State other than Dickinson Law;
 - c. Credit hours earned outside of Penn State such as U.S. Army War College credits or credits earned from another ABA accredited law school;
 - d. Credit hours earned in Independent Study courses;
 - e. Credit hours earned for participation in co-curricular activities such as law review, moot court and mock trial; and
 - f. Credit hours earned in any Dickinson Law summer study abroad courses or other courses taken outside the United States.
- Credits students earn in a law school clinic (LionPath codes EXPCL) do not count as co-curricular credits.
- II. **22 Credit Maximum for Co-Curricular Credits:** Students are permitted to enroll in no more than 22 co-curricular credits.
- III. **Credit Limits for Particular Categories of Courses:** In addition to the rule that limits students to a total of 22 co-curricular credits, the academic rules limit the

number of credits you can earn for particular kinds of courses. These limits are as follows:

- a. Students may enroll in no more than 6 credits for law review or journal membership or membership on any other student edited publication for which academic credit is awarded.
- b. Students may enroll in no more than 4 credits for Moot Court Board membership.
- c. Students may enroll in no more than 2 credits for membership on a mock trial competition team;
- d. Students may enroll in no more than 6 credits for summer study abroad courses offered by Dickinson Law;
- e. Students may enroll in no more than 6 credits for Penn State University graduate courses, U.S. Army War College courses, or Penn State University undergraduate foreign language courses, including courses offered via World Campus. Enrollment in 400-level courses, undergraduate foreign language courses, or courses offered via World Campus require the advance approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. (Students in an approved joint degree program are subject to the specific rules of that program and are not subject to this 6 credit limit).
- f. Students may enroll in no more than 6 credits for non-required upper-level courses offered by ABA accredited law schools other than Dickinson Law, unless approved to visit away at another ABA accredited law school. Such approval may be granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- g. Students may enroll in no more than 4 credits under the Pass/Fail option. A student may elect the Pass/Fail option for no more than one course during law school.

N. Independent Study Credit

- I. A student may register for no more than one Independent Study course per semester.
- II. A student may register for no more than two Independent Study courses for a maximum of four (4) credits during their legal study.
- III. An Independent Study course may be for one, two or three credits. Pursuant to Dickinson Law's academic rule on "Meaning of a Credit Hour," for every credit of an independent study, students will complete the equivalent of one hour in class and two hours of work outside of class per week for 15 weeks, or at least 45 hours per credit during the semester. Students must maintain a log of all hours and submit the log to the supervising professor no later than the last day of the exam period for the semester.
- IV. A student may take an Independent Study only from a supervising professor. A supervising professor must be either a resident or adjunct Dickinson Law faculty member. Professors from other units of the University are not within this definition. Graduate level Individual Studies credits will not be applied to the J.D. degree.
- V. The student must complete the Independent Study course [Declaration of Intent Form](#) which sets out the number and method of meetings, the method of how the meaning of a credit hour rule will be satisfied, the assessment tools for the course,

the frequency of time-log submissions and the expected work product. The supervising professor must approve the [Declaration of Intent Form](#).

- VI. The Independent Study Course can be either a singular research project that results in a research paper of a specific length, or an alternative project approved by the supervising professor. The supervising professor will determine and designate the appropriate assessment tool or tools, including, but not limited to, assigned readings, intermediate formative assessments, and final examination, for each Independent Study course.
 - VII. The student must submit the [Declaration of Intent Form](#) to the Law School Registrar prior to the first day of classes for the semester in which the Independent Study credits will be earned.
 - VIII. An Independent Study course does not satisfy the Seminar requirement for graduation.
 - IX. A student may elect to take an Independent Study course as Pass/Fail.
 - X. The student must submit a completed [Certificate of Completion Form](#) to the Law School Registrar no later than the last day of the exam period for the semester in which the Independent Study credits will be earned.
- O. Semester Study Abroad Programs:** Students may study abroad during the fourth or fifth semester of law school. Students may not study abroad during the sixth or final semester of law school. Check program details carefully. Additional information on studying abroad is available in the Education Abroad Handbook available through the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education.
- I. Eligibility: To be eligible to apply for semester study abroad, a student must:
 - a. Have completed with at least a passing grade all courses in the required curriculum;
 - b. Be in good academic standing and not subject to an Honor Code proceeding or sanction at the time of application and at the time the student studies abroad;
 - c. Have demonstrated a strong academic record at the law school in courses which comprise the core knowledge of lawyers and which are routinely tested on most state bar exams. At the minimum, by the end of the third semester, the student must rank in the top 80% of his or her class based on overall cumulative grade point average. However, if the student earned a C or lower in the required legal writing courses, or if the student earned a D or lower in any other course in the required curriculum, then, by the end of the third semester, the student must rank in the top 75% of his or her class based on overall cumulative grade point average); and
 - d. Demonstrate through academic achievement and conduct: integrity, maturity and excellent time management and interpersonal skill.

Note: Students who have transferred into to the J.D. program from the LL.M. program or from the J.D. program at another school, and students who enter the J.D. program with advanced standing are not eligible for semester abroad programs.

- II. Application Process: All students interested in a Dickinson Law semester study abroad program must follow the application process and deadlines established by the Office of International Programs and Graduate Education.
- III. Academic Credit and Grading: Dickinson Law will award academic credit (on a credit/no credit scale) towards the J.D. for courses a Dickinson Law exchange student successfully completes at a partner institution during the study abroad semester. The maximum number of credits transferred from the partner institution is 12 credits (ABROD 900).
- IV. Co-Curricular Credit Maximum: Students considering study abroad should review the law school requirements on co-curricular credits.

P. Certificate Program Policies and Requirements

- I. Certificate Requirements: To earn a certificate in one of the programs below, a student must:
 - a. Submit a [Declaration of Intent Form](#) to the Law School Registrar no later than the last day of classes of the fifth semester of their legal studies for J.D. students;
 - b. Complete a minimum of 15 credits by taking the Core Courses and Elective Courses, listed for each Certificate program;
 - c. Earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in the certificate courses. For purposes of calculating the cumulative GPA in certificate courses in instances where the student has completed more than the minimum course work for the certificate, the Registrar and Certificate Advisor shall use the course work with the highest grades. No graded certificate course work may be taken on a Pass/Fail basis; and
 - d. Submit a [Certificate Completion Form](#) to the Law School Registrar prior to the last day of classes before graduation. All of the above referenced forms are posted on the Office of the Registrar's My Dickinson Law website.
- II. Certificate Limitations: A student may pursue and earn only one certificate, and only one concentration within a certificate.
- III. Certificate Programs:
 - a. Civil Rights, Equal Protection, and Social Justice Certificate (Advisor: Professor Amy Gaudion).
 - b. Corporate Compliance Certificate (Advisors: Professors Lance Cole, Medha Makhoulouf & Laura Williams). Concentrations in Financial Services, Health Care, Information Security, and General are available.
 - c. Cyber, Privacy, and Data Security Certificate (Advisor: Professor Tonya Evans).
 - d. Entrepreneurship Law Certificate (Advisor: Professor Samantha Prince). Concentrations in Transactional Law, Intellectual Property and Technology, and General are available.
 - e. Family Law & Children's Advocacy Certificate (Advisors: Professors Jeffrey A. Dodge, Lucy Johnston-Walsh, and Megan Riesmeyer).

- f. Government Affairs Certificate (Advisors: Professors Lance Cole and Amy Gaudion). Concentrations in National Security Law, Federal Regulatory & Legislative Practice, and State Regulatory and Legislative Practice are available.
- g. Health Law & Policy Certificate (Advisor: Professor Medha Makhlouf).
- h. Litigation & Dispute Resolution Certificate (Advisor: Professor Gary Gildin). Concentrations in Civil Litigation, Criminal Litigation, and Dispute Resolution are available.
- i. Tax Law & Policy Certificate (Advisor: Professor Bill Barker).

Q. Academic Success & Bar Preparation Resources

- I. Director of Academic Success and Bar Passage: Dickinson Law has a director of academic success and bar passage that is available to support students in law school and on the bar exam. The director, currently Professor Titichia Jackson, develops, teaches, and supports substantive bar preparation courses and courses that provide academic and law-specific skill development, including the summer supplemental bar preparation program (offered from May to July following graduation) and Fundamental Skills for the Bar Exam (usually taught in the spring semester). She also provides individual academic success counseling to students.
 - II. Tutoring Program: Tutoring services are provided at no cost to students. Tutors are second- and third-year law students who have demonstrated a high level of competence in the assigned course curriculum. The tutoring program is not designed for course review; students are encouraged to request a tutor only for areas they find particularly daunting despite their best efforts. Tutors are available for doctrinal first year courses (Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law, Property, and Torts) and select upper-level bar tested subjects (Professional Responsibility, Evidence, and Business Entities I & II).
- R. Dickinson Law Review and Scholarly Journals:** Dickinson Law offers its students a rich array of research and scholarly experiences, including the opportunity to be selected for membership on The Dickinson Law Review and as student editors for the *Jus Gentium Journal of International Legal History*. The Dickinson Law Review is the law school's flagship journal. It is one of the oldest law reviews in the country and is credited with having the first woman law review editor, Julia Radle, in 1898. Its commitment to excellence and opportunity has remained steadfast over its 120+ year history. Students who have completed their first year of law school have the opportunity to be selected for law review. Participation on law review is a two-year commitment, which includes writing a scholarly comment of potentially publishable quality. Students who participate on law review earn one credit per semester their first year as editors and one to two credits per semester their second year depending on their role. Law review is a tremendous opportunity to advance a student's writing, editing, and leadership skills.
- S. Moot Court Board:** Dickinson Law students also participate in national moot court competitions. Team members, chosen each year through an intra-school competition, advance their writing, problem-solving, and advocacy skills under the guidance of faculty members and experienced lawyers. The law school sponsors moot court teams in a variety of legal areas. Students who participate on moot court can earn one course credit per semester.

4. Joint Degree Programs

Your choice of courses is not limited to Dickinson Law. You may enroll in one of an array of joint degree programs, graduating with both your J.D. from Dickinson Law and a master's degree from a coordinate academic unit of Penn State. Students will have degree advisors both at Dickinson Law as well as at the academic unit offering the joint degree. Completing a joint degree program, involving a law degree and a master's degree, usually takes 4 academic years to complete. Without the joint degree program, it would take 5 years (3 for the law degree and 2 for the master's degree). If you are interested in pursuing a joint degree, please contact the Registrar, and submit a request through the [Associate Deans' Approval Request Form](#).

A. **J.D./Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.):**

Students pursuing the J.D./M.B.A. may want to focus their M.B.A. studies in one of the tracks of electives listed below:

- I. Business Analytics
- II. Finance
- III. Information Systems
- IV. Strategic Leadership and Innovation
- V. Supply Chain Management

B. **J.D./Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.):** Students pursuing the J.D./M.P.A may want to focus their M.P.A. studies in one of the concentrations listed below:

- I. Nonprofit Management
- II. Policy Analysis and Evaluation
- III. Public Budgeting and Financial Management
- IV. State-Local Government and Administration

C. **J.D./Master of Public Health (M.P.H.):** The J.D./M.P.H. joint degree offers students an accelerated course of study of law and public health, enabling them to successfully enter the complex and ever-changing fields of public health and health law. Students pursuing this degree will gain advanced knowledge of legal matters relating to public health; use legal tools to solve public health challenges; and train for a career in public health research, policy, and advocacy; health law; or environmental law.

D. **J.D./Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.):** The J.D./Dr.P.H. degree offers students an accelerated course of study of law and public health, enabling them to successfully enter the complex and ever-changing fields of public health and health law. Students pursuing this degree will gain advanced knowledge of legal matters relating to public health; use legal tools to solve public health challenges; and train for a career in public health research, policy, and advocacy; health law; or environmental law.

5. Course Registration Policies

A. Meaning of a Credit Hour Pursuant to ABA Standard 310(b)

- I. A “credit hour” is an amount of work that reasonably approximates:
 - a. not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
 - b. at least an equivalent amount of work as required in subparagraph (a) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including simulation, field placement, clinical, co-curricular, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
- II. A student may not earn academic credit more than once for the same or similar work. For example, a student may not submit the same or similar work to satisfy the requirements for membership on a law journal and for credit in a Seminar course, independent study course, or other course. A student may not submit the same or similar work to satisfy the requirements of two different courses. With the Supervising Professor’s permission, a student may submit work for a course that builds on the student’s prior work, but the student must add new material and must satisfy the credit hour requirements listed in paragraph (I).
- III. For additional information, see the section above on “Double Counting of Course Work.”

B. Add/Drop Policies

- I. Students are responsible for making all decisions regarding their enrollment status for all courses. Should a student decide to withdraw from a course, they must drop it via LionPath prior to the “add/drop” deadline. Please note that this deadline is very short; the end of the first week of classes. A student may not drop or add a course after the expiration of the drop/add period except with the permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and only for adequate justification.
- II. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may permit a student to drop a course after expiration of the normal, one-week drop-add period and before the final work product for the course is due (either the examination date or the date when the final paper or similar product is to be submitted) if the student demonstrates, in writing via the [Associate Deans’ Approval Request Form](#) and in the judgment of the Associate Dean, adequate justification for dropping the course. Examples of adequate justification include:
 - a. hardship, especially if the consequences or events precipitating the hardship were unknown to or could not have been reasonably anticipated by the student at the close of the regularly scheduled drop/add period; and
 - b. uncertainty from the reasonable perspective of the student, continuing until the time when application to drop the course is filed, as to whether the student needs the course credit to meet usual academic requirements necessary for that student to complete their studies in ordinary course (e.g., the student took the course only because they were uncertain as to whether they might win a position on a law review or on an appellate or trial team for which credit is awarded upon successful completion of a

competition). The Associate Dean should make a prompt decision on any request to drop a course and should, in ordinary course, ascertain whether the course professor has reason to object.

- III. The precise dates for the end of the drop/add period are available on the Academic Calendar website.

C. Pass/Fail Policies: Students may elect to take a course Pass/Fail during the first three weeks of the semester. The following rules apply to Pass/Fail courses:

- I. A student may take only one course Pass/Fail during their entire J.D. program.
- II. A student who receives a grade below C+ in a Pass/Fail course will have the letter grade earned entered on the transcript and used for all purposes. A student who earns a grade of C+ or higher will have a "P" entered on the transcript, and the course is then ignored in the computation of grade point averages. The actual letter grade is not provided to the student.
- III. The Pass/Fail rules are in effect for any Summer Sessions and Study Abroad Programs. Credits earned in Summer Programs on a Pass/Fail basis are treated as though earned in the succeeding academic year.
- IV. Review the Co-Curricular Credit Rules for additional information regarding courses taken under the Pass/Fail option.
- V. Only courses designated "Pass/Fail eligible" by the professor in the registration materials may be elected Pass/Fail.
- VI. Students may not elect the Pass/Fail option for Required Courses, Seminars, or courses that a student is required to take for a certificate or elects to apply to a certificate.

D. Auditing a Course

- I. Permission to audit a course must be granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- II. The student must first seek approval from the course instructor to audit a course. This approval should be shared with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- III. The course will appear on the student's schedule as though it has been scheduled for credit.
- IV. The course will appear on the student's transcript with the grading symbol "AUS" if attendance was satisfactory or "AUU" if the attendance was unsatisfactory.
- V. No credit is earned, and the grade-point average is not affected.
- VI. Audit credits are charged at the normal per credit tuition rate.
- VII. Credits for a course being audited are not counted in determining the following:
 - a. enrollment status (full-time or part-time)
 - b. calculating semester standing
 - c. financial aid status
 - d. full-time status for international students for reporting to SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) under federal requirements.

E. Repeating Course Work

- I. Provided seats in a classroom are available, a student may elect, on a one-time basis, to retake a course that the student previously has taken, subject to the academic rules regarding retaking a course.

- II. A grade earned through repeated course work will not replace a prior grade earned in that same course. Each course attempted by a student will be listed on the student's transcript each time the course is taken, and each grade earned in a repeated course will appear on the transcript.
 - III. Each grade earned in a repeated course will count for purposes of calculating cumulative GPA and ranking.
 - IV. Regardless of how many times a course is taken, credits assigned to a single course will count only once for the purposes of applying credits toward the 88 credits needed to earn the J.D. degree.
- F. **Non-Law Students in Law School Classes:** Enrollment (including audit) and attendance in a law school class is limited to law students, with these exceptions:
- I. PSU graduate students with the approval of the law professor and the law school Associate Dean for Academic Affairs;
 - II. Students enrolled in PSU approved Integrated Undergraduate-Graduate degree programs with the approval of the law professor and the law school Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; and
 - III. Persons not already enrolled in a PSU academic program who register to audit a law school course with the approval of the law professor and the law school Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
 - IV. Auditors are charged law school tuition.

6. Classroom Policies

A. Class Attendance

- I. Prompt and regular course attendance is required of all students. Consistent with American Bar Association accreditation standards, individual faculty members shall establish, announce, and implement a policy designed to ensure regular and prompt attendance for each course. The policy shall be made known in writing to all students enrolled in the course by no later than the end of the drop-add period, and included in the course syllabus. With notice to students, faculty members may modify their methods for monitoring promptness and attendance during the semester. The faculty reserves the right to cancel the registration of a student who fails to comply with the requirement of regular class attendance.
- II. Please note that viewing a class recording is not a substitute for class attendance and preparation, which is required for all class sessions (unless excused by the professor on an exceptional basis for good reason) and in order to remain in good academic standing with the law school. The law school's class recording policy is intended to enhance your learning experience, not to substitute for regular class attendance and preparation.
- III. Students also should note the Involuntary Withdrawal policies in Section 9.

B. Class Recording Policy

- I. All Law School courses occur in classrooms equipped with audiovisual telecommunications equipment that is capable of making an audiovisual recording of each class session as it occurs. In order to provide the potential educational benefits of recorded classes to our students, the school records, and archives for a limited period of time, all class sessions occurring in our classrooms. The purpose of the recordings is to permit students enrolled in each recorded course to access the recordings outside of the regularly scheduled class period, according to rules established by the professor. Access to recorded classes will be controlled via a secure course management platform and will be restricted to students enrolled in the recorded course, the professor, and those University IT personnel necessary to maintain the system. All recordings will be deleted following the conclusion of the semester in which the recorded course occurs (unless all identifying student images are edited out of the recording, in which case the professor and school jointly may decide to retain the edited recording for other purposes). By registering for or attending Law School courses, you consent to the school's making and display of class recordings within the scope of this policy.
- II. The faculty's approval is predicated on the understanding that AV recordings are made as an accommodation to students and are not records or documents of the law school. They will be deleted shortly after the semester concludes. If University policy indicates anything to the contrary, then faculty approval of this AV policy is void and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will bring the issue of the school's AV recording policy back to the faculty for its consideration.
- III. Opt-Out Policy: Faculty members may opt-out of the automatic recording policy for all courses, with the exception of courses designated "REQ" or "BAR", absent enrollment of a student with ADA or language accommodations. Faculty seeking to opt out of the automatic recording policy will submit a request to the Law

School Registrar prior to the first day of classes for the semester. Once the drop/add period concludes, and course enrollment is confirmed, the Law School Registrar will process the opt-out requests. Faculty opting out of the automatic recording policy will notify the affected students.

C. Use of Electronic Devices During Class

- I. The use of personal electronic devices (e.g., laptops, smart phones, tablets, and other such devices) in law school classrooms must be consistent with Dickinson Law and University policies and are restricted to activities that further the educational mission of the class in session (e.g., taking notes or using electronic resources as instructed by the professor).
- II. Use of electronic resources for other purposes (e.g., unauthorized recordings of classes, playing games, surfing the Internet, reading and sending email, streaming videos, etc.) is forbidden and may result in disciplinary action.
- III. The instructor may take appropriate steps to address such behaviors when they arise in the classroom. These may include reducing the student's grade or denying the student credit for the class. Dickinson Law expects each student to advance the educational mission of the law school and to comply with this standard.

D. Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE):

Penn State's Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence manages the SRTE process and helps facilitate the appropriate use of SRTE data. The SRTE process provides students the opportunity to provide meaningful and constructive feedback about their courses and faculty. The SRTE process is conducted at the end of each semester and students are sent notices with the opening and closing dates. All students are strongly encouraged to complete SRTEs for their courses, so the feedback is as representative of the class as possible.

7. Assessments and Final Examinations

For more detailed information on semester-specific exam information, including information on the exam schedule, downloading and testing the appropriate exam software (Exam4), obtaining your Exam ID, seeking accommodations, and exam policies and regulations, students should visit the [Registrar's Office website on myDL](#). The policies below are applicable to both mid-semester assessments and final examinations.

A. **Honor Code Violations:** Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, failure to stop writing or typing when time is called, use of unauthorized materials or devices, violating law school regulations or in any other manner practicing dishonesty during or in connection with any assessment or final exam is a violation of the [Dickinson Law Honor Code](#).

B. General Assessment & Exam Regulations

- I. Instructions. Students should carefully review and follow the specific instructions and directions prepared by their faculty member for the timed, in-class assessment.
- II. Typing v. Handwriting. When taking a timed, in-class assessment, students may elect to type (using a laptop computer) or handwrite their answers.
 - a. Typing. Students who are typing must download and test the law school's Exam4 software prior to (1) mid-term assessments and (2) final exams, and must do so each semester. For more information about the Exam4 software, click [here](#).
 - b. Handwriting. Students who are handwriting must use the answer booklets provided in the room.

A student who begins typing in a secure exam program but encounters a computer problem should seek assistance from an IT office staff member. Such a student may switch to handwriting in supplied answer booklets, however, they may not log out of the exam software and their laptop must remain closed until the expiration of the exam period.

- III. Computer Problems During Timed, In-class Assessments. A student who begins typing but encounters a computer problem should leave their laptop in the room, and then seek assistance from an IT Office staff member (IT staff will be in the IT Suite). If the computer problem cannot be resolved quickly, the student may switch to handwriting in the answer booklets for the remainder of the assessment, however, the student should not log out of the Exam4 software and their laptop must remain closed until the expiration of the assessment period.
- IV. Arrival and Attendance. Students are responsible for knowing the due dates for all assignments and assessments, and for arriving to timed, in-class assessments approximately 15 minutes *before* the start time.
 - a. Tardy Students. Students arriving late for a timed, in-class assessment (after it has begun) will be directed to the Registrar's Office, and will take that assessment in another room so as not to disturb the assessment already in progress. Absent contrary written instructions from a faculty member,

the presumption is that students who are not present at the start of the timed, in-class assessment are eligible to take that assessment with a late start, but are not eligible for additional time to complete that assessment.

- b. Absent or No-Show Students. The proctor for the timed, in-class assessment will take attendance. If a student is absent and does not have a previously determined reason for being absent, the Registrar's Office will attempt to contact the absent student via email and telephone. If the student is able to arrive before the end of that assessment, the regulation governing Tardy Students (see above) will apply. Generally, if a student misses their timed, in-class assessment and does not provide a compelling reason, they will not be permitted to take it at another time. Students who miss their timed, in-class assessment should contact the Registrar; to preserve student anonymity, students should not contact the faculty member.

The schedule for timed, in-class final exams is available [here](#). The dates for all other timed, in-class assessments will be listed in the syllabus for the affected course.

- V. Mobile and Electronic Devices. The use of mobile and electronic devices (phones, watches, tablets, headsets, headphones, and other similar electronic devices, etc.) is prohibited during timed, in-class assessments unless specifically authorized by the faculty member. Such devices should be turned off upon entering the room, and stored with the student's other belongings in the front of the room (see section below on Personal Belongings).
- VI. Emergency Contacts. If a student needs to be reached during an assessment, students should provide the following list of contacts to the individuals that may need to reach the student during the timed, in-class assessment: Student Services: 717-240-5209 or the Registrar: 717-240-5212.

If an emergency call is received for a student, a staff member will escort the student from the assessment room to a private room so that the student may address the emergency.
- VII. Calculators. If students are permitted by the faculty member to use a calculator during a timed, in-class assessment, they must use an "old-fashioned" calculator that has no other function and cannot be connected to the internet. Students may not use a calculator application on a mobile device (phones, watches, other similar electronic devices, etc.).
- VIII. External Devices. Use of an external wired or wireless keyboard and/or mouse is permitted during timed, in-class assessments provided the devices are quiet. If other students are distracted by the use of an external keyboard, a student may be asked to use the internal keyboard of their laptop. If the internal keyboard of the student's laptop is not fully functional, they may request to borrow a wired external keyboard from the IT office (subject to availability). Students should contact the IT office no later than two weeks before the last day of classes for the

semester. Borrowed keyboards must be picked up and returned before and after each assessment. External displays are not permitted.

- IX. Leaving the Room During Assessment. If a student needs to leave the room during the timed, in-class assessment (for a restroom break or otherwise), the student may not take a mobile device or other similar electronic device out of the room (see section below on Mobile Devices). Students should refrain from speaking with others while in the restroom, hallway, café, etc.
- X. Food and Drink. Students are permitted to bring food and drink into their timed, in-class assessments. Out of respect for fellow test takers, students are encouraged to bring “quiet snacks” that are unwrapped and/or in a clear plastic bag before the exam begins. Students are allowed no more than two beverage containers, and they must be stored on the floor when not in use.
- XI. Personal Belongings. All backpacks, bags, books, mobile devices, and materials not otherwise permitted during a timed, in-class assessment must be stored in the front of the room.

C. Anonymous Grading & Exam IDs

- I. The majority of law school assessments are graded anonymously and student self-identification of any kind is not permitted. To preserve student anonymity, Mid-term IDs and Exam IDs are assigned to students for use on assessments. Until grades are delivered by the faculty member to the Registrar, students may not reveal IDs to any person other than a member of the IT Department or administrator. IDs will be used as the only identifier on the assessment materials, and placing the ID on that assessment is the student’s responsibility. Students who self-identify or place their names on assessments or answer sheets will have waived the right to have their assessment anonymously graded.
- II. To preserve student anonymity, the Office of Academic and Student Services is responsible for scheduling and proctoring assessments for students who have accommodations. To preserve student anonymity, the Registrar’s Office is responsible for scheduling and proctoring assessments for students who have rescheduling needs. To preserve student anonymity, students should not discuss individual scheduling arrangements with faculty members.
- III. Students are responsible for [obtaining their Mid-term ID or Exam IDs](#) prior to the assessment.

D. **Exam Schedule:** The final exam schedule is posted on the [Final Exam Information website](#) each semester.

E. Requests to Reschedule Exams

- I. Administration of timed, in-class assessments other than at the scheduled day and time is permitted only to accommodate students with a direct conflict (assessments scheduled on the same day and same time), for other compelling reasons (defined below), and religious holiday conflicts. All students requesting an exam reschedule must complete the [Associate Deans’ Approval Request Form](#).

- a. **Direct Conflict.** A direct conflict occurs when a student has two or more timed, in-class assessments scheduled on the same day and at the same time. If this occurs with timed, in-class final exams, the Registrar will notify students via e-mail of the opportunity to reschedule direct conflicts, and students must submit a request to reschedule to the Registrar no later than three weeks before the last day of classes for the semester.
 - b. **Other Compelling Reasons.** Students who encounter a compelling reason to reschedule a timed, in-class assessment, for example, an acute illness, accident, or a family or other emergency, should contact the Registrar, either before the assessment or as soon as practicable. Exam scheduling changes for conflicts with important scheduled events rarely will be granted. To qualify, the event must be a significant life event that requires a student's attendance (e.g., sister's wedding), the selection of the date must have been outside of the student's control, and the student must notify the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs as soon as the event is scheduled. A student should not make travel arrangements for such events until permission is granted. The Registrar and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will consider all requests and consult with the impacted faculty member in appropriate cases.
 - c. **Religious Holiday Conflict:** If an assessment or exam falls on a religious holiday a student observes, the student should notify the Associate Dean of Academic & Student Services as early in the semester as possible to arrange an appropriate make-up time.
- II. Because of the importance of anonymous grading, students must not discuss any exam scheduling or rescheduling issues with faculty. Violations of this rule may result in disciplinary action.

F. Accommodations Request (Disability-Related)

- I. Please [follow these steps](#) to request disability-related accommodations for timed, in-class assessments.
- II. Contact the [Office of Academic & Student Services](#) with questions.

G. Accommodations Request (Language-Related) - Translation Dictionary Request for International J.D. Students

- I. International students enrolled in the J.D. program for whom English is not a first language may request the use of a hard-copy English language and/or translation dictionary during timed, in-class assessments. In circumstances where a hard-copy translation dictionary is not available, the student may request the use of a foreign language translating dictionary in electronic form, provided it has no memory capacity, contains no other functions besides language translation, and does not connect to the internet. Legal dictionaries are not permitted for use during timed, in-class assessments. Such requests will be considered by the Director of International and Graduate Programs in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the affected faculty member.
- II. Please submit [this form](#) to request language-related accommodations for timed, in-class assessments.
- III. Contact the [Director of International and Graduate Programs](#) with questions.

8. Grading, Evaluation, and Academic Honors

A. Access to Grading Information:

- I. Students may access their grades on LionPath — select “My Grades” on the dashboard, then select the appropriate semester.
- II. Grading deadlines for faculty are located on the [Academic Calendar](#).
- III. See the instructions below on how to request a transcript.

B. Grading Norms:

The Dickinson Law faculty established these grading norms for all J.D. students in: (1) all required courses; (2) electives with an enrollment of 30 or more; and (3) seminars and electives with an enrollment of 29 or fewer, as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. All required courses: | Median = B Mean = 2.9-3.1 Expect 15% A and A- |
| 2. Electives with an enrollment of 30 or more: | Median = B Mean = 2.9-3.2 Expect 15% A and A- |
| 3. Seminars and electives with an enrollment of 29 or fewer: | Mean = 3.0-3.6 No expectations |

These norms are suggested guidelines as opposed to rigid requirements.

C. Grading System:

Grades are assigned to J.D. candidates on the basis of the instructor’s judgment of the student’s scholastic achievement using the grading system below:

| | | |
|-----|--------|---------------------|
| A | (4.00) | Distinguished |
| A- | (3.67) | Excellent |
| B+ | (3.33) | Superior |
| B | (3.00) | Very Good |
| B- | (2.67) | Good |
| C+ | (2.33) | Satisfactory |
| C | (2.00) | Passing |
| D | (1.00) | Conditional Failure |
| F | (0.00) | Failure (No Credit) |
| CR | | Credit |
| NC | | No Credit |
| DF | | Deferred Grade |
| NG | | No Grade Reported |
| AUS | | Audit Satisfactory |

| | | |
|-----|--|----------------------|
| AUU | | Audit Unsatisfactory |
|-----|--|----------------------|

D. Grade Appeals: Grading student work is one of the central responsibilities of law faculty members, and as lawyers they take this responsibility very seriously. Grading is the exclusive responsibility of each faculty member. Therefore, absent a calculation error or other mistake by the professor which the professor determines justifies submission of a grade change, grades are final. There are no grounds for appeal of a grade by a student except upon evidence of misconduct on the part of the faculty member such as: i) assignment of a grade on some basis other than the faculty member's assessment of the student's performance in the course; ii) assignment of a grade by arbitrary or capricious application of standards different than those applied to other students in the course; or iii) assignment of a grade under standards that are a substantial and unreasonable departure from the instructor's initially articulated standards.

E. Class Rank

I. When is Class Rank Calculated?

- a. The ranking process occurs after final grades have been submitted each semester. Credits earned at Dickinson Law over the summer are calculated in the fall ranking process; there is no summer ranking process.
- b. The general time frame for the ranking process is:
 - i. Fall Semester: Early January
 - ii. Spring Semester: Early June

II. Class Percentile Ranking Chart: An official percentile chart will be published each semester (fall and spring) on the law school's website after the ranking process runs. The chart will identify the cumulative GPA cut-offs associated with percentage ranks in the class for the semester based on the cumulative rankings of full-time students in each class for that semester. For example, it might show that a 3.68 or better is associated with a rank in the top 5% of the second-year class, that a 3.57 or better is associated with a rank in the top 10% of the class, etc.

III. Full-Time Student Ranking:

- a. Each full-time student enrolled in the law school's full-time J.D. program as a first-year student and beyond, shall receive a semester rank and cumulative rank relative to their classmates at the end of each semester (fall and spring) in which the student completes at least one letter-graded course for credit from the law school's curriculum. If a student has no graded credits during the semester, the student will not receive a semester rank.
- b. The class with which each full-time student is ranked shall be determined by the total cumulative number of law credits (900 level) the student has earned at the time semester ranks are calculated, employing the following rules:
 - i. 10 — 32 total credits earned ranked with the first-year class
 - ii. 33 — 56 total credits earned ranked with the second-year class
 - iii. 57+ total credits earned ranked with the third-year class

- c. The student can determine total cumulative credits earned by reviewing their advising transcript and current semester schedule on LionPath. By combining the cumulative law credits on the transcript with the current semester law credits where grades will be earned, the student can determine which class they will be included in for ranking.
 - d. Semester and cumulative ranks, as they are earned, will appear on the student transcript. Ranking information is considered part of the student's permanent academic record and therefore will not be removed from the transcript.
- II. Part-Time Student Ranking: Students enrolled on a part-time basis are not ranked but will receive a semester and a cumulative GPA.
- III. Joint Degree Student Ranking: To receive a semester rank, students enrolled in an approved joint degree program must complete at least one letter-graded course from the J.D. curriculum in the semester in which ranking takes place.
- IV. Transfer Student Ranking:
 - a. Students who enroll in the law school's full-time J.D. program as transfer students do not receive a cumulative ranking.
 - b. Students who enroll in the law school's full-time J.D. program as transfer students can determine their percentage rank among their classmates by using the official Class Percentile Rankings Chart.
 - c. Students who enroll in the law school's full-time J.D. program as transfer students will receive a semester rank relative to their classmates at the end of each semester (fall and spring) in which the student completes at least one letter-graded course for credit from the law school's curriculum. If a student has no graded credits during the semester, the student will not receive a semester rank.
- V. LL.M. and Visiting Student Ranking: LL.M. students and visiting students do not receive a semester or cumulative ranking.
- VI. Non-Law School Credits Earned and Class Ranking: Semester and cumulative GPAs account only for grades earned by students in courses offered in the law school's curriculum (900 level); credits earned in non-law school courses will not be calculated in the student's semester or cumulative rank. However, credits earned in courses that are not offered in the law school's curriculum may, in some cases, be applied to the total number of credits needed for graduation.

B. Academic Honors and the Woolsack Society

- I. Academic Honors
 - a. Students who rank in the top 10 percent (*cum laude*), 5 percent (*magna cum laude*) and 2 percent (*summa cum laude*) of their graduating class based on their class rank at graduation after at least six semesters of legal study at Dickinson Law will earn Academic Honors.
 - b. Dickinson Law students must have at least 57 graded credits to be eligible for Academic Honors.

- c. Academic Honors will appear on the student's diploma and transcript. Academic Honors are not listed in the commencement program.
- d. Please refer to the section above on "Class Ranking" for information on how class ranking is calculated, and the number of graded credits a student must earn to be ranked in a particular class.

II. Woolsack Society

- a. The Woolsack Honor Society was founded in 1920 for the purpose of recognizing academic excellence. It was re-established in 1981.
- b. Membership in the Society is extended to students who rank in the top fifteen percent of their graduating class and who have at least six semesters of legal study at Dickinson Law.
- c. Students must have at least 57 graded credits to be eligible for Woolsack Honor Society.
- d. Woolsack Honor Society will appear on the student's transcript. Woolsack Honor Society is not listed in the commencement program.

Transfer Student Eligibility for Academic Honors and Woolsack Society: Transfer students who have a cumulative GPA that would generate a rank equivalent to the ranks outlined above will be awarded Academic Honors and/or Woolsack Honor Society according to their rank equivalency. The award of Academic Honors or Woolsack Honor Society to a transfer student shall not displace a non-transfer student who qualifies for such recognition when transfer students are removed from the class rank calculation.

- III. Other Recognitions: Visit the [Awards and Honors website](#) to review other recognitions and recent recipients.

9. Enrollment and Withdrawal Policies

A. Visiting at Another ABA-Accredited Law School

- I. Ordinarily, it is expected that all full-time J.D. students will maintain full-time resident status during their six semesters at Penn State Dickinson Law. Required law school courses typically must be completed at Dickinson Law. However, any student may apply toward their J.D. a maximum of 6 credits of non-required upper-level course work offered at another ABA-accredited law school upon prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
 - II. In a rare case, the student may seek the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs's approval to waive the 6-credit limit by demonstrating a compelling reason. Circumstances reasonably foreseeable to the student, such as the desire to seek employment elsewhere, to relocate to be closer to a significant other, or to lower the costs associated with attending Dickinson Law, do not meet the compelling reason standard.
 - III. Dickinson Law students attending another ABA-accredited law school will be enrolled in VISIT 901 by the Law School Registrar. VISIT 901 provides the following benefits to the student: if applicable, financial aid can be awarded and processed, various enrollment reporting processes (i.e., health insurance, loan deferment) will report the student enrolled, and the student's Penn State Access Account will remain active. Penn State assesses a \$50 flat fee for this registration; this fee is in addition to any fees assessed by the other institution.
 - IV. To earn credit for any course work completed at another ABA-accredited law school, the student must earn a grade that corresponds to a grade of at least a C on that law school's grading scale, or Credit if the course is offered for Credit/No Credit. Credits earned at another ABA-accredited law school are included on the student's transcript by reference only in a credit block, and no attempt is made to convert grades from the other ABA-accredited law school to the Dickinson Law grading scale.
 - V. Except for students who transfer into the second year, no credit will be awarded for a course taken at another ABA-accredited law school on a Pass-Fail or similar basis when the student had the option of receiving a number or letter grade for the course.
 - VI. It is the responsibility of the student to have an official transcript from the other ABA-accredited law school they attended sent to the Dickinson Law Registrar. If the transcript is not received by the Registrar in a timely manner, the Dickinson Law course, VISIT 901, will convert to a NG (no grade) and eventually to an F.
 - VII. Students planning to take courses at another ABA-accredited law school should confirm with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that their plans comply with the Semesters-in-Residence policy.
- B. Summer Enrollment:** Dickinson Law does not regularly offer summer courses. An exception is the one-credit summer externship class. Enrollment in that course is limited to international students to satisfy the unique visa-related requirements for employment and Curricular Practical Training for those students.

C. Withdrawal Policies

I. Involuntary Withdrawal

- a. A student will be deemed to have withdrawn from Dickinson Law if, (1) After the initial registration, the student fails to register for any subsequent year for which the student is eligible to register or gives written notice to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of election to withdraw; (2) During a school term for which they are registered, they are absent from all scheduled classes for a continuous two-week period without having informed the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in writing that their absence is attributable to cause; or (3) They fail to appear for any scheduled final examination in any course and also fail, within one week thereafter, to inform the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in writing of the reason for their failure to appear for such examination.

II. Voluntary Withdrawal

- a. A student who has withdrawn voluntarily will not be entitled to return as a matter of course at a later date; such privilege must be requested prior to their withdrawal.
- b. Any student contemplating voluntary withdrawal and desiring the privilege of returning at a later date may apply in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for permission to withdraw with the privilege of later return, and the student may postpone final decision on withdrawal until their request is acted upon. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may grant or deny the request or refer it to the Admissions Committee for a decision.
- c. Any student who withdraws voluntarily without first obtaining written permission to withdraw from the school with the privilege of later return and who later seeks permission shall be required to apply for readmission to the Admissions Committee, whose decision shall be final to the same extent as its decision on applications for original admissions.

III. ABA Standard 311(b)

- a. In considering requests to return after withdrawal (either voluntary or involuntary), Dickinson Law follows ABA Standard 311(b), which requires that students complete the course of study for the J.D. degree no later than 84 months after the student commenced law study at the law school, except in extraordinary circumstances.
- b. Requests to return after withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

IV. Military Withdrawal: Dickinson Law works closely with the University Registrar to support our military students. For more information, please review the policy governing Military Withdrawal and contact the Law School Registrar.

D. Readmission Policies

I. Readmission After Academic Dismissal

- a. A student who seeks to return to Dickinson Law after academic dismissal (see Section 6E above) may not file a Petition for Readmission until two years following the date of dismissal.
- b. In order to be readmitted, the student must show that the prior disqualification does not indicate a lack of capacity to complete Dickinson Law's program of legal education and to be admitted to the bar.
- c. A student seeking readmission must file a Petition for Readmission with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that shows why the student believes that readmission is warranted under the standard listed above.
- d. The Associate Dean will forward the Petition for Readmission to the Admissions Committee. If the Admissions Committee decides to readmit the student, it will issue a Statement of Considerations that explains its reasoning. The Statement of Considerations will be included in the official student record. If readmission is granted, the student may be subjected to conditions of probation, which must be met by the student for advancement. The transcript of a student readmitted after academic dismissal shall include a notation of the prior academic dismissal.

II. Readmission After Withdrawal or Failure to Return

- a. A student who seeks to return to Dickinson Law after withdrawal or failure to return after leave must file a Petition for Readmission with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that shows why the student believes that readmission is warranted.
- b. The Associate Dean will forward the Petition for Readmission to the Admissions Committee. If the Admissions Committee decides to readmit the student, it will issue a Statement of Considerations that explains its reasoning. The Statement of Considerations will be included in the official student record. If readmission is granted, the student may be subjected to conditions of probation, which must be met by the student for advancement.

10. Administrative Matters

- A. **Address Update:** It is critical that students keep their permanent, local and emergency addresses updated. Students may review and update their address information on LionPath.
- B. **Transcripts:** There are two types of transcripts, advising and official:
- I. Advising transcripts are available to currently enrolled students. Your advising transcript is not certified by the Office of the University Registrar; it is intended for academic advising and on-campus use only. You may obtain an advising transcript on LionPath.
 - II. Official transcripts are available to currently enrolled students and former students. The official transcript is the University's certified statement of your academic record. You may order an official transcript from the Office of the University Registrar at www.registrar.psu.edu.
- Note: Our Office of Career Development will accept photocopies of your official transcript. Our suggestion is to order one official transcript from the University Registrar during fall recruitment, and then make copies as necessary for your application process.
- C. **Requesting a Letter of Good Standing:** Students must [request a letter of good standing for purposes of transfer](#) consideration or visiting away through another ABA approved school, including non-Dickinson Law study abroad programs. Please contact the Law School Registrar for more information.
- D. **Enrollment Verifications:** An academic verification provides proof of enrollment, student status, and graduation. It does not provide specific course or grade information. More information regarding [enrollment verifications](#) is available from the [Office of the University Registrar](#). Enrollment verifications are available on LionPath free of charge for currently enrolled students.
- E. **Communication Policy**
- I. E-mail is the primary mode of official communication at Dickinson Law. Students are advised to check their Penn State provided e-mail accounts regularly, as important information from faculty, administrative departments, student organizations, and more are posted to these accounts. You are responsible for accessing and reading all your emails, including the daily and weekly announcement e-mails. Failure to read official communications does not excuse you from knowing and complying with the content.
 - II. Faculty, departments, and authorized student leaders are permitted to notify the Dickinson Law community about upcoming events and items of interest by sharing details on the Dickinson Law Announcements blog. All content must have an educational or student organization-specific component and be open to all members of the Dickinson Law community. Within the limits of the law, the Office of Academic & Student Services reserves the right to reject any content it deems inappropriate. Information from administrative departments that is specific to a certain class of students may be communicated a first and only time directly to the relevant listserv. Reminders should be posted on the Dickinson

Law Announcements blog. Student organizations may request the opportunity to e-mail student listservs directly about matters that require increased visibility and attention. Such requests should be discussed with the Office of Academic & Student Services.

- F. Confidentiality of Student Educational Records:** The policies governing the confidentiality of student education records and directory information are available from the [Office of the University Registrar](#). In addition, you may contact the Law School Registrar for law school specific questions.
- G. Employment While Enrolled**
- I. Because full time law study is very demanding, the law school strongly discourages employment for full-time students in the first-year of law school and encourages upper-level students to limit employment to no more than 20 hours per week during the semester. The law school will not employ first-year students in the first semester of law school, but may employ a first-year student in the second semester if the student ranks in the top 75 percent of the class academically. Any full-time student employed by the law school will not be permitted to work more than 20 hours per week during the semester.
 - II. For more information, contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Director of Financial Aid.
- H. Proof of Completion – Undergraduate Degree Program:** All students enrolled in the J.D. program must, no later than October 1 of the first semester of law school, provide the Registrar with an official transcript from their undergraduate institution demonstrating that the student has earned a baccalaureate degree. Students who have not earned a baccalaureate degree must meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and may be subject to involuntary administrative withdrawal from the law school.
- I. Student Certification to Practice and Application for Certified Legal Intern:**
- I. Pennsylvania Bar Admission Rule 321 and similar rules in other states authorize appearances in court under certain circumstances by students who have completed three semesters of law school. Those rules typically require that the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs certify students as being of good character and competent legal ability and as being adequately trained to perform as a certified legal intern.
 - II. Students seeking certification in Pennsylvania should obtain the proper form and instructions on completing the form from the [Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners website](#). From the Board of Law Examiners homepage, select "Motioning & Limited License" from the menu on the left side of the screen. Then select the link to "Application for Legal Interns Certification (321/322)." A student seeking certification in another state should consult the appropriate student practice rule and meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to effect compliance with that rule.
 - III. Upon completing the Pennsylvania Application for Certification, students should submit the form to the Registrar's Office for certification of good standing and eligibility. The Registrar's Office will take care of submitting the

completed paperwork to the Prothonotary of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

- IV. To enable a student to serve as a legal intern following second-year fall semester examinations, the school will tentatively presume that the student has successfully completed three semesters at the end of examinations for the third semester. Should this presumption be overcome by the student's performance in the third semester, the school will withdraw the student's certification. Students who have taken courses on a part-time basis will be considered, for certification purposes, to have completed the equivalent of three semesters when they have completed 43 credit hours.
 - V. Dickinson Law requires that students submitting applications to become Certified Legal Interns under Pennsylvania Rules of Professional Responsibility 321 & 322 must have completed or are enrolled concurrently in Professional Responsibility.
- J. **Continuing Duty to Update on Character and Fitness Matters:** Throughout the entirety of your law school career, students have a continuing duty to report matters that relate to the character and fitness questions on their application for admission and matters of interest to state bar authorities. These disclosures must be submitted via the [Character and Fitness Declaration & Continuing Duty to Disclose form](#) immediately after the incident occurs. The Associate Dean for Academic and Student Services will review these disclosures to determine if they are approved to be entered into your student file or if they require additional discussion.
- K. **Inclement Weather Policy:** As always, please make a decision that ensures your safety. If you are not able to travel safely to the law school, please notify the appropriate supervisor, faculty member, or administrator.
- I. **Classes/Activities:** In the event of a change in normal campus operations due to inclement weather or an emergency, all classes will be delayed or cancelled regardless of whether they are delivered via in-person or remote mode. Faculty should not move classes to a synchronous remote setting, per [Faculty Senate Policy 45-00](#), because students, faculty, and staff may be experiencing differential impacts from inclement weather or emergency and may not have access to facilities and resources (such as Wi-Fi or materials) or they may have other commitments, such as childcare. Faculty will notify students of their plans for make-up work and/or rescheduled class sessions. Student organization leaders will communicate information about alternative arrangements for events and meetings impacted by the delay or closure.
 - II. **Building Access:** In the event of a delayed opening, the building will be open and accessible, although services and operations may be limited. In the event of a campus closure, the building will be closed and not accessible to students, faculty or staff.
 - III. **Staff:** In the event of a delayed opening, staff should report to work at the time indicated in the announcement. In the event of a campus closure, staff are not expected to come to the building or to work from home. Please reference [HRG10](#) for information on time entry and recording.

IV. Notice: Information about inclement weather, delayed openings, and campus closures will be communicated via law school email, [PSUAlert](#) text, and the [Dickinson Law homepage](#).

11. Student Well Being, Support, and Safety

Many students at Penn State and Dickinson Law face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. Dickinson Law and the Carlisle community offer a variety of services to help you through difficult times, including adjustments while pregnant or parenting, individual counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, disability accommodations, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- A. **Student Bar Association:** The Student Bar Association (SBA) is Dickinson Law's student government organization. Composed of all law students, the SBA is led by an executive board elected by the student body. The SBA oversees and allocates funding for student organizations and events, and is the liaison between students, faculty, and staff.
- B. **Student Organizations:** Students at Dickinson Law have a breadth of opportunities to get involved with their campus community. Visit the [Student Organizations website](#) to explore some of the opportunities that await you and reach out to the current leadership.
- C. **Creating New Student Organizations:** [Detailed instructions and forms](#) to start new student organizations are available. Reach out to the Assistant Director of Student Services with questions.
- D. **Health Insurance**
 - I. Health care services can be very costly and unexpected expenses can be disruptive to your academic progress. Adequate health insurance, that includes mental health services, provides students with security and an enhanced sense of wellbeing during their time at Penn State.
 - II. Students who do not currently have adequate coverage on or near Dickinson Law, are strongly encouraged to enroll in the Penn State Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) or explore options on the exchange. The Penn State SHIP, designed specifically for students, offers comprehensive health insurance at a competitive price with a wide network of providers across the United States.
 - III. Penn State requires full-time U.S. students to submit their health insurance coverage information at the beginning of each academic year. If students do not have health insurance coverage, they will be able to note that on the form. International students and any accompanying dependents are required to purchase the Penn State Student Health Insurance plan (SHIP) or submit proof of health insurance coverage that meets the full set of requirements.
- E. **Little Free Pantry:** Located on the lower level of the Dickinson Law, the Little Free Pantry is designed to provide free food to any Dickinson Law student experiencing hunger or food insecurity due to financial hardships. The Little Free Pantry features non-perishables, household items and toiletries, and operates on the honor system. To date, donations have come from within the Dickinson Law community. Staff check the pantry weekly and remove any expired goods.

- F. **Professional Clothing Closet:** Located adjacent to the Little Free Pantry, law students have access to gently used suits, shirts, ties, blouses, pants, skirts, accessories, and other clothing items. Students may access this resource anytime; no permission or staff assistance is needed.
- G. **Textbook Lending Library:** The Academic & Student Services Office maintains a textbook lending library outside room 238. Students who want to borrow books simply sign them out via the provided form. Book donations to the lending library may be placed directly on open shelves. The textbook lending library is not intended to supply all students with course materials and is available on a first come, first served basis.
- H. **Emergency Grants & Loans:** Students experiencing financial insecurity should reach out to the Director of Admissions & Financial Aid and Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services. Dickinson Law maintains a limited number of grants and loans to support students experiencing unforeseen emergencies. Each request is reviewed and addressed on a case-by-case basis. Do not suffer in silence, reach out if you are struggling.
- I. **Pregnancy and Lactation Support Policy**
- I. **Pregnancy During Law School:** Students who are pregnant are entitled to reasonable accommodations that foster the ability to continue the pursuit of higher education. If you are pregnant or become pregnant during law school, please contact the Office of Students Services at 717-240-5104 to discuss your rights and any need for accommodation.
 - II. **Lactation Support Policy:** Dickinson Law seeks to support nursing mothers. Student mothers are responsible for requesting lactation support, preferably no later than four weeks before the need for support arises, by submitting a written request to the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Services. Upon receiving the request for support, the Associate Dean will identify the appropriate space for lactation related activity. While children are welcome on campus to breastfeed, it is expected that the child will not remain in the lactation room, classroom, or other space not officially designated as a childcare center after the breastfeeding session concludes.
- J. **Disability Accommodation Process**
- I. At Penn State and Dickinson Law we welcome students with disabilities into our educational programs. Students with temporary or permanent medical conditions or physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities may also be able to receive accommodations to eliminate barriers to their success. Accommodated students do not receive an advantage over others; rather, accommodations allow such students to not be at a disadvantage relative to other students as a result of conditions beyond their control.
 - II. The Office of Academic & Student Services handles student disability accommodations at Dickinson Law. Instructions for students who need to register for accommodations for the first time as well as for students who previously registered with the office are posted on the [Disability Accommodation Process website](#). All students are strongly encouraged to address their accommodation needs as early in the semester as possible. An

accommodation letter must be approved and signed every semester before accessing accommodations. Contact the Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services with questions.

- K. Sharing Concerning Behavior:** In order to enhance emergency preparedness and prevention efforts, Dickinson Law has established a [Behavioral Threat Management Team \(BTMT\)](#). The objective of the BTMT is to systematically identify, evaluate, and manage potentially threatening situations, including persons of concern, at Dickinson Law. The multidisciplinary team is composed of people from across the law school. This centralized team is led in partnership between the Offices of Academic Affairs, Academic & Student Services, University Police and Public Safety, and more. If Dickinson Law community members are ever concerned about students, faculty, staff, or community members that interact with the campus, please complete a [BTMT Referral Form](#). Emergencies should always be reported to 911.
- L. Counseling Services:** Each academic year Franco Psychological Associates, PC offers FREE individual counseling sessions to all Dickinson Law students. Students can call Franco directly for services but must identify themselves as a Penn State Dickinson Law student. This totally confidential service is not a substitute for having health insurance with mental health coverage, especially for students who need long-term care. Location: 26 State Ave., Suite 101, Carlisle, PA 17015; Phone: 717-243-1896.
- M. Steve Fund Text Support:** The [Steve Fund](#) is an organization that specifically focuses on the mental health of young people of color. They have a [crisis text line](#) where students of color can text STEVE to 741741 and receive a live Crisis Counselor response.
- N. Veterans Crisis Line:** The Veterans Crisis Line provides free and confidential services to all veterans, even those not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), select option 1.
- O. Pennsylvania Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL):** LCL is an independent, non-profit corporation run by judges and lawyers for the benefit of the Bench and Bar. They understand the stresses of law school and legal practice. They are in and/or in support of recovery from a variety of mental health & substance use challenges. They understand these issues and relate to the pain, fear and frustration of the lawyer, judge, family member or law student who is in distress. They offer nonjudgmental, discreet and confidential assistance through a 24/7/365 confidential helpline. Law students may access their resources and support at 888-999-1941.
- P. Crisis Hotlines (24/7):** If this is a psychological emergency and you need immediate attention, please dial 911 or visit your nearest emergency room. Below are additional resources for you to access:
- Crisis Text Line: Text LIONS to 741741
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255
 - Cumberland County Crisis Intervention: 866-350-4357 (also provides support where person is located when needed)
 - Penn State Crisis Line: 877-229-6400

12. Student Concerns Regarding ABA Standards Compliance

- A. Preface: As an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school, Dickinson Law is subject to the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools. Any law student may bring a formal complaint to the law school's administration of a significant problem that directly implicates the law school's program of legal education and its compliance with ABA Standards by following the steps described below.
- B. Procedure for Submitting Complaints:
 - I. Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services.
 - II. The writing should describe in detail the behavior, program, process or other matter that is the subject of the complaint, and should explain how the matter implicates the law school's program of legal education and its compliance with a specific, identified ABA Standard(s).
 - III. The administrator to whom the complaint is addressed shall acknowledge the complaint within three (3) business days of receipt.
- C. Procedure for Resolving Complaints:
 - I. Within ten (10) business days of acknowledgement of the complaint, the administrator to whom the complaint was addressed, or their designee, shall either meet with the complaining student or provide a substantive response to the complaint in writing.
 - II. In this meeting or writing, the student shall be provided with information about what steps are being taken by the law school to address or further investigate the complaint.
 - III. Within ten (10) business days of completing its investigation, the law school shall communicate its findings and, if appropriate, its intended actions to the complaining student.
- D. Procedure for Appeals:
 - I. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome or resolution of the law school's investigation, that student has a right to appeal to the Dean.
 - II. The appeal must be submitted in writing within ten (10) business days after communication to the student of the findings of the investigation.
 - III. The Dean's decision shall be communicated to the student within ten (10) business days and shall be final.
- E. Maintenance of Records:
 - I. A copy of the complaint and resolution shall be maintained in a confidential manner in the Office of Academic & Student Services.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- **Academic Calendar:** Dickinson Law’s academic calendar is maintained on our Academic Resources website and sometimes differs from the University calendar. View the [Academic Calendar on our website](#).
- **Associate Deans’ Approval Request Form:** Certain provisions of the Student Academic Handbook require the permission of either the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or Associate Dean for Academic & Student Services. To seek such approval, please complete the [Associate Deans’ Approval Request Form](#).
- **Course Catalog:** Visit the [Course Catalog](#) to review potential academic offerings. The Registrar’s Office also maintains a comprehensive set of academic resources on the My Dickinson Law (myDL) intranet.
- **Dickinson Law Announcements Blog:** Daily email announcements are distributed to students, faculty, and staff. Current and past announcements are posted in a searchable format on the [Announcements Blog](#).
- **H. Laddie Montague, Jr. Law Library:** The [Law Library](#) maintains important research and study resources on its website.
- **Honor Code:** The Honor Code governs academic related misconduct, while the Code of Conduct manages behavioral concerns. It is based on the fundamental principles of mutual trust and respect. Each student who joins the Dickinson Law community affirms, by the student's acceptance of a position in the community, this commitment to integrity, trust and respect. View the [Honor Code on our website](#).
- **Information Technology:** View Dickinson Law [Information Technology Recommendations](#) on our website.
- **My Dickinson Law (myDL):** Visit additional student resources on the [Dickinson Law intranet \(myDL\)](#). Log in required.