

**PENN STATE DICKINSON LAW**

Unified Student Academic Handbook

2025-2026

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## **Introduction**

Dear Colleagues,

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

Penn State Dickinson Law encourages anyone with questions to reach out to law school administrators. You can find a complete list of your administration and faculty on our [website](#). You can also find a helpful link to Who Does What at Dickinson Law on the intranet. We hope that you will find this handbook a useful resource.

Sincerely,

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Certain provisions of the Student Academic Handbook require the permission of the Office of the Dean. To seek such approval, please complete the [Associate Deans' Approval Request Form](#). Unless otherwise specified, this form is the mechanism for requesting various approvals (as noted herein).

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## **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.

### **1) 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 curriculum: Torts, Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Legal Analysis & Writing I, Legal Analysis & Writing II, Legal Research, Property, Race and Equal Protection of the Laws, and Pathways to Legal Success: Foundations, Skills, and Career Development;
  - ii) the upper-level required courses in: Professional Responsibility, one upper-level writing seminar, and one course that satisfies ABA Standard 303(c); and
  - iii) at least 9 credit hours of experiential learning coursework, 3 credits of which must be earned in a law clinic, an externship, or a semester-in-practice course.
- 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, 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.

### **2) 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; and
  - 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; learning from experience through self-critique;
  - xiii) managing projects within time and resource limitations;
  - xiv) presenting orally outside of litigation; and
  - xv) using technology in legal practice.

### 3) **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 one's self 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 serves 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.

## **THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 1) 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.
  - a) 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.
  - b) Penn State 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 Penn State Dickinson Law Honor Codes (available [here](#) and [here](#)). The existing Honor Codes apply to currently enrolled students and will remain in effect through the 2026-2027 academic year.
  - c) The Honor Codes ([Carlisle](#) and [University Park](#)):
    - i) Penn State Dickinson Law will be developing an honor code for newly-enrolled students during the 2025-2026 academic year.
    - ii) 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, Penn State Dickinson Law Honor Codes exist to safeguard and promote the ideals of honor and integrity by prohibiting lying, cheating, stealing, and other dishonorable conduct of an academic nature.
    - iii) Any person affiliated with the law school may report a violation by submitting a memorandum to the Honor Code Administrator. View the Honor Codes (linked above) on our website for more information.
- 2) [Statement of Nondiscrimination](#):
  - a) 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.
  - b) Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901, Email: [oeoa@psu.edu](mailto:oeoa@psu.edu), Phone: 814-863-0471.
  - c) 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.
- 3) [Bias Response](#): Penn State and Penn State 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](#).

- 4) [Title IX Policy](#):
- a) 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 [Penn State's Title IX policies and procedures](#).
  - b) 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 [Penn State Dickinson Law Title IX resource webpage](#).
- 5) [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](#).
- 6) [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 and/or Penn State Dickinson Law location 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, University Support Building I, Suite 150, University Park, PA 16802 or by calling 814-863-1111.

## **JURIS DOCTOR (J.D.) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

**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.

- 1) ***For students entering in Fall 2025, to earn the Penn State Dickinson Law J.D. degree, a student must:***
  - a) Earn at least 88 credits, including all first-year required courses;
  - b) Be in residence for six semesters;
  - c) Meet good standing requirements;
  - d) Complete an upper-level writing seminar with at least a C;
  - e) Complete Professional Responsibility with at least a C;
  - f) Complete the required credits for experiential learning (see below); and
    - i) To earn a J.D. degree students must complete with a grade of at least C, or a grade of Credit in Credit/No Credit courses, 9 credits in Experiential Learning courses from the upper-level curriculum. The student must earn at least 3 of the required 9 credits in either a law clinic [LWCLI], an externship [LWEXT 901], or a semester-in-practice [LWEXT 902; LWEXT 903; LWEXT 904] course. The student may earn the remaining experiential learning credits in a law clinic [LWCLI], an externship [LWEXT 901], a semester-in-practice [LWEXT 902; LWEXT 903; LWEXT 904], or an experiential skills [LWEXP] course.
  - g) Complete one course that satisfies [ABA Standard 303\(c\)](#) with at least a C.
  - h) Legal Writing and Analysis and Legal Research Grade Requirements:
    - i) A student must earn a grade of "C" or better to earn credit for the Legal Analysis & Writing I and II courses.
    - ii) If a student earns a grade below "C" in Legal Analysis & Writing I, the student will not be permitted to enroll in Legal Analysis & Writing II in the subsequent semester but must retake the Legal Analysis and Writing I course at the earliest possible time.
    - iii) 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.
    - iv) A student required to retake Legal Analysis & Writing I or II may, with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location, enroll in experiential learning coursework prior to successful completion of the course.
    - v) Earning a grade below C in Legal Research: A student must earn a passing grade of "C" or better to earn credit for the Legal Research course. If a student earns a grade below "C" in Legal Research, the student will be required to retake the Legal Research course at the earliest possible time.
      - (1) A student required to retake Legal Research may, with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location, enroll in experiential learning course work prior to successful completion of the Legal Research course.
- 1) ***For students who entered Penn State Dickinson Law (Carlisle) prior to the Fall 2025 semester:***
  - 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;
  - d) Complete with a grade of at least C the course labelled Legal Analysis and Writing II;



- e) Complete with a grade of at least C the course labelled Legal Research;
  - f) Complete with a grade of at least C one course designated as a Seminar course ("SEMNR");
  - g) Complete with a grade of at least C the course in Professional Responsibility;
  - h) 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;
  - i) 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.
    - i) The student must earn at least 6 of the required 12 credits in a live client experience course, such as 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 mock client experience courses designated as simulation courses ("EXPSK").
  - j) Comply with the Semesters-in-Residence Requirement; and
  - k) Comply with the Academic Standing Rules.
- 2) ***For students who entered Penn State Law (University Park) prior to the Fall 2025 semester:***
- a) Earn at least 88 credits, including all first-year required courses. The maximum number of credits permitted per semester is 17.
  - b) Be in residence for six semesters. To be in residence, the student must enroll in at least 12 credits, at full tuition, and not work more than 20 hours per week during the semester. Credits earned through the Semester in Washington Program, the Semester in Harrisburg Program, the Externships Everywhere Program, and authorized Penn State Law semester-long study abroad programs may be used to fulfill this requirement. Credits earned during the summer months may not be used to fulfill this requirement.
  - c) Complete with a grade of at least C one course designated as an Upper-Level Writing Seminar course.
  - d) Complete with a grade of at least C the course in Professional Responsibility.
  - e) Complete with a grade of at least a C one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours.
  - f) Complete the Professional Development program that takes place in January of your first year. Please see academic calendar for dates of the program.
  - g) Starting with the Class of 2026, complete with a grade of at least a C one course approved by the faculty to comply with [ABA 303\(c\)](#).
- 3) ***J.D. Degree Requirements for Transfer Students:*** Students transferring to Penn State Dickinson Law from another law school must satisfy or have waived all requirements for graduation. An assessment of these requirements is provided at the time of admission.
- 4) ***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 Penn State Dickinson Law must be in residence for 6 semesters.
- a) "Resident" semesters are fall and spring.
  - b) "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.
  - c) Students who transfer from another institution to Penn State Dickinson Law must be in residence for at least 4 semesters.

- d) 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 Academic Success and Bar Pass Office at your location 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 Penn State Dickinson Law procedures on the intranet for additional instructions. This rule is under review by the Academic Rules Committee in AY 2025-26.
- e) More detailed information on residency may be found in the section on Earning Credits from Another ABA-Accredited Law School.

#### **MASTER OF LAWS (LL.M.) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) To receive the LL.M. degree, a student must:
  - a) Earn at least 24 credits;
  - b) Complete Introduction to the U.S. Legal System; and
  - c) Complete Legal Analysis, Writing and Research for LL.M. Students.
- 2) Please refer to [LL.M. Student Academic Handbook, Supplemental](#) for more information.

#### **DOCTOR OF JURIDICAL SCIENCE (S.J.D.) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) To receive the S.J.D degree, a student must:
  - a) Earn at least 24 credits; and
  - b) Satisfy the requirements and rules outlined in the S.J.D. policy.
- 2) Please refer to [S.J.D. Student Academic Handbook, Supplemental](#) for more information.

## **ACADEMIC STANDING RULES & ACADEMIC DISMISSALS**

### **1) 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:
  - i) earn a grade point average of at least 1.7 in the first semester;
  - ii) earn a semester grade point average of at least 2.0 each semester;
  - iii) maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0; and
  - iv) receive no more than 2 F's during the student's law school career.

### **2) Procedure:**

- a) **Notice to Student.** As soon as practicable after grades are due each semester, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location shall notify a student in writing that they failed to meet the minimum standard of academic performance.

- 3) **Petition for Reinstatement to Good Standing.** The student may submit to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location a written petition seeking reinstatement to good standing within 5 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 at their location 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.

- 4) **Effect of Failure to Submit a Petition.** A student who does not submit a written petition seeking reinstatement within the five-day period (or an authorized longer period) will be dismissed from the law school as of the last date for submission of a petition.

- 5) **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.

### **6) Presumption Based on Academic Performance:**

- a) 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:
  - i) The student is unable or unwilling to undertake the discipline of study to succeed in law school and the legal profession; or
  - ii) 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 reasonable could not have anticipated or rectified. (In no case will employment during the semester be considered a disabling circumstance).
- b) In addition to the student's petition, the Academic Rules Committee may request information related to the student's academic performance from the student's current or former instructors.

- 7) **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.
- 8) **Effect of 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.
- 9) **Withdrawal Policies**
- a) *Involuntary Withdrawal*
- i) A student will be deemed to have withdrawn from Penn State 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 at their location 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 at their location 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 at their location in writing of the reason for their failure to appear for such examination.
- b) *Voluntary Withdrawal*
- i) 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.
- ii) 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 at their location 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 at their location may grant or deny the request or refer it to the Admissions Committee for a decision.
- iii) 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.
- iv) Students must submit their petitions for withdrawal by no later than 11:59 p.m. on the last day of law school classes for the term.
- c) *Degree Completion within 84 Months*
- i) In considering requests to return after withdrawal (either voluntary or involuntary), Penn State Dickinson Law 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.
- ii) Requests to return after withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location.
- d) *Military Withdrawal:* Penn State Dickinson Law works closely with the University Registrar to support our military students. For more information, please review the University policy governing Military Withdrawal and contact the Law School Registrar.

## 10) Readmission Policies

### a) *Readmission After Academic Dismissal*

- i) A student who seeks to return to Penn State Dickinson Law after academic dismissal may not file a Petition for Readmission until two years following the date of dismissal. This rule is under review by the Academic Rules Committee in 2025-26.
- ii) 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 be admitted to the bar.
- iii) A student seeking readmission must file a Petition for Readmission with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location that shows why the student believes that readmission is warranted under the standard listed above.
- iv) The Associate Dean at their location 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 subject 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.

### b) *Readmission After Withdrawal or Failure to Return*

- i) 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 at their location that shows why the student believes that readmission is warranted. Once a decision is reached, the Associate Dean at their location will issue a Statement of Considerations which 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.

### **ENHANCED ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM**

- 1) At the conclusion of each semester, students who are in good academic standing but whose cumulative GPAs fall in the lowest 20% of their class will be notified that they are subject to the conditions of the Enhanced Academic Support Program.
- 2) Students in the Enhanced Academic Support Program must:
  - a) Obtain approval from their location's academic success officer of their proposed course schedule before registering for courses to ensure adequate preparation for the bar exam and the practice of law.
  - b) Obtain approval from the academic success officer before enrolling in any semester away program, including other externship opportunities and Semesters in Practice.
  - c) Consult with the academic success officer before assuming a leadership position in student government/ student organizations or engaging in employment.
  - d) In courses where faculty permit, review their exams from the previous semester and then meet with the academic success officer to discuss the common feedback received on their work.
  - e) Participate in academic support programs that the academic success officer deems appropriate which will typically include mandatory tutoring and workshops designed to improve academic performance.
  - f) Enroll in and satisfactorily complete BAREX 900: Fundamental Skills for the Bar Exam in Spring of the third year.
- 3) A student who fails to satisfy any of these conditions shall be subject to dismissal under the procedure set forth in Academic Standing Rules.
- 4) Students exit the enhanced academic support program if their cumulative GPAs rise above the lowest 20% of their class at the end of any semester. The academic support officer may also excuse a student from further participation in the enhanced academic support program based on academic progress.

## **J.D. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED AND COURSE PLANNING**

### **1) Required First Year and Upper-Level Courses for Students Entering Fall 2025**

- a) Fall 1L Required Courses:
  - i) Torts (4 credits)
  - ii) Civil Procedure (4 credits)
  - iii) Criminal Law (3 credits)
  - iv) Legal Analysis & Writing I (2 credits)
  - v) Race and Equal Protection of the Laws (0.5 credit)
  - vi) Pathways to Legal Success: Foundations, Skills, and Career Development (1 credit)
- b) Spring 1L Required Courses:
  - i) Contracts (4 credits)
  - ii) Constitutional Law I (3 credits)
  - iii) Property (4 credits)
  - iv) Legal Analysis & Writing II (2 credits)
  - v) Race and Equal Protection of the Laws (0.5 credit)
  - vi) Legal Research (2 credits)
- c) Upper-Level Required Courses:
  - i) Experiential Learning (9 credits)
  - ii) Professional Responsibility (3 credits)
  - iii) One course that meets the upper-level writing seminar requirement (2-3 credits)
  - iv) One course that satisfies [ABA Standard 303\(c\)](#)

### **2) Required First Year and Upper-Level Courses for Students Located in Carlisle who Entered Before Fall 2025**

- a) Fall 1L Required Courses:
  - i) Civil Procedure (4 credits)
  - ii) Criminal Law (3 credits)
  - iii) Torts (4 credits)
  - iv) Legal Research I (1 credit)
  - v) Legal Analysis & Writing I: Objective (2 credits)
  - vi) Race and Equal Protection of the Laws (0.5 credit)
  - vii) Practicing Greatness (1 credit)
- b) Spring 1L Required Courses:
  - i) Contracts (4 credits)
  - ii) Constitutional Law I (3 credits)
  - iii) Property (4 credits)
  - iv) Legal Research II (1 credit)
  - v) Legal Analysis & Writing II: Persuasive (2 credits)
  - vi) Race and Equal Protection of the Laws (0.5 credit)
- c) Upper-Level Required Courses:
  - i) Experiential Learning (12 credits)
  - ii) Professional Responsibility (3 credits)
  - iii) One course that meets the Seminar requirement (2-3 credits)
  - iv) One course that meets the Civil Rights, Equal Protection, or Social Justice requirement (2-3 credits)

**3) Required First Year and Upper-Level Courses for Students Located in University Park who Entered Before Fall 2025**

- a) Fall 1L Required Courses:
  - i) Civil Procedure (4 credits)
  - ii) Criminal Law (3 credits)
  - iii) Applied Legal Analysis and Writing I (3 credits)
  - iv) Legal Research Tools and Strategies (2 credits)
  - v) Torts (4 credits)
- b) Spring 1L Required Courses:
  - i) Criminal Procedure (3 credits)
  - ii) Constitutional Law I (3 credits)
  - iii) Contracts (4 credits)
  - iv) Applied Legal Analysis and Writing II (2 credits)
  - v) Property (2 credits)
- c) Upper-Level Required Courses:
  - i) Experiential Learning (6 credits)
  - ii) Professional Responsibility (3 credits)
  - iii) One course that meets the upper-level writing seminar requirement (2-3 credits)
  - iv) One course that satisfies [ABA Standard 303\(c\)](#)

**4) Faculty Advisors:**

- a) All Penn State Dickinson Law students are assigned a full-time faculty member as an academic advisor. Information on your academic advisor is available on [LionPath](#) in your Student Services Center. Faculty who are away on sabbatical or other leave for a semester or more will receive no 1L advisees. That faculty member's 2L and 3L advisees will be temporarily assigned to other faculty. When the faculty member returns, they will reestablish their relationship with their advisees in coordination with the faculty who substituted for them during their leave. Advisees of faculty members who retire or otherwise leave Penn State Dickinson Law permanently will be reassigned to other faculty.
- b) The Offices of Academic Affairs, Academic Success, Academic & Student Services, and the Law School Registrar are also available to advise any student.

**5) Upper-Level Courses:**

- a) *Enrolling in Other Upper-Level Courses:* This information is intended to offer some general advice 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 Offices of Academic Affairs, Academic Success, Academic & Student Services, or other members of the faculty for more personalized guidance.
- b) *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, Conflict of Laws, Constitutional Law II, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Family Law, 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.
- c) 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.

- d) *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.
  - e) Students can find a variety of planning resources and guides on the Registrar's website located on the intranet. These include a graduation checklist, lists of seminar courses, lists of skills courses, lists of courses that meet ABA Standard 303(c), and other course selection materials. In addition, the Registrar creates a semester-specific webpage to help students with registration and enrollment questions.
- 6) **Co-Curricular Credit Rules for Law Students Entering in Fall 2025**: Certain courses in the curriculum have been designated as co-curricular courses. The law school's academic rules about co-curricular credits reflect the requirements found in the relevant accreditation standards adopted by the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.
- a) *Total Credit Cap for Co-Curricular Credits*: Students are permitted to enroll in no more than 18 co-curricular credits.
  - b) Co-curricular credits are credits earned in ungraded settings, settings that do not involve attendance during the semester in regularly scheduled classroom sessions, or settings that lack direct faculty instruction. Credits earned in the following types of courses are co-curricular credits:
    - i) Credits earned through externships, the Semester-in-Practice programs, and the International Justice Program;
    - ii) Credits earned in an academic unit of Penn State other than Penn State Dickinson Law;
    - iii) Credits earned from another ABA-accredited law school;
    - iv) Credit hours earned in Independent Study courses;
    - v) Credit hours earned for participation in co-curricular activities such as law review, moot court, and mock trial;
    - vi) Credits students earn in a law school clinic do not count as co-curricular credits.
  - c) *Credit Caps for Particular Categories of Courses*: In addition to the Total Credit Cap for Co-Curricular Credits (18 credits), students are subject to credit caps for different kinds of courses, as follows:
    - i) Externships. Students may enroll in no more than 12 credits for externship courses (note: the externship credit portions of the Semesters-in-Practice courses and programs do not count toward the 12-credit cap on externships, however, they do count toward the total Credit Cap for Co-Curricular Credits).
    - ii) Law Reviews and Journals. Students may enroll in no more than 6 credits for membership in a law review or any other student-edited publication for which academic credit is awarded.
    - iii) Moot Court Board. Students may enroll in no more than 4 credits for Moot Court Board membership, *Vis* Competition, or other moot court competitions.
    - iv) Mock Trial Competitions. Students may enroll in no more than 4 credits for membership on a mock trial competition team.

## 7) Co-Curricular Opportunities:

### a) *LAW REVIEWS AND SCHOLARLY JOURNALS*

- i) Penn State Dickinson Law offers its students a rich array of research and scholarly experiences. A recalibration of our law reviews and scholarly journals will be conducted in 2025-26. It is anticipated that the Dickinson Law Review and Penn State Law Review will begin operating as the Penn State Dickinson Law Review in 2026.
- (1) [Jus Gentium Journal of International Legal History](#) is the first dedicated journal in the United States addressing the history of international law. Much current scholarship on the history of international law is preoccupied not with international law, but with international legal doctrine; the doctrinal writings of remarkably few individuals dominate the discourse while the rest remain unseen or overlooked.
- (2) The [Arbitration Law Review](#) is a student-edited publication done in a law review format. Each editorial board produces a stand-alone book rather than a number of issues that are eventually assembled in a collective volume. The Arbitration Law Review covers domestic U.S. developments in arbitration, but periodically addresses transborder developments. The Review publishes scholarly articles delivered at an annual symposium, as well as student pieces on recent case law and legislative enactments, along with book reviews.
- (3) 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.
- (4) The [Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs](#) (JLIA) is a student-edited, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal, jointly published by Penn State Law and School of International Affairs. The Journal publishes twice a year and includes scholarly articles and student comments focusing on developments of international law and current issues. The Journal promotes academic and public discourse at the intersection of law and international affairs, featuring contributions in the areas of public and private international law, international relations, comparative law and politics, geography, economics, history, and policy issues in the various sciences.
- (5) The [Penn State Law Review](#) (PSLR) is a student-run journal that publishes three times a year and serves the legal community by presenting analysis and commentary on relevant topics. Each issue contains articles by leading professors, judges, and practitioners from around the country. In addition, PSLR features student-written material in its issues. The student-written material takes the form of comments, which PSLR's associate editors compose during their first year of membership. Beyond the four printed issues, PSLR organizes an annual symposium, hosts scholarly dialogues for authors with forthcoming or recently published articles to discuss their contributions, and maintains the Penn Statim, which serves as an online companion providing access to published and original content.

ii) *Membership and Write-On Process:*

- (1) Students are selected for journal membership at the end of their first year of legal study on the basis of academic performance and achievement in the annual Writing Competition, held in May. For more information on eligibility and membership requirements for the scholarly journals, contact the editor-in-chief listed on each journal's website.
- (2) Transfer students are eligible for membership in the scholarly journals. For more information, transfer students should review the Collective Policy on Transfer Students, and request a copy of the Transfer Student Instructions for the writing competition from the Admissions Office.
- (3) Joint degree students are eligible for membership on a scholarly journal and may participate in the writing competition. However, J.D./M.B.A. joint degree students must defer law journal membership while enrolled in full time MBA coursework, which normally occurs in the year following the 1L J.D. year.

b) *COMPETITION TEAMS*

- i) Moot Court Board: Penn State 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.
- ii) Mock Trial Competition Team: Penn State Dickinson Law students also participate in national mock trial competitions. Team members, chosen each year through an application and tryout process, advance their writing, problem-solving, and advocacy skills under the guidance of faculty members and experienced lawyers.

## **SEMINAR WRITING REQUIREMENT**

### **1) Seminar Writing J.D. Degree Requirement:**

- a) **Seminar Course Criteria.** A major academic purpose of a Seminar is to develop and test students' research and writing skills. The following rules should be interpreted with this purpose in mind. Each faculty member may issue instructions or interpretive guidelines to supplement these rules. To qualify as a Seminar, a course must meet the following criteria:
  - i) **Credits and Enrollment.** Enrollment in a Seminar Course is limited to twenty students to ensure regular interaction between faculty and students and among students in the course. Ordinarily, absent special arrangements by the faculty member and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, a Seminar is expected to meet weekly. A Seminar must be at least 2 credits.
  - ii) **Instructor.** A Seminar is ordinarily taught by a member of the full-time resident faculty or visiting faculty member.
  - iii) **Evaluation and Content.** In accordance with relevant ABA standards, a Seminar will be a rigorous writing experience that provides an opportunity for students to conduct research and develop an original thesis, and multiple opportunities for feedback and individualized assessment of students' writing. A student's grade must be based on: a) a paper requiring original legal research and writing; and b) at the instructor's discretion, student participation and/or presentation that is different from that which is ordinarily expected in other courses. If students are required to produce a single paper, students are expected to work on the paper throughout the semester and to submit for faculty assessment a thesis proposal, outline, rough draft and a final paper, each of which must meet the stated expectations of the instructor as to content, form, and timeliness. If students are required to produce multiple papers, student effort and faculty assessment must be similarly rigorous.
  - iv) **Format.** A Seminar's paper must comply with the following submission and formatting requirements unless the faculty member directs otherwise: at least ten double-spaced, typed pages per credit, with the maximum length to be set by the course faculty member; one-inch margins; and twelve-point font. Citations shall conform to "The Bluebook" unless the faculty member has established a different citation system.
  - v) **Due Dates.** 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 Penn State Student Disability Resources that provides for an extension of time, or the faculty member has established a different due date.
  - vi) **Reuse of Previous Work.** 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, or any work submitted for credit in one course for credit in another. 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.

## **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

1. **Students Entering in Fall 2025 Seeking to Earn a J.D. Degree:** must complete with a grade of at least C, or a grade of Credit in Credit/No Credit courses, 9 credits in Experiential Learning courses from the upper-level curriculum. The student must earn at least 3 of the required 9 credits in either a law clinic [LWCLI], an externship [LWEXT 901], or a semester-in-practice [LWEXT 902; LWEXT 903; LWEXT 904] course. The student may earn the remaining experiential learning credits in a law clinic [LWCLI], an externship [LWEXT 901], a Semester-in-Practice [LWEXT 902; LWEXT 903; LWEXT 904], or an experiential skills [LWEXP] course.
2. **Experiential Learning J.D. Degree Requirement for Students Located in Carlisle who Entered Before Fall 2025:**
  - a) To graduate from Penn State Dickinson Law, students must complete 12 credits in experiential learning courses.
  - b) Six of the 12 required experiential learning credits must come from a law practice setting (i.e., a live client experience). 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.
  - c) 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 (i.e. mock client experience) designated as an experiential learning course (EXPSK), or from another faculty approved program.
  - d) Experiential Learning Credit Caps:
    - i) Students may enroll in no more than 12 credits total for in-house clinical courses (EXPCL).
    - ii) 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.
    - iii) 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.
  - e) Experiential Learning Enrollment Limitations:
    - i) 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:
      - (1) a clinic and an externship in the same semester;
      - (2) more than one externship in the same semester; or
      - (3) more than one clinic in the same semester.
    - ii) 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 Academic Affairs at your location.
  - f) Please reference the Experiential Learning and Externship Handbooks for more information on the program specific requirements. You may also contact the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at your location with questions.
3. **Experiential Learning J.D. Degree Requirement for Students Located in University Park who Entered Before Fall 2025:**
  - a) To earn a J.D. degree, a student must complete with a grade of least C one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours, in addition to the other J.D. Degree Requirements. An experiential course must be a simulation course, a law clinic, or one of our Externships. Please note that co-curricular credit rules may apply to Externships and In-House Law Clinics.

#### 4. DIFFERENT KINDS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

- a) *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. The application process occurs early each semester, before registration for other courses. Enrollment in clinics is selective and not guaranteed. Clinical faculty select students for enrollment in their respective clinic based on some or all of 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 certifications, pass background checks, or other clearances required by the clinic;
  - v) the student's ability to undertake clinic work;
  - vi) whether the student has been afforded a clinical opportunity previously and would displace a student who has not yet had a clinical course; and
  - vii) whether the student will agree to sign an agreement indicating that they will work required hours and take care of all client-related responsibilities.
- b) Penn State Dickinson Law currently operates the following clinics. Please note that some clinics may not be offered every semester (e.g., due to sabbaticals or other administrative leave) nor are the locational references below guaranteed every semester.
  - i) [Arts, Sports & Entertainment Law Clinic.](#) (Only available to University Park location.) The Arts, Sports and Entertainment Law Clinic is an issues-oriented clinic that provides free services to individuals in art, sports, and entertainment fields. Services include providing educational information and, when appropriate, legal representation. The clinic is an educational resource of the Pennsylvania State University and to the Penn State Athletic Department and Penn State athletes on the subject of Name, Image, and Likeness. Under the supervision of Professor of Law and Director, Geoffrey Scott, the clinic has provided clients with information about intellectual property matters (including copyrights, trademarks and right of publicity), taxes, contracts (including, but not limited to recording, music publishing, literary publishing, representation, gallery, and sports), licensing, and merchandising endorsement. Among other services, the clinic has helped bands to negotiate recording deals, has provided educational assistance for professional sports associations, and has delivered lectures on a variety of topics.
    - (1) Requirements to Participate in the Arts, Sports, & Entertainment Clinic:
      - (a) J.D. students in their second- or third-year at the Law School may apply, as well as LL.M. students.
    - (2) Prerequisite course:
      - (a) Law of Artistic Properties and Persons (prior to concurrent enrollment)
    - (3) Suggested courses:
      - (a) Copyrights; Trademarks; Licensing of IP; Internet Law; Business Law Courses; Tax Law Courses
  - ii) [Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic.](#) (Only available to University Park location.) The Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic (CIRC) is a nationally recognized clinic focused on immigration directed and supervised by its founder, Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, Samuel Weiss Faculty Scholar and Clinical Professor of Law. CIRC provides law students with hands-on clinical

training in immigration law through three pillars: community outreach and education, pro bono legal support, and policy work. At CIRC, students engage in community outreach and education on immigration topics such as immigration remedies for victims of crimes, immigration and K-12 education, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or “DACA,” and immigration enforcement, and in this capacity, students have worked closely with the State College municipality, school district, and organizations, local and national. CIRC has also provided legal support in individual cases of immigrants challenging deportation (removal) or seeking protection by the Department of Homeland Security and in the courts. CIRC has reached hundreds of individuals and families and served as a clearinghouse for the community and nationally on changing immigration law and policy. CIRC is a member of Welcoming America, a national movement of organizations and municipal governments interested in making their communities more welcoming to immigrants and refugees. In the policy arena, students produce white papers, fact sheets, toolkits, and primers for institutional clients across the nation.

(1) Requirements to Participate in CIRC:

- (a) J.D. students in their second- or third-year at the Law School may apply, as well as LL.M. students, and SIA students.

(2) Prerequisite courses:

- (a) None, but preference is given to those who have taken/are taking Immigration Law or Asylum and Refugee Law

iii) [Children’s Advocacy Clinic \(CAC\): Protecting the Most Vulnerable.](#) (Only available to Carlisle location.) The CAC is an innovative interdisciplinary clinical program under the direction of founding Director, Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Assistant Professor of Law. In this clinic, law students and graduate social work students work in teams to advocate for children who are involved in the legal system. Each law student is partnered with a graduate social work student, and together, work to address the child’s needs. Clinic students also work to address broader systemic issues which impact the foster care system. The Clinic receives court appointments to advocate for youth involved in juvenile court cases. Students gain valuable training and experience working directly with clients. 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. The Clinic course includes a weekly classroom seminar component.

(1) Requirements to Participate in the Children’s Advocacy Clinic:

- (a) Complete Three Semesters of Law School

(2) Prerequisites preferred:

- (a) Professional Responsibility
- (b) Evidence

(3) Taking one of the following courses is strongly encouraged:

- (a) Juvenile Law
- (b) Child Welfare Law & Policy Seminar

iv) [Civil Rights Appellate Clinic.](#) (Only available to University Park location.) The Civil Rights Appellate Clinic provides intensive training in appellate advocacy by involving students in noncriminal civil rights cases before the state appellate courts, federal courts of appeal, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Students conduct research, draft briefs, assist in case selection,

develop substantive legal positions, and plan appellate strategy. The clinic is supervised by Clinical Professor of Law, and Director, Michael Foreman.

(1) Requirements to Participate in Civil Rights Appellate Clinic:

- (a) J.D. students in their second- or third-year at the Law School may apply, as well as LL.M. students, and SIA students.

(2) Prerequisite course:

- (a) None, but preference is given to third-year students who have completed a substantive civil rights or employment law course. Completion of evidence is also preferred.

(3) Suggested courses:

- (a) Civil Rights or Employment Law Courses; Evidence

- v) [Community Law Clinic: Equal Justice Under the Law.](#) (Only available to Carlisle location.) 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 clients 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, in disability law matters, such as Social Security Disability Claims, and in housing matters such as landlord/tenant claims.

(1) Requirements to Participate in the Community Law Clinic:

- (a) Complete Three Semesters of Law School

(2) Taking one of the following courses is strongly encouraged, but is not a requirement:

- (a) Family Law
- (b) Law of Individuals with Disabilities
- (c) Administrative Law

(3) In selecting students for the Community Law Clinic, preference will be given to students who have completed the courses listed below:

- (a) Professional Responsibility
- (b) Evidence

- vi) [Criminal Appellate and Post-Conviction Services Clinic.](#) (Only available to University Park location.) The Criminal Appellate & Post-Conviction Services Clinic allows students to represent indigent defendants at appellate and post-conviction proceedings. This representation will occur at the trial and appellate courts as well as representation at the Board of Pardons. In addition, students will have the opportunity to advocate for broader changes in the criminal justice system through the filing of amicus briefs. This course includes a classroom component designed to foster both critical thinking and practical knowledge. Students will work under the supervision of Associate Clinical Professor of Law, and Director, Gopal Balachandran. Students will work collaboratively on criminal appellate cases (including amicus briefs and petitions to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court) as well as various post-conviction matters. The post-conviction matters will involve reviews of relevant case law as well as the factual underpinnings of various criminal cases. Students may also assist state prison inmates in their applications for commutation of their sentences or with



individuals in the community seeking pardons. The work will involve some transportation to the Centre County Courthouse in Bellefonte and to various local and state prison facilities.

(1) Requirements to Participate in Criminal Appellate and Post-Conviction Services Clinic:

(a) J.D. students in their second- or third-year at the Law School may apply.

(2) Co- or prerequisite course:

(a) Evidence

vii) Entrepreneur Assistance Clinic. (Based at the University Park location, available for remote participation in Carlisle.) The Entrepreneur Assistance Clinic (EAC) allows students to represent startups, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations in a setting similar to a small law firm. Under the supervision of Professor from Practice, and Director, Tom Sharbaugh, and the clinic staff attorneys, students provide legal services to the clinic's clients in much the same manner as practicing lawyers. The clinic regularly assists clients with choice of entity, entity formation, and other entity transactions, including acquisitions, and provides legal services related to drafting, reviewing, and revising organizational documents for entities such as operating agreements, shareholder agreements, and bylaws. In addition, the clinic assists with the preparation and review of agreements necessary for the operation of businesses, including commercial leases, independent contractor agreements, service agreements, non-disclosure agreements, and liability waivers. Clinic students develop practical legal skills in business law, including advising clients on entity formation, drafting and negotiating key organizational and commercial agreements, conducting research, managing client relationships and communication, and interviewing clients during meetings. Students adhere to basic principles of law office administration and will be expected to comply with law office protocols (e.g., conflicts, client confidentiality, and time and expense record keeping) and will learn and conform to the professional responsibilities of lawyers engaged in business transactional practice.

(1) Requirements to Participate in EAC:

(a) J.D. students in their second- or third-year at the Law School may apply.

(2) Prerequisite course:

(a) There are no prerequisites for this clinic, although it would be useful if applicants have taken or are taking concurrently Representing the Entrepreneur.

(3) Suggested experience:

(a) The EAC typically will hire about 12 1L and 2L (at time of application) students for in-person summer employment at the LaunchBox in State College; this is completely optional.

viii) Family Law Clinic. (Only available to University Park location.) Students in the Family Law Clinic represent victims of domestic abuse, and other individuals with family law disputes such as divorce, equitable distribution, support, and child custody cases. Students work under the supervision of Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, and Director, Susan Bardo to provide legal assistance at all stages of representation. The work typically includes intensive counseling, case strategy and negotiation, for which the students learn a client-centered approach to the practice of law. Family Law Clinic students have an opportunity to fully engage in client representation under Pennsylvania's student practice rules in the Court of Common Pleas of Centre County. The clinic stresses reflective learning, and critical thinking about litigation tactics and client counseling. Students are held to high standards as they hone their written and oral advocacy skills, and as they analyze each client's options with an eye towards client empowerment and justice.

- (1) Requirements to Participate in Family Law Clinic:
    - (a) Complete Three Semesters of Law School
  - (2) Prerequisite courses:
    - (a) Family Law and Evidence
  - (3) Suggested course:
    - (a) Professional Responsibility
- ix) [Indigent Criminal Justice Trial Clinic.](#) (On Pause in AY 2025-26.) The Indigent Criminal Justice Trial Clinic is a partnership with the Centre County Office of the Public Defender. The clinic allows students to represent indigent criminal defendants accused of misdemeanor offenses in the Centre County Court of Common Pleas under the supervision of Associate Clinical Professor of Law Richard Settgast, and attorneys in the Centre County Office of the Public Defender. Students learn litigation, negotiation, and advocacy skills as they represent defendants through all stages of a criminal case before any appeals. This hands-on experience is accompanied by a classroom component designed to give students guidance, feedback, and an open forum to discuss their cases and the various facets of defense work. The Indigent Criminal Justice Trial Clinic has two primary objectives: (1) provide criminal defendants who cannot afford private counsel with highly effective representation that is client-centered, professional, and ethical, and (2) create a structured and supervised environment which enables each student to (a) gain a detailed, working knowledge of how to represent a defendant; (b) apply that knowledge to actual criminal cases; and (c) gain feedback and reflection after each important stage of the case.
- (1) Requirements to Participate in Indigent Criminal Justice Trial Clinic:
    - (a) Complete Three Semesters of Law School
  - (2) Prerequisite courses:
    - (a) Professional Responsibility and Evidence
- x) [Intellectual Property Clinic.](#) (Based at the University Park location, available for remote participation in Carlisle.) The Intellectual Property Clinic provides law students with an opportunity to gain practice-ready skills in intellectual property law. Under the supervision of Associate Clinical Professor of Law and Director, Jon D'Silva, students will provide legal services to the clinic's clients in much the same manner as practicing IP lawyers. Students in the clinic will engage in client intake and interview, patent and other intellectual property searching and evaluation, client communication, docketing, and filing applications in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Students will adhere to standard patent law office practices such as conflict checks, maintenance of strict confidentiality, docketing, and time-recording, and will learn and conform to the professional responsibilities of lawyers engaged in IP transactional practice as well as the Rules of Ethics of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.
- (1) Requirements to Participate in Intellectual Property Clinic:
    - (a) Only J.D. students are permitted to apply. Preference given to J.D. students who are eligible to take or have passed the USPTO's Patent Registration Examination (sometimes referred to as the "Patent Bar").
  - (2) Prerequisites:
    - (a) Prior or current enrollment in any of: Patent Law, Trademarks, Copyrights, Introduction to IP, Licensing of IP.
  - (3) Suggested courses:
    - (a) Professional Responsibility, Contracts, Corporations.

- xi) [Manglona Lab for Gender and Economic Equity.](#) (Based at the Carlisle location, available for remote participation in University Park.) The Anuncia Donecia Songsong Manglona Lab for Gender and Economic Equity creates opportunities for law students to learn about the past and present issues surrounding gender and economic equity in law, while learning valuable legal skills. Under the supervision of Associate Clinical Professor of Law and Director, Bethany Schols, students contribute to Manglona Lab's economic equity research initiatives, interviews, and litigation matters. The Manglona Lab performs research on various matters related to gender and equity in the law and publishes that research on this website. The Manglona Lab interviews women and captures their experiences related to gender and equity. In collaboration with the Penn State PILOT lab, the Manglona Lab performs research to advance the knowledge on the economic drivers of technology entrepreneurship and equity.
- (1) Requirements to Participate in Manglona Lab Clinic:
    - (a) All 2Ls, 3Ls, and LL.M. students are permitted to apply.
  - (2) Prerequisite or Suggested courses: None
- xii) [Medical Legal Partnership: Making Lives Whole.](#) (Only available to Carlisle location.) 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 founding Director, Medha D. Makhoulf, 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.
- xiii) [Rural Economic Development Clinic.](#) (Only available to University Park location.) With one of the nation's largest rural populations, Pennsylvania's prosperity depends upon its rural communities. Under the supervision of Director and agricultural law expert, and Clinical Professor of Law, Ross Pifer, the clinic is committed to the complementary goals of training talented lawyers while encouraging sustainable rural economic development by representing clients in agricultural, food, and energy sectors. The clinic works with individuals and organizations to assist in providing tools for successful business operation. An example of a potential client is an agricultural producer who needs help drafting a contract to market goods using the Community Supported Agriculture model or to sell produce to local restaurants. Other services could include providing legal assistance with business entity formation and reviewing contracts, reviewing leases for wind/solar energy or oil/gas extraction, or developing model agreements or ordinances.
- (1) Requirements to Participate in Rural Economic Development Clinic:
    - (a) All 2Ls, 3Ls, and LL.M. students are permitted to apply.
  - 1) (2) Suggested but not required courses:
    - a) Agricultural Law, Professional Responsibility, Corporations, and general business law courses.

xiv) [Veterans and Servicemembers Legal Clinic](#). (Based at the University Park location, available for remote participation in Carlisle.) The Veterans and Servicemembers Legal Clinic offers students hands-on experience representing veterans and current servicemembers in disability, education, and pension matters before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and federal courts. Under the supervision of Clinical Professor of Law, and Director, Michele Vollmer, law students (1) interview clients; (2) conduct medical and legal research; (3) develop legal theories for service-connection and increased ratings; (4) review and summarize medical records, military records, and claim file documents; (5) draft briefs, statements in support and VA submissions; (6) work with treating physicians and medical experts to develop medical evidence; (7) plan appellate strategy; (8) counsel clients; (9) draft amici briefs and conduct oral argument; (10) comment on pending legislation or rule making; and (11) advocate for changes in veterans and military law.

(1) Requirements to Participate in Veterans Clinic:

(a) J.D. students in their second- or third-year at the Law School may apply, as well as LL.M. students.

(2) Prerequisites: none

5. **Fall and Spring Externship Program:** Under the guidance of an experienced supervisor, second- and third-year students can step out of the classroom and gain practical experience working in a legal office in one of [Penn State Dickinson Law's externship placement sites](#) during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- a) In order to receive academic credit for working at an externship placement site, students must:
    - i) complete legal work at their externship site for a required number of hours per credit (typically 140 hours per semester for three credits);
    - ii) attend and participate in the academic companion course; and
    - iii) complete assigned readings, required reflective assignments, and self-evaluations.
  - b) Students usually apply for externships using a list of previously approved externship placement sites listed in Law Lion Careers, Penn State Dickinson Law's Career Portal. Students are also permitted to propose a new externship placement site. However, all new externship placement sites must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Associate Deans for Academic Affairs and the Externship Program Director in the applicable location.
  - c) To apply for the General Externship Program, students need to log-in to Law Lion Careers, click on the OCI and Job Listings tab, select OCI, filter by Round and then select the "Externship Recruitment" Round from the drop-down menu. Students can then select individual employers and submit the required materials. The application process for externship placements occurs during the registration period for other courses. Enrollment in externships is selective and not guaranteed.
  - d) Students may not enroll in a clinic and an externship in the same semester.
  - e) The Externship Program Directors in each location will advise and counsel law students concerning externship placements, particularly when students need experiential education credits to meet graduation requirements. Students should be mindful of experiential education graduation requirements and engage in advanced planning to meet those requirements.
  - f) General externships allow students to continue taking courses while working with federal judges, state or federal government agencies, and private, public interest or nonprofit organizations, such as:
    - i) Federal Judicial Placements
    - ii) Federal Government Placements
    - iii) State Government Placements

- iv) Public Interest and Nonprofit Placements
  - v) Law Firms (must be paid)
  - vi) Corporations (must be paid)
  - vii) Penn State University Placements
  - g) 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). Students should consult with the Externship Program Director in the applicable location to determine the specific requirements of their externship placement.
  - h) Most types of externships for academic credit may be paid or unpaid. However, all externships with for-profit entities (such as law firms and corporations) must be paid.
  - i) Visit the Externship Program website to learn about placement opportunities.
6. **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:
- a) The student is in good academic standing and is not the subject of an Honor Code investigation or proceeding;
  - b) The student will complete the third year of law school with at least 88 credits required to graduate;
  - c) The student will not exceed the limit on co-curricular credits with inclusion of the semester-in-practice externship; and
  - d) The student has taken doctrinal and skills-based courses that adequately prepare them for success on the bar exam.

Visit the Semester in Practice Program website to learn about placement opportunities.

**7. The Summer Externship Program**

- a) Summer Externship Placements – Only students with an F-1 visa are eligible to apply for a 1-credit summer externship, with one rare exception for undue hardship noted below. Students with an F-1 visa must timely apply for summer externships to gain Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Enrollment in a summer externship is selective and not guaranteed. After obtaining an offer from an employer, students should timely send their summer externship application to the Externship Program Director in the applicable location for approval. Students with F-1 visas must disclose their visa status to externship employers, and must confirm that the employer will support CPT before contacting the Externship Program Director in their location. Under rare circumstances, to avoid an undue hardship, when an employer requires a student to receive academic credit to be eligible to receive an offer for a summer position, the Associate Dean for Experiential Education (ADEE) may grant approval for a student without an F-1 visa to earn 1 credit for a summer externship. Before granting approval, the ADEE or Externship Program Directors will contact the employer to discuss the academic credit requirement to determine if it can be waived or removed.

8. **The International Justice Program:** Students eager to put the theories and skills they build through the International Curriculum into practice can participate in experiential programs, summer opportunities, and post-graduate fellowships. Students work in law firms with a multinational practice, NGOs, and government organizations. The Career Planning & Development Office and faculty members work with students to identify practice experiences. Students can get international

human rights and criminal prosecution experience through the International Justice Externship Program or by working with a government organization such as the Department of State or an international development organization during the Semester in Washington program.

- a) 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 Penn State 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.
- b) Spring semester may be considered with permission from the program director.
- c) For more information on the International Justice Program, contact Professor Dermot Groome and visit the [Semester in Practice Program website](#).

## **COURSE REGISTRATION POLICIES**

### **1) Meaning of a credit hour:**

- a) A “credit hour” consists of:
  - i) One hour of classroom or faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class work per week for fifteen weeks (including final exams) or the equivalent for a different schedule.
  - ii) The same amount of work for other academic activities like simulations, field placements, clinics, co-curriculars, etc.
  - iii) Out-of-class work can include activities like reading, case briefing, writing assignments, problem sets, simulations, research, discussions, exam preparation, take-home exams, papers, and projects.
- b) 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).
- c) For additional information, see the section on “Double Counting of Course Work.”

### **2) Add/Drop Policies:**

- a) 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, usually 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 at their location and only for compelling justification.
- b) The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location 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 at their location, compelling justification for dropping the course. Examples of compelling justification include:
  - i) 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
  - ii) 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 at the relevant location 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.
- c) The precise dates for the end of the drop/add period are available on the [Academic Calendar website](#).



- d) If a late drop, or add, is approved, please note that the university charge is \$6 per transaction. For example, a person who drops one course and adds another would be charged for two separate transactions.
- 3) **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:
- a) A student may take only one course (maximum of 4 credits) Pass-Fail during their entire J.D. program.
  - b) 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. Experiential Credit courses may be taken Pass-Fail, if designated by the professor. Courses graded credit/no credit are not pass/fail courses under this policy.
  - c) 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. Students electing pass/fail grading may not elect to receive the course letter grade earned after the semester pass/fail election period is past.
  - d) 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.
  - e) Review the Co-Curricular Credit Rules for additional information regarding courses taken under the Pass/Fail option.
  - f) Only courses designated "Pass/Fail eligible" by the professor in the registration materials may be elected Pass/Fail.
- 4) **Auditing a Course**
- a) Permission to audit a course must be granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the relevant location.
  - b) 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 at their location.
  - c) The deadline for requesting a course be added/changed to an audit is the semester drop/add deadline published on the [Academic Calendar](#).
  - d) The course will appear on the student's schedule as though it has been scheduled for credit.
  - e) 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.
  - f) No credit is earned, and the grade-point average is not affected.
  - g) Audit credits are charged at the normal per credit tuition rate.
  - h) Credits for a course being audited are not counted in determining the following:
    - i) enrollment status (full-time or part-time)
    - ii) calculating semester standing
    - iii) financial aid status
    - iv) full-time status for international students for reporting to SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) under federal requirements
- 5) **Non-Law Students in Law School Classes**
- a) Enrollment (including audit) and attendance in a law school class is limited to law students, with these exceptions:



- i) School of International Affairs Students, with the approval of the law professor, the director of the School of International Affairs, and the student's SIA academic advisor;
- ii) Other PSU graduate students with the approval of the law professor and the law school Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the relevant location;
- iii) 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 at the relevant location. Note: the law course will only be applied to the graduate degree program and transcript;
- iv) 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 at the relevant location. (Auditors are charged law school tuition).

## **OTHER ACADEMIC RULES**

### **1) Location Change Request Policy**

#### **a) *Background:***

- i) Penn State Dickinson Law operates as one law school with two locations. Throughout the law school application and selection process, Penn State Dickinson Law applicants have opportunities to learn about both Law School locations and identify their preferred location. Admitted students are encouraged to visit both locations, connect directly with admissions ambassadors from both locations, and participate in virtual programming focused on “Location Considerations.” Prior to enrollment, students may submit a location reconsideration request to the admissions office. After enrollment, students may request to relocate to the other location for a single semester or for the remainder of their legal education for academic or personal reasons in accordance with this policy.

#### **b) *Policy:***

- i) Students enrolled at one location may relocate to the other location for a single semester or for the remainder of their legal education. The ability to change locations is not guaranteed. Requests to change location are subject to the availability of space and resources at the desired location.
- ii) A temporary relocation of no more than one semester may take place in either the Fall or Spring semester. Permanent relocation is restricted to the start of the second and third years only for J.D. students. Students in the LL.M. and S.J.D. programs must stay at their assigned location for the first two semesters of their program. Relocation requests after that will be considered in accordance with this policy’s process and deadlines. Students seeking to relocate must submit a Location Change Request through the Associate Dean’s Approval Request Form.

#### **c) *Process:***

- i) Currently enrolled Penn State Dickinson Law students who wish to relocate to the other location must submit a Location Change Request through the Associate Dean’s Approval Request Form. The form will allow students to indicate whether they seek a temporary or permanent relocation. Students submitting the form are also required to submit a short statement articulating the academic or personal reasons for the requested change.

#### **d) *Deadlines:***

- i) Beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year, requests for temporary and permanent relocation beginning in the Fall semester must be submitted by March 1 of the preceding Spring semester. Requests for temporary relocation beginning in the Spring semester must be submitted by October 1 of the preceding Fall semester. These deadlines ensure that, should the request be approved, the relocating student can participate in the standard course registration period for the subsequent semester.

#### **e) *Exceptional Circumstances:***

- i) Students experiencing exceptional circumstances should contact [Dean Saidman-Krauss](#).

### **2) Taking Courses at Another Penn State Academic Unit**

- a) *Penn State University non-law courses.* Students may enroll in no more than 12 credits for Penn State University graduate courses, or Penn State University undergraduate foreign language courses, including courses offered via World Campus, and must receive advance approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location to enroll in such courses. Students in an approved joint degree program or an accelerated bachelor’s to J.D. program are subject to the specific rules of that program and are not subject to this credit limit.

- b) *Eligible Graduate-Level Courses:*
    - i) 500-level or higher courses; or
    - ii) 400-level courses, but only with the advanced approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location upon a showing that the course is sufficiently rigorous to justify credit toward the J.D. degree.
  - c) *Pre-Matriculation Credit:* Academic credit earned prior to matriculation into the Penn State Dickinson Law J.D. program may not be applied toward the J.D. degree unless:
    - i) The credit is awarded pursuant to the Penn State Dickinson Law “Rules Governing Transfer from the LL.M. to the J.D. Degree Program;” or
    - ii) 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 Deans for Academic Affairs at their location determines that some or all of the credits should be imported and applied toward the J.D. degree at Penn State Dickinson Law.
  - d) J.D. students enrolled in an approved joint degree program are subject to the specific rules of that program.
  - e) *Generally Applicable Rules and Exclusions*
    - i) No credit splitting. Students may not apply less than all the credits earned in a single course toward the total number of credits permitted under this rule.
    - ii) Credits for graduate level courses that a law student earned prior to admission to the J.D. program will not count toward the J.D. degree.
    - iii) Credits will count toward the J.D. degree only if the student earns a grade of at least a B. Grades will appear on the student’s transcript; however, grades for graduate courses are not calculated into a student’s GPA.
    - iv) To count toward the J.D., courses must be taken at Penn State University Park or via World Campus. Credits earned through distance education (defined as through either World Campus or via the remote section of a Penn State Law course offered via synchronous audiovisual communication) will count as distance education credits under ABA Standard 306 on Distance Education and state bar eligibility rules. The maximum number of credits permitted to count toward the J.D. degree is 27.
    - v) Advanced undergraduate and graduate level credits for individual studies or supervised research will not count toward the J.D. or LL.M. degree.
- 3) *J.D. Distance Education:* A student may earn up to 27 credit hours required for the J.D. degree through distance education courses. 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 25 percent or more 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.
- 4) *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 on the “Meaning of Credit Hour.”

## 5) Independent Study Credit

- a) A student may enroll in no more than one Independent Study Course per semester. A student may register for no more than two Independent Study Courses for a maximum of four (4) credits during the J.D. degree. A student may elect to take an Independent Study Course as Pass/Fail.
- b) An Independent Study Course may be for one, two, or three credits. Pursuant to the relevant ABA standards and the law school's "Meaning of a Credit Hour" requirement, a student must complete at least 45 hours of work per independent study 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.
- c) An Independent Study Course can be either a research project that results in a research paper of a specific length (the usual expectation is twenty double-spaced pages per credit), or an alternative equivalent project approved by the Supervising Professor. Each Supervising Professor sets the standards and expectations that each student must satisfy for course credit. 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.
- d) A student may take an Independent Study Course only from a Supervising Professor. A Supervising Professor must be a resident law faculty member, an emeritus faculty member, or an affiliate faculty member with a J.D. degree (with approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location).
- e) Before a student may register for an Independent Study Course, the student must submit to the Registrar the Independent Study Declaration of Intent Form. This form sets out the student's goals for the course, a proposed thesis topic, 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.
- f) The student should 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 Course credits will be earned.
- g) An Independent Study Course does not satisfy the Seminar requirement for the J.D. degree. Graduate-level Individual Studies credits will not be applied to the J.D. degree.
- h) 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 an Independent Study, or any work submitted for credit in one course for credit in another. 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.

## 6) Education Abroad: 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 Graduate and International Programs.

- a) Eligibility: To be eligible to apply for semester study abroad, a student must:
  - i) Have completed with at least a passing grade all courses in the required curriculum;
  - ii) 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;
  - iii) 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
- iv) Demonstrate through academic achievement and conduct: integrity, maturity, and excellent time management and interpersonal skills.
  - b) *Note:* Students who have transferred into 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.
  - c) *Application Process:* All students interested in a Penn State Dickinson Law semester study abroad program must follow the application process and deadlines established by the Office of Graduate and International Programs.
  - d) *Academic Credit and Grading:* Penn State Dickinson Law will award academic credit (on a credit/no credit scale) towards the J.D. for courses a Penn State 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).
  - e) *Co-Curricular Credit Maximum:* Students considering study abroad should review the law school requirements on co-curricular credits.

## 7) Earning Credits from Another ABA-Accredited Law School

- a) Ordinarily, it is expected that all J.D. students will maintain full-time resident status during their six semesters at the law school. However, any student may apply toward their J.D. a maximum of 6 credits of non-required upper-level coursework offered at another ABA-accredited law school upon prior written approval of the [Associate Dean for Academic Affairs](#) at their location. In a rare case, the student may seek an Academic Dean'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 the Law School, do not meet the standard. Law School required courses typically must be completed at Penn State Dickinson Law.
- b) Penn State Dickinson Law students attending another institution will be enrolled in LWVIS 903 by the Law School Registrar's office. LWVIS 903 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.
- c) To earn credit for any course work completed at another ABA-accredited law school, the student must receive a grade that corresponds to at least a C on that 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 Penn State Dickinson Law grading scale.
- d) Except for students who transfer into the second year, no credit will be awarded for a course taken on a Pass-Fail or similar basis when the student had the option of receiving a number or letter grade for the course.
- e) It is the responsibility of the student to have an official transcript from the law school they attended sent to the Law School Registrar's office. If the transcript is not received by the Law

School Registrar in a timely manner, the LWVIS 903 credits will convert to a NG (no grade) and eventually to an F.

- f) Students planning to take courses at another ABA-accredited law school should confirm with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location that their plans comply with the Semesters-in-Residence policy.
- 8) **Summer Enrollment:** Penn State 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 Curricular Practical Training requirements for employment, other than rare exceptions to avoid undue hardship identified in the Summer Externship section of this Handbook.
- 9) **Certificate Program Policies and Requirements and Specialized Fields of Study & Concentrations for J.D. Students Who Enter Penn State Dickinson Law Beginning in Fall 2025:**
  - a) During the Fall 2025 semester, the unified faculty at Penn State Dickinson Law will determine and vote on certificate program policies and specialized fields of study and concentrations for J.D. Students entering Penn State Dickinson Law in the Fall 2025 semester and LL.M. students entering in fall 2026.
- 10) **Certificate Program Policies and Requirements for Students Who Entered Penn State Dickinson Law at the Carlisle Location Prior to Fall 2025:**
  - a) *Certificate Requirements:* To earn a certificate in one of the programs below, a student must:
    - i) 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. The form should be submitted through the Associate Dean's Approval Request Form;
    - ii) Complete a minimum of 15 credits by taking the Core Courses and Elective Courses, listed for each Certificate program;
    - iii) 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
    - iv) 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 intranet website.
  - b) *Certificate Limitations:* A student may pursue and earn only one certificate, and only one concentration within a certificate.
  - c) *Certificate Programs:*
    - i) Civil Rights, Equal Protection, and Social Justice Certificate (Advisor: Professor Shaakirrah Sanders).
    - ii) Corporate Compliance Certificate (Advisors: Professor Laura Williams).
    - iii) Cyber, Privacy, and Data Security Certificate (Advisor: Professor Amy Gaudion).
    - iv) Entrepreneurship Law Certificate (Advisor: Professor Samantha Prince).
    - v) Family Law & Children's Advocacy Certificate (Advisors: Professors Jeffrey A. Dodge, Lucy Johnston-Walsh, and Megan Riesmeyer).
    - vi) Government Affairs Certificate (Advisors: Professor Amy Gaudion). Concentrations in National Security Law, Federal Regulatory & Legislative Practice, and State Regulatory and Legislative Practice are available.

- vii) Health Law & Policy Certificate (Advisor: Professor Medha Makhoul).
- viii) Litigation & Dispute Resolution Certificate (Advisor: Professor Gary Gildin). Concentrations in Civil Litigation, Criminal Litigation, and Dispute Resolution are available.
- ix) Tax Law & Policy Certificate (Advisor: Professors Bill Barker and Samantha Prince).

**11) Specialized Fields of Study & Concentrations for J.D. Students Who Entered Penn State Dickinson Law at the University Park Location Prior to Fall 2025 and LL.M. Students Who Enter in Fall 2025:**

- a) Penn State Dickinson Law students gain core knowledge and basic skills in the first-year curriculum and students in their second and third year have the option to concentrate their studies in one or more of the law school's many specialized fields of study. LL.M. students can take courses in any of our specialized fields of study during their one-year program.
- b) Students may earn Concentration recognition in the Specialized Fields of Study below. J.D. students must earn a minimum of 12 credits and LL.M. students a minimum of 9 credits. A minimum grade of 'C' is required for each course being used toward a Concentration.
- c) Upon graduation and verification of completion, students will receive a document of recognition. Students may earn multiple Concentrations. Students must submit their Concentration Declaration Application by the last day of the semester prior to their graduation.
- d) Approved courses for each Concentration are available on each of the Specialized Fields of Study pages below. Students must request approval from the Penn State Dickinson Law Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location to count any course not listed as an approved course on the Specialized fields of Study pages by emailing the Course Exception Form to the Law School Registrar.
  - (1) Administrative Law and the Regulatory State
  - (2) Advocacy and Litigation
  - (3) Antitrust and Competition Law
  - (4) Arbitration, Mediation, and Negotiation
  - (5) Arts, Sports, and Entertainment Law
  - (6) Banking and Financial Regulation
  - (7) Commercial Law
  - (8) Corporate Law and Practice
  - (9) Constitutional Law and Civil Rights
  - (10) Criminal Law
  - (11) Energy and Environmental Law
  - (12) Families, Children, and the Law
  - (13) Health Law
  - (14) Immigration and Migration
  - (15) Intellectual Property
  - (16) International, Foreign, and Comparative Law
  - (17) Labor and Employment Law
  - (18) Law, Science, and Technology
  - (19) National Security, Military, and Veterans
  - (20) Public Interest Law
  - (21) Race, Law, and Equity
  - (22) Taxation

## 12) Joint Degree/Dual Degree Programs

- a) Whether you study in Carlisle or University Park, Penn State Dickinson Law offers a wide array of joint degree options, allowing you to customize your legal education and graduate with your J.D. and a master's or doctoral degree from Penn State. Students will have degree advisors both at Penn State 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.
- b) Joint Degree/Dual Degree Options Include:
  - i) *J.D./Master of International Affairs (M.I.A.) with the School of International Affairs*
    - (1) The J.D./M.I.A. offers students an accelerated course of study of law and international affairs, preparing them for a career in international law, international policy and diplomacy, and much more.
    - (2) Students must apply to Penn State Law and School of International Affairs separately and must meet each school's admissions requirements.
    - (3) A maximum of twelve (12) credits for M.I.A. course work may be transferred for credit toward the J.D. degree at Penn State Law. Courses eligible for cross-counting towards the J.D. and M.I.A. include the courses on the current M.I.A. electives list and any other courses taken as M.I.A. electives with the express written permission of the S.I.A. and J.D. advisors. Students must obtain a grade satisfactory to the Law School for the course work to be credited towards the J.D. degree.
    - (4) Up to twelve (12) credits of Penn State Law course work may be applied to the M.I.A. degree. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the M.I.A. degree, courses taken in Penn State Law as a part of the elective component of the M.I.A. automatically count towards the SIA. Courses eligible for cross-counting towards the J.D. and M.I.A. include the courses on the current M.I.A. electives list and any other courses taken as M.I.A. electives with the express written permission of the S.I.A. and J.D. advisor.
  - ii) *J.D./Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) with the Smeal College of Business*
    - (1) 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:
      - (a) Business Analytics
      - (b) Finance
      - (c) Information Systems
      - (d) Strategic Leadership and Innovation
      - (e) Supply Chain Management
    - (2) Students must apply to Penn State Law and Smeal separately and must meet each school's admissions requirements.
    - (3) A typical J.D./M.B.A. joint degree student will be in residence at Penn State Law for six semesters and at Smeal College of Business for two semesters.
    - (4) All students in the program will have two advisors, one from Penn State Law and one from Smeal. Periodic interaction between the two advisors will be encouraged.
  - iii) *J.D./Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) with the School of Public Affairs*
    - (1) The J.D./M.P.A. program is intended for those with career interests in government, public management, health and human services, and other public services and nonprofit



organizations. The curriculum blends theoretical and applied concepts and assures “real-world” experiences.

- (2) Students pursuing the J.D./M.P.A. may want to focus their M.P.A. studies in one of the concentrations listed below:

- (a) Nonprofit Management
- (b) Policy Analysis and Evaluation
- (c) Public Budgeting and Financial Management
- (d) State-Local Government and Administration

*iv) J.D./Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) with the College of Medicine*

- (1) 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.
- (2) Admissions requirements for the joint J.D./M.P.H program are the same as those for the independent J.D. and M.P.H. programs. J.D./M.P.H. students will have to meet the admissions requirements of both programs, and each program will make a separate admissions decision.

*v) J.D./Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) with the College of Medicine*

- (1) The J.D./Dr.P.H. degree is offered jointly by Penn State Dickinson Law and Penn State College of Medicine, part of Penn State Health in Hershey, Pennsylvania. This 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.
- (2) Students will have two academic advisors: one from the Department of Public Health Sciences at Penn State College of Medicine and one from Penn State Dickinson Law.

*vi) J.D./Master of Arts (M.A.) in Media Studies with the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications*

- (1) Students must apply to Penn State Dickinson Law and the Bellisario College of Communications Media Studies program separately and must meet each school's admissions requirements.

*vii) Through the Penn State College of Education, several joint degrees have been established in the following areas of study:*

- (1) J.D. Master of Arts (M.A.) in Educational Theory and Policy
- (2) J.D./Doctor of Educational Theory and Policy (Ph.D.)
- (3) J.D./Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Higher Education
- (4) J.D./Doctor of Higher Education (Ph.D./D.Ed.)
- (5) J.D./Master of Educational Leadership (M.Ed.)
- (6) J.D./Doctor of Educational Leadership (Ph.D./D.Ed.)

*viii) J.D./Master of Health Administration (M.H.A.) with the College of Health and Human Development*

- (1) Students applying to the joint degree program must be admitted separately into both Penn State Law and HPA.
- (2) Penn State Law will accept the transfer of twelve (12) credits from the M.H.A. program's required core curriculum as elective credit towards the J.D. students must obtain a grade satisfactory to the program in order for the credits to be transferable.
- (3) HPA will accept the transfer of twelve (12) credits from the Penn State Law curriculum towards the M.H.A. in lieu of (i) two M.H.A. electives, (ii) a required M.H.A. course in health law, and (iii) one other required M.H.A. course as determined by the student and their advisors. Specific law course selection for transfer to the M.H.A. will be dependent on course offerings available at Penn State Law. Students must obtain a grade satisfactory to the program in order for the credits to be transferable.

*ix) J.D./Master of Science (M.S.) in Human Resources and Employment Relations with the College of the Liberal Arts*

- (1) The number of openings in the joint degree J.D./M.S. program will be limited to students with an outstanding academic record who have successfully completed the first-year curriculum with the law school. Applicants to the joint degree program: must have been admitted to Penn State Law; should have successfully completed the first-year curriculum at Penn State Law with a grade point average of 3.0; must submit two letters of recommendations from Penn State Law faculty; must submit a career statement.
- (2) Twelve (12) credits of relevant course work for the HRER Graduate Program can be double-counted towards the requirements for the J.D. degree. The only two HRER courses that will not be credited toward the J.D. degree are HRER 501 and HRER 510.
- (3) Twelve (12) credits of relevant course work from the law school can be double-counted toward the 37 credits required for the M.S. degree.

## **GRADING, EVALUATION, GRADE APPEALS, CLASS RANK, AND ACADEMIC HONORS**

### **1) Access to Grading Information:**

- a) Students may access their grades on [LionPath](#) — select “My Grades” on the dashboard, then select the appropriate semester.

### **2) Grading Norms:**

#### **a) *JD Grading Norms:***

- i) Required courses:
  - (1) Median = B
  - (2) Mean = 2.9-3.1
  - (3) Expect 15% A and A-
  - (4) Expect 15% C+ and below
- ii) Elective Classroom Courses (30+):
  - (1) Median = B.
  - (2) Mean = 2.9-3.2.
  - (3) Expect 15% A and A-
- iii) Seminars, small classes, etc.:
  - (1) Median = B+
  - (2) Mean = 3.0-3.7
  - (3) No expectations

#### **b) *J.D. grading system:***

- (1) A (4.00)
- (2) A- (3.67)
- (3) B+ (3.33)
- (4) B (3.00)
- (5) B- (2.67)
- (6) C+ (2.33)
- (7) C (2.00)
- (8) D (1.00)
- (9) F (0.00)
- (10)CR Credit
- (11)NC No Credit
- (12)DF Deferred Grade
- (13)NG No Grade Reported
- (14)AUS Audit Satisfactory
- (15)AUU Audit Unsatisfactory

- c) *LL.M. grading norms:* Grades are based solely on the instructor's judgment of the student's scholarly performance based on the expectations set forth in the course syllabus. LL.M. student grades are not calculated into the JD grading curve.

#### **i) *LL.M. grading system:***

- (1) A, A-, B+ (Excellent range): Exceptional achievement
- (2) B, B-, C+ (Good range): Substantial achievement
- (3) C (Satisfactory range): Acceptable achievement
- (4) D (Poor): Inadequate achievement
- (5) F (Failure): Work is unworthy of credit and indicates the student may not be capable of succeeding in LL.M. Study

### 3) Grade Appeals Policy

- a) Grading is the exclusive responsibility of each course instructor. Absent a calculation error or other mistake by the instructor which the instructor determines justifies submission of a grade change, grades are final. There are no grounds for appeal of a grade by a student except for:
  - i) Assignment of a grade on some basis other than the instructor's assessment of the student's performance in the course.
  - ii) Assignment of a grade based on standards different than those applied to other students in the course.
  - iii) Assignment of a grade based on standards that are a substantial and unreasonable departure from the instructor's initially articulated standards. Disagreement with an instructors' professional judgment of the quality of students' academic performance is not a ground for appeal.
- b) Absent compelling circumstances, students with questions or concerns about their grade must speak with their instructor before submitting a grade appeal.
- c) To appeal a grade, students must do the following:
  - i) Submit a grade appeal petition to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location (Associate Dean) no later than four weeks after the grading deadline for the semester when the grade was issued.
  - ii) The petition must present clear and convincing evidence that the assignment of the grade was based upon one or more of the three listed grounds, rather than the professional judgment of the instructor.
- d) Upon receipt of the grade appeal petition, the Associate Dean at their location will notify the Chair of the Academic Rules Committee. The Chair will then appoint two members of the Academic Rules Committee, who with the Associate Dean will constitute an ad hoc committee to review the grade appeal.
- e) The ad hoc committee will seek any additional information needed to review the petition from the instructor, the student, or others.
- f) If the ad hoc committee determines that the assignment of the grade was not based on one or more of the three listed grounds, the Associate Dean will notify the student, and the grade will stand. The grade appeal is thus concluded, and no other appeal will be considered.
- g) If the ad hoc committee concludes that the assignment of the grade is based on one or more of the three listed grounds, the Associate Dean will notify the student and instructor and recommend a disposition of the appeal, which may include a grade change.
- h) If both the student and instructor accept the recommended disposition, it should be implemented promptly. If the disposition results in a change in the student's grade, the instructor should complete a change of grade form in compliance with law school and Penn State University protocols.
- i) If either the student or the instructor does not accept the recommended disposition, they must notify the Associate Dean and the Dean of Penn State Dickinson Law within ten days.
- j) The Dean will appoint a committee of three faculty members with appropriate expertise to determine a grade.
  - i) This committee will be comprised of faculty members at the same or higher rank as the instructor.
  - ii) This committee may be a standing committee appointed at the start of the academic year or an ad hoc committee if no standing committee has been appointed.
  - iii) The Associate Dean will then transmit the grade to the Registrar, and the grade appeal process is concluded.

#### 4) Class Rank Policy

##### a) *Class Rank Calculation:*

- i) Class ranks are calculated after final grades have been submitted each semester, generally within a month of the final grading deadline. Credits earned at Penn State Dickinson Law over the summer are calculated in the fall ranking process; there is no summer ranking process.
- ii) Once the ranking process is complete, class ranks will not be recalculated for that semester on the basis of later changes to students' grades.
- iii) Students with any deferred grades as of the final grading deadline will not receive semester and cumulative class ranks.

##### b) *Class Percentile Ranking Chart:*

- i) 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.

##### c) *J.D. Student Ranking:*

- i) All students enrolled full time in the law school's J.D. program as first-year students and beyond shall receive semester and cumulative class ranks relative to their classmates at the end of each semester (fall and spring) in which they complete at least six graded credits from the law school's curriculum.
- ii) Consistent with their matriculation to schools offering separate programs of legal education, students graduating in 2025, 2026, and 2027 will be ranked by location of matriculation.
- iii) Unified class ranks will begin with students graduating in the class of 2028. Students completing no graded credits during a semester will not receive a semester class rank.
- iv) The class with which each J.D. 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:
  - (1) 10 — 30 total credits earned ranked with the first-year class
  - (2) 31 — 54 total credits earned ranked with the second-year class
  - (3) 55+ total credits earned ranked with the third-year class
- v) Students 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, students can determine which class they will be included in for ranking.
- vi) Semester and cumulative class ranks will not be reported on students' transcripts. At the conclusion of each semester, J.D. students will be issued an official letter from Penn State Dickinson Law reporting their semester and cumulative class ranks.

##### d) *Ranking for Students Enrolled in Fewer than Twelve Credits:*

- i) Students enrolled in fewer than twelve credits in a semester are not ranked but will receive a semester and a cumulative GPA.

##### e) *Joint Degree Student Ranking:*

- i) To receive a semester class 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.

##### f) *Transfer Student Ranking:*

- i) Students who enroll in the law school's J.D. program as transfer students do not receive a cumulative class rank.

- ii) Students who enroll in the law school's J.D. program as transfer students can determine their percentage rank relative to their classmates by using the official Class Percentile Rankings Chart.
- iii) Students who enroll in the law school's J.D. program as transfer students will receive a semester class rank 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 class rank.
- iv) The transfer student class rank rules apply also to J.D. students in the classes of 2026 and 2027 who change their location of instruction.
- g) *Non-J.D. Student Ranking:*
  - i) Non J.D. students do not receive a semester or cumulative class rank.
- h) *Non-Law School Credits Earned and Class Ranking:*
  - i) 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 class 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.

## 5) Academic Honors and the Woolsack Society

- a) *Academic Honors for Students entering Penn State Dickinson Law in Fall 2025:*
  - i) Academic honors are awarded as follows: cum laude to graduates who rank in the top 25 percent of the graduating class, magna cum laude to those who rank in the top 10 percent and summa cum laude to those who rank in the top 3 percent of their class. Refer to the policy 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) Penn State Dickinson Law students must have at least 57 graded credits to be eligible for Academic Honors.
  - iii) Academic Honors will appear on the student's diploma and transcript. Academic Honors are not listed in the commencement program.
- b) *Transitional Rules for Latin Honors:*
  - i) For Penn State Dickinson Law students graduating in 2025, 2026, and 2027, academic honors are awarded as follows:
    - (1) cum laude to graduates who rank in the top 30 percent, magna cum laude to those who rank in the top 15 percent, and summa cum laude to those who rank in the top 5 percent.
    - (2) Rankings will be calculated separately for students completing the academic program in Carlisle and in University Park. Academic honors will appear on the student's diploma and transcript. Academic honors are not listed in the commencement program.
- c) *Woolsack Society*
  - i) The Woolsack Honor Society was founded in 1920 for the purpose of recognizing academic excellence. It was re-established in 1981.
  - ii) Membership in the Society is extended to students who rank in the top fifteen percent of their graduating class.
  - iii) Woolsack Honor Society will appear on the student's transcript.
  - iv) Once inducted, membership is permanent.
- d) The "[CALI award](#)" is given to the student with the highest grade in a class, as determined by the Penn State Dickinson Law professor. Awardees receive a printed certificate, which includes a

permanent URL Virtual Award that the student can link to from their online resumés or biographies. In the spring semester, CALI Award certificates for graduating students are mailed to their diploma mailing address, or permanent address if there is no diploma mailing address listed in the student's Student Services Center in LionPath.

- e) Other Recognitions: Visit our [website](#) to view other recognitions and recent recipients.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **1) Class Attendance**

- a) Prompt and regular class attendance is mandatory for all students. Consistent with American Bar Association accreditation standards, individual faculty members must establish and implement a policy to ensure attendance, which will be communicated in writing to students by the end of the drop-add period. This policy will also be included in the course syllabus. Faculty members may change how they monitor attendance during the semester, with appropriate notice to students. Consistent with their stated attendance policies, faculty may refuse to allow a student to take the final exam or otherwise complete the course if they fail to meet the attendance requirements.
- b) Viewing recorded lectures does not substitute for in-person class attendance and preparation. Regular attendance and active preparation are required for all class sessions to maintain good academic standing. Recordings are meant to supplement learning, not replace in-person participation.
- c) If a student is unable to attend classes for more than three consecutive days due to uncontrollable circumstances (e.g., medical issues, family emergencies, death of family or friends), the student should promptly notify the Office of Academic & Student Services. Students may also be asked to submit an Associate Deans' Approval Request Form, along with supporting documentation. If absences are anticipated to exceed two weeks, students should consider taking a leave of absence and must contact the Office of Academic & Student Services. Individual faculty member attendance policies per course apply to these absences.

### **2) Class Recording Policy**

- a) 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, students consent to the school's making and display of class recordings within the scope of this policy.
- b) 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 at the relevant location will bring the issue of the school's AV recording policy back to the faculty for its consideration.
- c) *Opt-Out Policy:* Faculty members may opt-out of the automatic recording policy for all courses, with the exception of courses designated as required or tested on the bar exam, 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.

**3) Use of Electronic Devices During Class**

- a) The use of personal electronic devices (e.g., laptops, smart phones, tablets, and other such devices) in law school classrooms must be consistent with course syllabi, Penn State 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).
- b) 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.
- c) 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. Penn State Dickinson Law expects each student to advance the educational mission of the law school and to comply with this standard.

**4) Student Educational Experience Questionnaire ([SEEQ](#)):**

- a) Penn State's Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence manages the SEEQ process and helps facilitate the appropriate use of SEEQ data. The SEEQ process provides students the opportunity to provide meaningful and constructive feedback about their courses and faculty. The SEEQ 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 SEEQs for their courses, so the feedback is as representative of the class as possible.

## **ASSESSMENTS, FINAL EXAMINATIONS, AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

- 1) 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 the intranet. The policies below are applicable to both mid-semester assessments and final examinations.
- 2) **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 Penn State Dickinson Law Honor Code.
- 3) **Anonymous Grading and Exam IDs**
  - a) 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. To preserve student anonymity, the Office for Student Services is responsible for distributing, proctoring, and collecting exams for students who have received a disability-based exam accommodation.
  - b) You must obtain your Exam ID prior to sitting for your exams. Your Exam ID will be used as the only identifier on your exam materials. Placing the Exam ID on the exam is your responsibility. Accordingly, if you place your name on your exam or answer sheet(s), you will have waived the right to have your exam anonymously graded.
- 4) **General Assessment & Exam Regulations (J.D. and LL.M. Students)**
  - a) *Instructions.* Students should carefully review and follow the specific instructions and directions prepared by their faculty member for the timed, in-class assessment.
  - b) *Computer Use Required for Exams:* Students are required to use a single laptop computer for in-classroom exams. Desktops, all-in-ones, or other types of computers or tablets are not permitted. No additional computers/tablets, second or external monitors/screens, or other secondary electronic data storage or transmitting devices are permitted for scheduled, in-classroom exams. A student may use an external keyboard and/or mouse in a scheduled, in-classroom exam, provided it is not loud when in use or otherwise distracting to other students. If a complaint is received by an exam proctor or IIT staff about the noise being made by an external keyboard, the student must stop using that keyboard and may request one from IIT if their laptop keyboard is not working. When typing a take-home exam outside of the building, either laptops or desktops may be used. All computers must be compatible with the EXAM4 software. All students must be familiar with and comply with the Computer Exam Procedures.
  - c) *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.

- d) *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. The final exam schedule is posted on the Final Exam Information website each semester. Students are responsible for knowing when and where their exams will be administered.
- e) *Tardy or Late-Arriving 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 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.
- f) *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.
- g) The schedule for timed, in-class final exams is available on the intranet. The dates for all other timed, in-class assessments will be listed in the syllabus for the affected course.
- h) *Mobile and Electronic Devices.* The use of mobile and electronic devices (phones, watches, tablets, headsets, headphones, and other similar electronic devices, etc.) is prohibited. All electronic devices should be turned off and removed from the exam room entirely. Failure to do so likely carries strict liability under the Honor Code, meaning regardless of the reason for having the mobile device (accident, forgot, etc.), it may be pursued as a violation.
- i) *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:
  - (1) Carlisle: Student Services: 717-240-5209, 717-240-5015 or the Registrar: 717-240-5212.
  - (2) University Park: Student Services: (814) 867-1261 or the Registrar: (814) 863-9938
- j) 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.
- k) *Calculators.* If students are permitted by the faculty member to use a calculator during a timed, in-class assessment, they must use a basic calculator that has no other function and cannot be connected to the internet, and is not a graphing calculator or one that has storage capability.

Students may not use a calculator application on a mobile device (laptop, phones, watches, other similar electronic devices, etc.).

- l) *Dictionaries.* If you are permitted by a language accommodation or your professor to use a dictionary, you may use a traditional paper English language and/or translation dictionary or you may use a foreign language translating dictionary in an electronic form, provided it has no memory capacity, contains no other functions besides language translation, and does not connect to the internet. You may not use a dictionary application on a cell phone or any other electronic device. Students are responsible for making sure that any electronic devices they use comply with these guidelines.
  - m) *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 access personal items stored outside the room (i.e., backpacks, computer bags, mobile phones/devices, wallets/purses, etc.). Students should also refrain from speaking with others while in the restroom, hallway, café, etc.
  - n) *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 may only bring “quiet snacks” that are unwrapped and stored 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.
  - o) *Personal Belongings.* Students must leave all personal items not permitted for use in the exam administration (i.e., backpacks, computer bags, mobile phones/devices, wallets/purses, etc.) outside the exam room. Students may request a locker at the beginning of the academic year from the Office of Academic & Student Services should you not live nearby or commute without a car. Fidget devices are only permitted with explicit approval as a disability accommodation.
- 5) **Final Exam Computer Procedures**
- a) Note that each exam will have its own rules and procedures for taking the exam. You must follow the rules designated by your professor.
  - b) Once you have downloaded the software, you are required to take a practice exam all the way through the exam submission process to verify the software is working properly. Do not type anything in your practice exam that you wish to review later because exam files are encrypted and cannot be viewed from the software after exiting the exam.
- 6) **Requests to Reschedule Exams:** 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](#).
- i) *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's Office will reschedule one or more of the student's exams for the next available exam time on the student's schedule.
  - ii) *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 complete the [Associate Deans's Approval Request Form](#) 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), and the selection of the date must have been outside of the student's control. A student should not make travel arrangements for such events until permission is granted. Students should NOT contact their professor to request rescheduling of an exam and instead direct questions about the process to the Academic and Student Services Office.

- iii) *Religious Holiday Conflict*: If an assessment or exam falls on a religious holiday a student observes, the student should notify the Office of Academic & Student Services and complete the [Associate Deans' Approval Request Form](#) as early in the semester as possible to arrange an appropriate make-up time.
- iv) The law school Registrar schedules all make-up exams.
- b) The Office of Academic & Student Services is responsible for scheduling and proctoring assessments for students who have and intend to use assessment accommodations. To preserve student anonymity, students should not discuss individual exam scheduling arrangements with faculty members.

## **7) Accommodations Requests (Disability-Related)**

- a) Penn State Dickinson Law is fully committed to (a) making its programs accessible to all qualified individuals, regardless of disability and (b) making reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.
- b) The [Office of Student Disability Resources \(SDR\)](#), located in University Park, is the designated office for ensuring the university's legal compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Qualified Penn State students with disabilities are covered by the ADAAA and Section 504, which entitles them to non-discrimination, reasonable academic accommodations, auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, and accessible facilities. SDR is responsible for coordinating support services, reasonable academic accommodations, and promoting disability awareness in the university community.
- c) Students seeking accommodations must follow the steps outlined by SDR. Each of the steps below is explained in more detail in subsection (f) below:
  - (1) Complete a short online introductory questionnaire.
  - (2) Provide [necessary documentation](#). Please consult SDR's [documentation guidelines](#).
  - (3) Meet with an SDR representative. Students may schedule this meeting by calling 814-863-1807 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by emailing [upsdr@psu.edu](mailto:upsdr@psu.edu).
- d) SDR reviews the documentation submitted by the student and develops plans for the provision of reasonable accommodations. SDR will send written notification regarding recommended accommodations to the law school's Office of Academic & Student Services. SDR maintains all official records regarding disability accommodations.
- e) Accommodations for disabilities are facilitated solely by the Office of Academic & Student Services. Faculty members are not authorized to grant or deny disability accommodations\*. (\*The faculty member's role is explained in detail below).
- f) The process for requesting and receiving approval for accommodations is as follows:
  - i) Any student with a disability requesting an accommodation must meet with SDR. The meeting should occur within the first two weeks of the student's first semester in law school. In the case of a disability discovered after the student has begun law school, the meeting should be scheduled within two weeks of the student's discovery of the disability. Students are strongly encouraged to submit necessary documentation and meet with SDR as soon as

possible to ensure timely implementation of the accommodation sought. After the initial meeting, SDR will inform the Office of Academic & Student Services that the individual has provided the required documentation and propose specific accommodations for the student.

- ii) Any student requesting an accommodation must present appropriate documentation, from a qualified professional, establishing (a) that the disability exists and (b) that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the student with the opportunity to achieve or participate in the program to the same extent as a similarly-situated person without a disability. Please refer to SDR's [Documentation Guidelines](#) for the most up-to-date information on acceptable documentation, acquiring documentation, and submitting documentation.

- (1) SDR reserves the right to determine whether submitted documentation supports the need for reasonable accommodations based on the functional impact of the disability in the educational environment.

*g) DETERMINATION OF APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION*

- i) Once documentation has been submitted as described above and approved, the Office of Academic & Student Services will receive from the requesting student an approved classroom and/or exam accommodation plan. The student will submit to each applicable faculty member their approved classroom accommodation plan. The Office for Academic & Student Services will retain the exam accommodation plan; students should not share exam accommodation plans with faculty members.
- ii) A faculty member who is notified of an accommodation which is available to a student in the faculty member's course or program may inform the Office of Academic & Student Services of special circumstances which the faculty member believes make the accommodation unreasonable or inappropriate. The Office of Academic & Student Services, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the relevant location and SDR, shall consider such information and, where consistent with ADA standards, suspend or modify the established accommodation for the particular situation involved.

*h) CONFIDENTIALITY*

- i) No details regarding the nature of any student's documented disability shall be made available to any person except for the information described immediately above. The law school will make best efforts to conceal the identity of any student who is receiving an exam accommodation to any professors or other persons. However, the law school may reveal the identity of a student receiving an accommodation when it is not reasonably feasible to maintain confidentiality or when a student waives confidentiality. Instances in which a professor or other staff member working with a professor may be made aware of the student's name, the requested services, and the fact that the requested services are being made in order to accommodate a documented disability include but are not limited to:
  - (1) Accommodations for non-degree seeking students;
  - (2) Classroom accommodations;
  - (3) Accommodations for formative assessments delivered through electronic means; and
  - (4) Final exam accommodations delivered through electronic means.

*i) EXAMINATIONS & ASSESSMENTS*

- i) A [Testing Accommodation Access Request](#) must be submitted for each quiz, midterm, final exam or other assessment for which a student seeks to access their testing accommodations.
- ii) Faculty members shall ensure that our disability accommodation policies are followed where applicable, including the application of these policies to midterms and quizzes. Where a

disabled student is entitled to an accommodation on a midterm and/or quiz or series of quizzes, the Office of Academic & Student Services shall perform its normal functions (including exam administration) regarding such accommodations. Where a disabled student is entitled to an ADA accommodation on an online midterm and/or quiz or series of quizzes, the faculty support staff shall consult with the Office of Academic & Student Services to coordinate such accommodations and to ensure anonymity is preserved. The Office of Academic & Student Services will coordinate student disability accommodations for final examinations.

*j) RECERTIFICATION IN SUBSEQUENT SEMESTERS*

- i) Each student shall, at the beginning of each academic semester, provide the Office of Academic & Student Services and applicable faculty members with an approved classroom and/or exam accommodation plan.
- k) Contact the Office of Academic & Student Services at [StudentSuccess@dickinsonlaw.psu.edu](mailto:StudentSuccess@dickinsonlaw.psu.edu) with questions.

**8) Accommodations Request (Language-Related) - Translation Dictionary Request for International Students**

- a) International students 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.
- b) Contact the Office of Academic & Student Services with questions regarding language-related exam accommodations.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

- 1) **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.
  - a) Prior students must notify the University Registrar's Office of addresses changes, via the Address Correction Form.
- 2) **Transcripts:** There are two types of transcripts, advising and official:
  - a) 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.
  - b) 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](http://www.registrar.psu.edu).
  - c) 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 make copies as necessary for your application process.
  - d) Information regarding how to obtain a Penn State academic transcript can be found on the University Registrar [website](#).
- 3) **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-Penn State Dickinson Law study abroad programs. Please contact the Law School Registrar for more information.
- 4) **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.
- 5) **Degree Audit (Academic Requirements Report)**
  - a) Your Degree Audit (Academic Requirements report) is available in your Student Services Center in LionPath. You can use your Degree Audit (Academic Requirements report) along with your J.D. Requirements information to ensure you are staying on track to meet your graduation requirements.
- 6) **Communication Policy**
  - a) E-mail is the primary mode of official communication at Penn State 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.
  - b) Faculty, departments, and authorized student leaders are permitted to notify the Penn State Dickinson Law community about upcoming events and items of interest by sharing details on the Penn State Dickinson Law Announcements blog. All content must have an educational or student organization-specific component and be open to all members of the Penn State 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 [Penn State Dickinson Law Announcements blog](#). In an effort to best highlight our community events in the Law Announcements blog, posts are limited as follows:

- i) Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) may advertise their events up to five (5) times;
- ii) RSOs may advertise their meetings up to three (3) times;
- iii) Administrative Departments may advertise their events or announcements three to five (3-5) times.
- iv) Posts to the [Penn State Dickinson Law Announcements blog](#) should include the following information:
  - (1) Title of event
  - (2) Location of event (Carlisle or University Park? Room number?)
  - (3) Modality (In-person? Zoom or live-streamed?)
  - (4) Time of event
  - (5) Host of event (RSO? Outside group?)
  - (6) Audience for event (i.e., who are you hoping to attract?)
  - (7) Posts should include 2-5 sentences explaining the purpose of the event.
  - (8) If posting a photo or flier for your event, images should be pdf or jpeg, medium size (extra large or custom size images are not mobile-phone friendly)
  - (9) The blog is publicly accessible; non-protected Zoom links cannot be posted. Any events that will be streamed must have registration procedures in place and be password protected.
  - (10) Any postings that advertise unprofessional or inappropriate events will be removed; examples of such postings include: advertising drink specials for bar review events.
  - (11) Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in a warning in the first instance and a suspension of posting privileges for the remainder of the semester in the second instance.
- c) RSOs may request the opportunity to e-mail student listservs directly about matters that require increased visibility and attention. If approved, RSOs may send one community-wide email directly to the listservs for events of high importance. If approved, RSOs may also send a calendar invite to the listservs. Such requests must be approved by the Office of Academic & Student Services.
  - 1) *RSO Newsletters*: RSO's may distribute newsletters according to the guidelines herein. Before distributing any newsletters, please contact the Office of Academic & Student Services with questions.
    - a) SBA and RSOs must share the desired distribution dates for newsletters with the Office of Academic & Student Services at the beginning of the academic year and each semester so that we can ensure that email distribution is adequately spread out and so that recipients are not receiving newsletters on the same date(s) as other important correspondence.
    - b) SBA and RSO newsletters are required to adhere to Penn State Dickinson Law's visual identity brand standards. If you have questions, please contact the Office of Academic & Student Services or a member of our Marketing and Communications team.
    - c) Please connect with the Office of Academic & Student Services prior to sending out any newsletters to ensure that any SBA and/or RSO newsletters are being distributed using University-permitted email distribution services.

- d) Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in a warning in the first instance and a suspension of newsletter privileges for the remainder of the semester in the second instance.
- 7) **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.
- 8) **Employment While Enrolled:** Because full-time law study is very demanding, the law school strongly discourages employment for 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.
- 9) **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 at their location and may be subject to involuntary administrative withdrawal from the law school.
- 10) **Student Certification to Practice and Application for Certified Legal Intern:**
  - a) [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 at the relevant location certify students as being of good character and competent legal ability and as being adequately trained to perform as a certified legal intern.
  - b) Students seeking certification in Pennsylvania should obtain the proper form and instructions on completing the form from the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners website ([pabarexam.org](http://pabarexam.org)). 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 Intern Certification \(321/322\)](#)."
  - c) A student seeking certification in another state should consult the appropriate student practice rule and meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at their location to effect compliance with that rule.
  - d) 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.
  - e) 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.
  - f) Students in the Enhanced Academic Support Program are subject to a consultation requirement before engaging in employment during the semester. Students should refer to that program's guidelines for details.

- 11) **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. Decisions about Carlisle operations are made by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, while the University Park location follows central university guidance. The policies outlined below are applicable to both locations when experiencing inclement weather.
- a) *Classes/Activities:* In the event of a change in normal location 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. Classes that connect between the law school locations will follow the guidance for the in-person section. Where a delayed opening or closure impacts only the connected location section, students will not be required to attend, cannot be penalized for the absence, and will be provided a class recording or other form of make-up work. Student organization leaders will communicate information about alternative arrangements for events and meetings impacted by the delay or closure.
  - b) *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 location closure, the building will be closed and not accessible to students, faculty or staff.
  - c) *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 location 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.
  - d) *Notice:* Information about inclement weather, delayed openings, and campus closures will be communicated via law school email, PSUAlert text, and the [Penn State Dickinson Law homepage](#).

## **STUDENT WELL-BEING, SUPPORT, AND SAFETY**

Many students at Penn State Dickinson Law face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. Penn State Dickinson Law and the University Park and Carlisle communities 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 or contract practitioners 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.

### **1) Student Organizations:**

- a) *Student Bar Association*: The Student Bar Association (SBA) is Penn State 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. The SBA has a presence at both locations of Penn State Dickinson Law.
- b) [Registered Student Organizations \(RSOs\)](#): Students at Penn State Dickinson Law have a breadth of opportunities to get involved with their campus community. Visit the RSO 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 Office of Academic & Student Services with questions.

### **2) Health Insurance**

- a) Health care services can be very costly and unexpected expenses can be disruptive to your academic progress. Adequate health insurance, which includes mental health services, provides students with security and an enhanced sense of wellbeing during their time at Penn State Dickinson Law.
- b) Students who do not currently have adequate coverage on or near Penn State 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.
- c) 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.

### **3) Food Insecurity:**

- a) *Little Free Pantry (Carlisle)*: The Little Free Pantry is designed to provide free food to any 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 Penn State Dickinson Law community. Staff check the pantry weekly and remove any expired goods.
- b) [Lion's Pantry](#) (University Park): The Lion's Pantry serves as the official on-campus student food pantry at Penn State's University Park campus. Anyone with a Penn State ID who is facing food insecurity is welcome to shop during Open Hours. The Pantry's Main address is: 133 Bluebell Rd,

University Park, PA 16802. If you have any additional questions, please reach out to [thelionspantry@psu.edu](mailto:thelionspantry@psu.edu).

4) **Professional Clothing:**

- a) Professional Clothing Closet (Carlisle): Located in the Garden Level of Katz Hall in Carlisle, the Professional Clothing Closet provides law students with 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.
- b) [Professional Attire Closet](#) (University Park): The Professional Attire Closet is located at 105 Career Services Center, University Park, PA 16802 and is open Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. No appointment necessary.

- 5) **Textbook Sharing Shelf** (Carlisle): The Office of Academic & Student Services maintains a textbook lending library of used and older edition textbooks. Students who want to borrow books simply borrow them. 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.

- 6) **Emergency Grants & Loans:** Students experiencing financial insecurity should reach out to the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid and the Office of Academic & Student Services. Penn State Dickinson Law maintains a limited number of grants, loans, and gift cards 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.

7) **Pregnancy and Lactation Support Policy**

- a) *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 Academic & Student Services to discuss your rights and any need for accommodation.
- b) *Lactation Support Policy:* Penn State 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 Office of Academic & Student Services. Upon receiving the request for support, the Office 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.

- 8) **Sharing Concerning Behavior:** In order to enhance emergency preparedness and prevention efforts, Penn State 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 Penn State 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 and Student Services, University Police and Public Safety, and more. If Penn State 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.

- 9) **Wellness Resources:** Penn State offers a number of wellness resources to all students, including [WellTrack Boost](#), online mental health screenings, and other resources. More information can be found on the [PSU Wellness Services site](#).

**10) Counseling Services:**

- a) Counseling And Psychological Services (CAPS) resources are available in a variety of modalities to Penn State Dickinson Law students at both locations. Please review the chart below to learn more about the resources available at each location. Please visit the [CAPS website](#) or call 814-863-0395 to learn more about your options. CAPS operates from Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. If there is an emergency situation after hours, contact the 24/7 Penn State Crisis Line at 1-877-229-6400.

<b>CAPS available to Penn State Dickinson Law Students</b>	<b>University Park</b>	<b>Carlisle</b>
<a href="#">WellTrack Boost</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">CAPS Virtual Library</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Life Hack Kits</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Red Folder</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Penn State Crisis Line</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Crisis Text Line</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Thriving Campus</a>	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Short-term counseling, group, and psychiatric services</a>	Yes	No*
<a href="#">CAPS Chat</a>	Yes	No*
Consultation with staff on student concern cases	Yes	Yes

\*See (b) below for comparable resources available to Carlisle students.

- (b) To ensure that all students have access to counseling services, the Law School has contracted with [Franco Psychological Associates, PC](#), to offer individual counseling sessions during the Academic Year to students in Carlisle. If a student has health insurance that includes mental health coverage, Franco will bill the student's insurance company for reimbursement, and Penn State Dickinson Law will cover or offset up to four (4) co-pays per academic semester. If a student does not have health insurance that includes mental health coverage, Penn State Dickinson Law will cover the cost of counseling sessions for up to four (4) one-hour counseling sessions per academic semester per student. If a student is in extreme need of additional sessions, Penn State Dickinson Law may cover the cost of those additional sessions if verified in writing by Franco. Carlisle 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.

- 11) **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.
- 12) **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.
- 13) **Pennsylvania Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL):** [LCLPA](#) 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.
- 14) **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:
  - i) [National Mental Health Hotline](#): 866-903-3787
  - ii) Crisis Text Line: Text LIONS to 741741
  - iii) [National Suicide and Crisis Hotline](#): Call 988
  - iv) [Connections Emergency Behavioral Health Crisis Walk-In Center](#): (717) 408-1353, 1100 S. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17104
  - v) [Cumberland County Crisis Intervention](#): 717.243.6005
  - vi) [Centre County Crisis Intervention](#): 1-800-643-5432; A Walk-In Center is available at 2100 East College Avenue that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  - vii) [Penn State Crisis Line](#): 877-229-6400

### 13) Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Resources

- i) [National Dating and Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 1-800-799-SAFE; Text START to 88788
- ii) [Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#): 800-656-HOPE
- iii) At University Park:
  - (1) [Centre Safe](#): 877-234-5050
  - (2) [Centre Helps](#): 814-237-5855
- iv) In Carlisle:
  - (1) [YWCA Carlisle and Cumberland County Sexual Assault Crisis Services](#): 888-727-2877
  - (2) [Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties](#): 800-852-2102



## **ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND BAR PREPARATION RESOURCES**

Under the leadership of Associate Dean and Professor of Legal Skills Keith Elkin and Assistant Professor of Law and Director of Academic Success and Bar Passage Titichia Jackson, the [Office for Academic Success \(OAS\)](#) helps students identify and strengthen their academic abilities and aids students facing the challenges of a rigorous legal education. Penn State Dickinson Law offers comprehensive academic and bar exam support in Carlisle and University Park.

### **1) Academic Support**

- a) Through peer tutoring, workshops, individualized academic counseling, and opportunities for students to complete and receive feedback on practice exams, the OAS assists students in developing and enhancing the critical skills necessary for success in law school and the legal profession.

### **2) Bar Exam Support**

- a) Substantive support for bar exam preparation is available during law school and beyond. Dean Elkin and Professor Jackson teach Fundamental Skills for the Bar Exam for 3rd year law students. In addition, both teach a summer supplemental bar preparation course.

### **3) Enhanced Academic Support Program**

- a) At the conclusion of each semester, students with cumulative or semester GPA's under or equal to 2.70 but not subject to dismissal under the current Academic Standing Rule (requiring a cumulative and semester GPA of at least 2.0 for continued good standing) will be notified by the Associate Dean for Academic Success that they are in good standing, but subject to fulfillment of the conditions of the Enhanced Academic Support Program as described below.
- b) Students in the Enhanced Academic Support Program must:
  - i) As a condition to eligibility to register and schedule courses in each of the remaining semesters, obtain approval from Dean Elkin or Professor Jackson of their proposed course schedule.
  - ii) Consult with Dean Elkin or Professor Jackson before they
    - (1) assume a leadership position in student government/student organizations;
    - (2) engage in employment; or
    - (3) enroll in any semester away program including Externships Everywhere and Semester in Washington.
  - iii) In courses where faculty permit, review their exams from the previous semester.
  - iv) Participate in academic support programs that the Associate Dean for Academic Success deems appropriate which will typically include mandatory tutoring and workshops designed to improve academic performance.
  - v) Enroll in and satisfactorily complete BAREX 900: Fundamental Skills for the Bar Exam in Spring of the third year.
- c) The Enhanced Academic Support Program will end if the student achieves a 2.70 cumulative GPA at the end of any semester. A student who fails to satisfy any of these conditions shall be subject to dismissal under the procedure set forth in Academic Standing Rules.

### **4) Information About Bar Admission and Examination**

- a) Every U.S. jurisdiction has a unique set of rules, requirements, and criteria for admission to its bar. Penn State Dickinson Law students are responsible for researching and understanding the licensure requirements of the jurisdictions in which they plan to practice and communicate with



the Board of Law Examiners (BOLE) to resolve any questions related to bar admissions. You will find directories of the various BOLE [here](#).

*i) General Overview of Bar Admissions*

- (1) Bar admissions is made-up of four component parts:
  - (a) Timely completion of an application form.
  - (b) Passing the bar examination.
  - (c) Passing the character and fitness inquiry.
  - (d) Successfully completing other requirements in your jurisdiction.

*ii) Bar Application Forms*

- (1) Bar application deadlines are listed in the National Conference of Board Examiners ([NCBE](#)) Bar Admissions Guide. In that guide, you will find a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction snapshot of bar admission requirements.

*iii) The Bar Examination*

- (1) The Uniform Bar Examination ([UBE](#))
  - (a) The UBE is administered in 39 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. You may find comprehensive information about the UBE [here](#).
- (2) Next Generation Bar Examination ([NextGen](#))
  - (a) The NextGen bar exam will first be made available to US jurisdictions with the July 2026 bar exam. As jurisdictions announce whether they intend to first administer the new exam in July 2026, February or July 2027, or February or July 2028, the National Conference of Bar Examiners will update its list of participating jurisdictions to reflect these announcements.
- (3) State-Specific Bar Exams
  - (a) Several states including California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, and Virginia use only a portion of the UBE. These jurisdictions also test state-specific law, usually in essay format. You will find information about these and other state-specific bar exams [here](#).

**5) Character and Fitness to Practice Law Inquiry**

- a) Every jurisdiction has a character and fitness requirement. The Pennsylvania standard is illustrative:
  - i) “The character and fitness standards require that an applicant to the bar be one whose record of conduct justifies the trust of clients, adversaries, courts and others. The hallmark of such a person is honesty, especially in connection with the application for admission to the bar. Persons with a record showing a deficiency in honesty, trustworthiness, diligence or reliability may not be recommended for admission.”
  - ii) Character and fitness inquiries typically include, criminal or civil offenses, litigation in which you were a named party, driving records, employment terminations, dishonesty/lack of candor, misconduct, academic discipline failure to meet financial obligations, or substance abuse. Many jurisdictions require full disclosure even in cases where a record has been expunged. The inquiry will also include a form to be completed by Penn State Dickinson Law investigating whether any disclosures made to the bar were also made during the law school admission process, as well as any misconduct and/or discipline that may have occurred during your enrollment here. A failure to respond to a character and fitness inquiry truthfully, accurately, and completely is commonly deemed a character and fitness violation in and of itself and may be more detrimental to bar admission prospects than the undisclosed or inaccurately disclosed underlying conduct. If you have questions about information to be disclosed on your character and fitness form or need to amend your law

school application to include information previously omitted, please contact the Office of Academic & Student Services.

- iii) Until the first day of classes, students who need to make amendments to their application should submit amendments to the Penn State Dickinson Law Office of J.D. Admissions. Amendments that would have changed the admissions decision may result in the withdrawal or revocation of an offer of admission.
- iv) As of the first day of class of the first semester, and in subsequent semesters, all disclosures must be made to the Office of Academic and Student Services. These disclosures will be maintained by the Office of Academic & Student Services and the Office of the Registrar.
- v) During the first semester of enrollment, Penn State Dickinson Law students must certify that they have made all necessary disclosures and that they understand their continuing duty to disclose character and fitness issues throughout their time at Penn State Dickinson Law.
- vi) Questions about Character and Fitness Disclosures should be directed to the Office of Academic & Student Services.

## **6) Additional Requirements**

- a) Most jurisdictions require a passing score on the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam. Several states have additional requirements for admission. New York, for example, requires an additional exam and 50 hours of pro bono work.

## **7) FAQ's:**

- a) *What is a Law School Certificate or Deans Certification form?*
  - i) Most states require a certificate from your law school dean attesting to the fact that you have graduated from law school. These forms can be found online at the various state bar websites. You should download the form and turn it to the Registrar's Office. If the bar also requires that we submit a copy of your law school application, please request this at the time of the submission of your bar form.
- b) *What do I do if an official transcript is required as part of the Bar Examination Application Process?*
  - i) Information regarding how to obtain a Penn State academic transcript can be found on the University Registrar website.
- c) *Can I get a loan to pay for bar exam expenses and living expenses during the bar study period?*
  - i) Yes, see the Law School's information on student loans.
- d) *What do I do if fingerprints are required as part of the Bar Examination Application Process?*
  - i) As part of the character and fitness investigation, some jurisdictions require fingerprints from applicants. IdentiGO is the official state contractor for fingerprinting in Pennsylvania. If you are sitting for a bar exam in another jurisdiction, please verify that the BOLE will accept IdentiGO fingerprinting.
- e) *How do I Apply for Disability Accommodations on the Bar Exam?*
  - i) Each jurisdiction's office of bar examiners provides information about the process for seeking bar examination accommodations for each state, including links to forms, deadlines, and additional information about the bar application process, and sample cases. Even if you have received accommodations while in law school, it does not guarantee that you will receive accommodations on the bar exam. The standard for receiving accommodations for the bar examination is much stricter, and students may be required to show updated, additional neuro-psych evaluations or medical testing to receive bar exam accommodations. Please contact the Office of Academic & Student Services to discuss bar exam

accommodations and the process for obtaining accommodations if you have questions or concerns.

f) *Should I take a Commercial Bar Review Course?*

- i) Students are strongly encouraged to take a commercial bar review course to properly prepare for successful completion of the bar exam. It is extremely difficult to pass the exam without a bar review course. The law school does not recommend any particular commercial course and the links below are provided to students only as a matter of convenience. Providing this information does not constitute an endorsement of any programs or products by Penn State Dickinson Law.

- (1) [BARBRI](#)
- (2) [Kaplan Bar Review](#)
- (3) [Themis Bar Review](#)
- (4) [Helix](#)

## **STUDENT CONCERNS REGARDING ABA STANDARDS COMPLIANCE**

Preface: As an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school, Penn State 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.

- 1) Procedure for Submitting Complaints:
  - a) Complaints must be submitted in writing to an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the relevant location or Office for Academic & Student Services at the relevant location.
  - b) 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).
  - c) The administrator to whom the complaint is addressed shall acknowledge the complaint within three (3) business days of receipt.
- 2) Procedure for Resolving Complaints:
  - a) 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.
  - b) 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.
  - c) 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.
- 3) Procedure for Appeals:
  - a) 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.
  - b) The appeal must be submitted in writing within ten (10) business days after communication to the student of the findings of the investigation.
  - c) The Dean's decision shall be communicated to the student within ten (10) business days and shall be final.
- 4) Maintenance of Records:
  - a) A copy of the complaint and resolution shall be maintained in a confidential manner in the Office of Academic & Student Services.