



PennState
Dickinson Law

Student Academic Handbook S.J.D. Supplement, 2025-2026

International Programs and Graduate Education
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Welcome to the Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) Degree Program.

This document serves as a supplement to the J.D. Student Academic Handbook, which is the primary source for Dickinson Law's academic policies and protocols. S.J.D. students are expected to understand and adhere with all academic policies and protocols. When not explained herein, students are directed to defer to the J.D. Student Academic Handbook. S.J.D. students should become especially familiar with the following policies and resources:

[The Student Code of Conduct](#)
[Honor Code](#)
[Nondiscrimination Statement](#)
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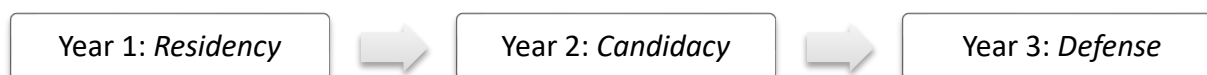
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DOCTOR OF JURIDICAL SCIENCE (S.J.D.) - OVERVIEW

The *Doctor of Juridical Science* (S.J.D.) degree is Penn State Dickinson Law's most advanced legal degree. The program is designed for both domestic and internationally trained legal scholars seeking specialized knowledge and advanced study in a particular area of legal scholarship. It is ideally suited for those who already have advanced legal degrees and want to pursue a career focused on legal research and scholarship.

The S.J.D. program offers a flexible course of study that allows students to pursue supervised research leading to the production of a dissertation that should serve as an original and valuable contribution to legal scholarship. While the structure of the S.J.D. program can vary, the degree generally requires three years, one of which is spent in residence. A typical three-year schedule is as follows:



Residency

S.J.D. students are required to be in residence at Penn State Dickinson Law in Carlisle, PA for one academic year (or two semesters), preferably during year one of the program. During the residency period, students complete two courses: *Research Methods* (2 credits) and *Research Colloquium* (2 credits). Whereas *Research Methods* focuses on the methodological considerations in the proposed area of legal research, the *Research Colloquium* is designed to engage scholars in a public facing discussion of their proposed research.

Candidacy

To move into Candidacy, each S.J.D. student must first pass an oral defense to an appointed Candidacy Committee, which usually takes place at the end of the first year of residency. Candidates are encouraged to remain in residence after the candidacy defense unless their research requires other arrangements. To remain in good standing, candidates must submit an *Annual Progress Report* to demonstrate that satisfactory research progress is being made.

Defense

Students are expected to complete the program within two years after meeting the minimum residency requirement and achieving candidacy. When appropriate, a candidate's faculty supervisor will recommend to the S.J.D. Program Committee that the candidate be scheduled to defend the dissertation to an appointed Committee of Examiners. Upon successfully defending the dissertation and submitting the written dissertation as prescribed to Penn State Dickinson Law, the S.J.D degree will be conferred.

Questions may be directed to the Director of International Programs
and Graduate Education at, DickinsonGradEd@psu.edu.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements in fulfillment of the S.J.D. degree at Penn State Dickinson Law include a residency period, coursework, a candidacy defense, a written dissertation, and a dissertation defense. Students must maintain satisfactory progress throughout the duration of the S.J.D. degree program.

Coursework

S.J.D. students are required to remain enrolled full-time throughout the duration of their S.J.D. studies. Students are manually registered by the Dickinson Law Registrar each semester for DLSJD 901, 903, or 904, depending on one's candidacy and residency status. Equal to 12 credits, these courses allow students to remain in fulltime enrolled status (see Table One).

In year one, while in residence in Carlisle, students are required to successfully complete DLSJD 902 Research Methods (2 credits) and DLSJD 905 Research Colloquium (2 credits). In some cases, the S.J.D. Program Committee and/or the appropriate faculty supervisor may require additional coursework. Additional tuition and fees may apply.

Upon reaching candidacy, S.J.D. candidates may not enroll in additional coursework beyond what is specified in Table One without the approval of their faculty supervisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Additional coursework may include pro bono services, internships, and fellowships that require approval and concurrent enrollment in an independent study or externship course.

While students must remain enrolled full-time throughout the duration of their S.J.D. studies, the degree program does not require a minimum number of credits for graduation.

Table One. *SJD Course Requirements.*

| | Course Code | Course Title | Course Description | Credits | Semesters |
|---|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Year One "Student" | DLSJD 901 | SJD Pre-Candidacy Resident | Pre-candidacy | 12 | 1 & 2 |
| | DLSJD 902 | SJD Research Methods | Research Skills | 2 | 1 (or 2) |
| | DLSJD 905 | SJD Research Colloquium | Research Colloquium | 2 | 2 (or 1) |
| Year Two & Three "Candidate" | DLSJD 903 | SJD Dissertation Research In-Residence | Post-candidacy [Pre-Req. DLSJD 901] | 12 | 3, 4, 5, & 6 |
| | DLSJD 904 | SJD Dissertation Research Not In-Residence | Post-candidacy [Pre-Req. DLSJD 901] | 12 | 3, 4, 5, & 6 |

Candidacy Defense

Each S.J.D. student must pass an oral defense to an appointed Candidacy Committee. Typically, the Candidacy Defense will be scheduled toward the end of the first year of residency. Before a student is permitted to proceed to the Candidacy Defense, the students' *Candidacy Submissions* must be approved by the faculty supervisor and the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education. Students who successfully satisfy the Candidacy Committee as to their progress will be considered "Candidates". (For more information, see [Candidacy Defense Guidelines](#).)

Annual Progress Reports

Candidates are encouraged to remain in residence throughout their studies. Each must submit an *Annual Progress Report* at the end of each academic year (before May 1), that the faculty supervisor and the S.J.D. Program Committee will review and deem satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If a candidate does not show satisfactory progress, the S.J.D. Program Committee may decide to remove the candidate from the program (see Table Two). (For more information, see [Candidacy Defense Guidelines](#).)

Dissertation

To fulfill the S.J.D. degree requirements, each candidate must produce a dissertation. The dissertation must be an original and significant contribution to legal scholarship, either by investigating a research problem from a unique perspective or addressing a recognized problem with a new approach. It should have a clear claim, well-structured arguments, and appropriate references. Most dissertations are around 250 to 400 pages. The dissertation can take the form of a monograph or multiple published or unpublished articles or book chapters (minimum of 3) with introductory materials, a comprehensive bibliography, and relevant appended materials. Commissioned studies, committee reports, and work from other degree programs are not accepted. (For more information, see [Dissertation Defense Guidelines](#).)

Dissertation Defense

When appropriate, the faculty supervisor will recommend to the S.J.D. Program Committee that a candidate be advanced to the dissertation defense. At this time, the faculty supervisor will provide nominations of those to serve on Committee of Examiners. Upon successfully defending and submitting the written dissertation as prescribed to Penn State, the S.J.D degree will be conferred.

Table Two. S.J.D. Milestone Chart

| <i>Requirement</i> | <i>Deadline*</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| DLSJD902 Research Methods (2 cr.) | First year (in residence at Carlisle), Fall semester |
| DLSJD905 Research Colloquium (2 cr.) | First year (in residence at Carlisle), Spring semester |
| Candidacy Defense | First year (in residence at Carlisle), no later than mid-April |
| Annual Progress Report | During Candidacy, no later than May 1 |
| Declare Intention to Graduate | Between 6 & 12 months before intended graduation |
| Formation of Committee of Examiners | At least 6-weeks before the scheduled dissertation defense |
| Dissertation Submission for Review | At least 4-weeks before the scheduled dissertation defense |
| Dissertation Defense | At least 8-weeks prior to intended graduation |
| Final Dissertation Submission | At least 8-weeks prior to intended graduation |
| Graduation | Third year, usually mid-May |

* Based on three-year timeline beginning with fall matriculation.

CANDIDACY DEFENSE GUIDELINES

In order to move into candidacy status, each S.J.D. student must pass an oral defense to an appointed Candidacy Committee. What follows are guidelines that are to be followed in fulfillment of this requirement. Any questions are to be directed to the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education.

Candidacy Requirements

The requirements for advancement to S.J.D. degree candidacy are:

1. Completion of all required coursework [DLSJD Research Methods (2 credits); DLSJD Research Colloquium (2 credits)]
2. Submission of the first chapter/article of the dissertation, bibliography, research methodology, and research plan (referred to as "Candidacy Submissions")
3. Satisfactory completion of an oral defense to an appointed Candidacy Committee

Candidacy Submissions

To be approved for the Candidacy Defense, a student must submit the first chapter/article of the dissertation and a comprehensive bibliography. Additionally, a student must submit a detailed research methodology explaining how the research will be conducted and what research method will be used. This should include a proposed research plan or timeline leading to the Dissertation Defense. All documentation must be submitted to the appropriate faculty supervisor and the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education. Before a student is permitted to proceed to the Candidacy Defense, the Candidacy Submissions must be reviewed and approved by the faculty supervisor and the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education.

Candidacy Defense Protocol

To move into candidacy, each S.J.D. student must pass an oral defense to an appointed Candidacy Committee. Toward the end of the first year of residency, or when the S.J.D. faculty supervisor believes the draft of a chapter/article of the


dissertation and other required components of the Candidacy Submissions are ready for review, the oral defense may be scheduled. Those who successfully satisfy the Candidacy Committee as to their progress will be considered "Candidates" for the duration of their S.J.D. studies. Individuals unable to successfully complete the candidacy defense within two full-time academic years must seek S.J.D. Program Committee approval to continue in good standing. Until such time as one becomes a candidate, standard year one tuition rates apply.

In conjunction with the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education, the faculty supervisor will designate the date, time and location for the oral defense. The oral defense should be scheduled to allow a minimum of ten days for all members of the Candidacy Committee to review the Candidacy Submissions. The final oral defense will be scheduled for no longer than 90 minutes and will be open to the Dickinson Law community.

Candidacy Committee

In collaboration with the S.J.D. Program Committee, the faculty supervisor will appoint a Candidacy Committee of at least three members. The composition of the Candidacy Committee will include the faculty supervisor, a co-supervisor (if applicable) and 1-2 current members of the Dickinson Law faculty. If appropriate, a legal scholar from another Penn State campus or institution may serve as a fourth member of the Candidacy Committee. The faculty supervisor will serve as chair of the Candidacy Committee.

Additionally, the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education will serve on the Candidacy Committee as an ex-officio non-voting



member and retains the authority to suspend proceedings should a situation arise that would not be conducive to a fair defense.

Candidacy Defense Proceedings

The oral defense is facilitated by the Candidacy Committee Chair who will open the proceedings. Generally, the S.J.D. student will begin the oral defense with a brief presentation of proposed research (approx. 15 minutes), after which the members of the thesis committee will question the student in an order determined by the chair. Questions dealing with the substance, meaning and usefulness of the research are of greatest priority. Inquiries or comments dealing with punctuation, grammatical minutiae, spelling, etc. should be privately submitted to the S.J.D. student and the faculty supervisor. When, in the judgment of the chair, members of the Candidacy Committee have had an adequate opportunity to question the student, the chair may open the defense to non-committee members present at the oral defense.

If, in the opinion of the chair, it is deemed desirable to discontinue the oral defense, the chair will excuse everyone except members of the Candidacy Committee. The S.J.D. student should be evaluated upon both: (a) the overall quality and significance of the Candidacy Submissions, and (b) the oral defense. A student passes the oral defense and becomes a “candidate” for the S.J.D. degree if there is no more than one dissenting vote and no significant issues have been identified.

S.J.D. students that fail the oral defense will be granted a second and final attempt, to be scheduled no later than six months after the first attempt. After two unsuccessful attempts, the S.J.D. Program Committee may decide to remove the student from the program.

The faculty supervisor and members of the Candidacy Committee will sign the S.J.D. Candidacy/Dissertation Form, and each registers a vote of “pass” or “fail.” Committee members may not abstain in this vote. The signed document is maintained by the Dickinson Law Registrar.

Maintaining Candidacy Status

In order to maintain candidacy, each S.J.D. candidate must submit an *Annual Progress Report* at the end of each academic year (usually in May). This is a detailed report of the candidate’s research, writing and professional activities submitted to the faculty supervisor for approval and feedback. A copy of the report must also be shared with the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education.

The Annual Progress Report must be certified by the candidate’s faculty supervisor who must confirm to the S.J.D. Program Committee that the candidate is making adequate progress each academic year. If a candidate does not show satisfactory progress, the S.J.D. Program Committee may decide to remove the individual from the program.

While no standard template is currently required, the Annual Progress Report must provide a detailed accounting of the candidate’s progress in alignment with the initial research plan submitted at the time of the candidacy defense. Any modifications to the dissertation research, its methodology or the research plan should be noted and discussed. Additionally, the candidate should acknowledge and discuss any particular challenges or barriers to progressing without delay to the dissertation defense. The report should be dated and signed by the candidate, the faculty supervisor and members of the S.J.D. Program Committee. The signed document is maintained by the Dickinson Law Registrar.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE GUIDELINES

When appropriate, a candidate's faculty supervisor will recommend to the S.J.D. Program Committee that a candidate be advanced to the final dissertation defense. What follows are guidelines for the fulfillment of this requirement. Any questions are to be directed to the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education.

Dissertation Defense Requirements

The requirements for advancement to *Dissertation Defense* are:

- Completion of all required coursework [DLSJD 902 Research Methods (2 credits); DLSJD 905 Research Colloquium (2 credits)]
- Satisfactory completion of an oral defense to an appointed Candidacy Committee.
- Successful research progress as demonstrated through Annual Progress Reports submitted to the faculty supervisor and S.J.D. Program Committee.
- Recommendation of the faculty supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) and approval of the S.J.D. Program Committee to proceed to dissertation defense.
- Submission of notification of the "Intent to Graduate" in accordance with Penn State's [Academic Calendar](#).
- Formation of a Committee of Examiners, with approval of the S.J.D. Program Committee, at least 6-weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.
- Submission of a complete dissertation manuscript to the Committee of Examiners at least 4-weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.

Dissertation Format

The dissertation submitted for defense must be an original and substantial contribution to the advancement of legal scholarship. It will do so most commonly (a) by formulating a research problem that probes some aspect of the conceptual framework for thinking about an issue and investigating the problem systematically from this angle to construct an original argument, or (b) by developing

a new approach to addressing a recognized and significant problem and showing how understanding of its dimensions is advanced by this methodology. The claim the dissertation advances should be clear and the supporting arguments should be well structured and appropriately referenced. A dissertation that merely surveys, catalogs, or compiles relevant literature, legislation, case material, or the ideas of others will not satisfy the dissertation requirement.

While there is no prescribed length, most S.J.D. dissertations are approximately 250 to 400 pages (the equivalent of a book-length manuscript). Length is in part a function of the subject chosen and methodology and should be determined in consultation with the faculty supervisor, subject to the final approval of the S.J.D. Program Committee. The text may consist of narrative, commentary, draft annotated legislation or treaty, annotated translation, annotated bibliography or other contribution to the history of law books, or other forms consistent with doctrinal contributions to legal scholarship.

Depending on the nature of the research, the dissertation may be in the form of (a) a monograph; or (b) multiple published or unpublished articles or book chapters (no less than three), prefaced by appropriate prefatory and introductory materials and with a comprehensive bibliography and any other relevant appended materials which collectively constitute an original and substantial contribution to the advancement of legal scholarship. If co-authored, the original and substantial contribution of the candidate must be clearly identified (e.g., by statements of (an)other co-author(s),

disclosure of author contributions in a published manuscript, etc.) as belonging to the candidate and not to other co-authors. Projects that are historically, sociologically, or philosophically oriented are generally best served by a monographic form, but in other cases (e.g., in legal fields that develop more quickly, such as health law) a series of related articles or book chapters may also be acceptable with the approval of the faculty supervisor and the S.J.D. Program Committee.

Commissioned studies, committee reports, and academic work, papers, or dissertations written in or submitted as part of another degree program or academic requirement at Penn State or any other academic institution will not be accepted in fulfillment of the dissertation requirement.

Committee of Examiners

Subject to the approval of the S.J.D. Program Committee, the S.J.D. candidate and the faculty supervisor will select a Committee of Examiners, of at least three members (maintaining an odd number of examiners), at least 6-weeks before the scheduled dissertation defense. Examiners are not compensated. Neither the faculty supervisor nor co-supervisor may serve as Committee Chair. In general, the composition of the Committee of Examiners is as follows:

- the faculty supervisor, and co-supervisor (if appointed);
- a Dickinson Law professor, either a tenured or tenure-track, who will serve as chair; and,
- a legal scholar from another Penn State campus or other institution, domestic or international, with appropriate subject matter expertise.

Additionally, the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education will serve on the Committee of Examiners as an ex-officio non-voting member and retains the authority to suspend proceedings should a situation arise that would not be conducive to a fair defense.

Dissertation Defense Protocol

Upon approval of the S.J.D. Program Committee and in collaboration with the chair of the Committee of Examiners, the faculty supervisor will designate the date, time and location for the dissertation defense. The dissertation defense should be scheduled at least 8-weeks before the intended graduation date. The dissertation defense should be scheduled to allow at least four weeks for all members of the Committee of Examiners to review the final dissertation. The defense will be scheduled for no longer than 120 minutes and will be open to the Dickinson Law community.

Dissertation Defense Proceedings

The dissertation defense is facilitated by the chair of the Committee of Examiners. Generally, the S.J.D. candidate will begin the oral defense with a presentation of the dissertation research (approx. 30 minutes), after which the members of the Committee will question the candidate in an order determined by the chair. Questions dealing with the substance, meaning and usefulness of the research are of greatest priority. Inquiries or comments dealing with punctuation, grammatical minutiae, spelling, etc. should be privately submitted to the S.J.D. candidate and the faculty supervisor. When, in the judgment of the chair, members of the Committee have had an adequate opportunity to question the candidate, the chair may open the defense to non-committee members present at the defense.

If, in the opinion of the chair, it is deemed desirable to conclude the defense, the chair will excuse everyone except members of the Committee of Examiners and, if in attendance, the Dickinson Law Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, to confer. The S.J.D. candidate should be evaluated upon both: (a) the overall quality and significance of the dissertation, and (b) the oral defense. A candidate passes the defense for the S.J.D. degree if there is no dissenting votes and no significant issues have been identified.

If major edits are needed, the Committee of Examiners, at its discretion, may allow the candidate to make emendations and schedule a second review by the full Committee of Examiners. If only minor edits are needed, the Committee may elect to require a second review by the full Committee of Examiners or defer verification of those edits to the faculty supervisor. The final dissertation must be submitted within 4-weeks of the dissertation defense and at least 4-weeks before the intended graduation date.

The faculty supervisor and members of the Committee of Examiners will sign the S.J.D. Candidacy/Dissertation Form, and each registers a vote of “pass” or “fail.” Committee members may not abstain in this vote. The signed document is maintained by the Dickinson Law Registrar.

Any S.J.D. candidate that fails the dissertation defense will be granted one additional attempt, to be scheduled no later than six months after the first attempt. After two unsuccessful attempts, the S.J.D. candidate will be removed from the program.

Submission Requirements

In preparation for the final dissertation defense, manuscripts are to be submitted electronically to the faculty supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) and the director of International Programs and Graduate Education.

Manuscripts must be page-numbered and double-spaced, with margins not exceeding of 1½ inches. While there is no predetermined format for the cover page, each candidate should check with that candidate’s faculty supervisor for specific requirements or preferences. At a minimum, the cover page should include the candidate’s name, “S.J.D. Dissertation,” the dissertation title, the names of the members of the Committee of Examiners, and the date of submission. With adequate disclosure, multiple-essay dissertations composed of one or more published articles can include the articles as published, but they must be paginated with a sequential numbering system to capture their inclusion in a unitary project and to facilitate library storage in a monographic form.

S.J.D. TRAVEL/RESEARCH GRANT

Dickinson Law maintains grant funding in support of S.J.D. students and their professional advancement and scholarly research. Grant funds are intended to provide assistance for students to present results from their research at professional meetings and conferences. Grant funds may also be used to cover expenses related to primary data collection or field research. Awards are up to \$500 each per year, and subject to available funding.

Applications are available at, [Travel/Research Grant](#). Applicants must have completed at least one semester in residence and be in good academic standing. Applications require the endorsement of the student’s primary faculty supervisor. Applications will be reviewed based on the significance of the student's request and the importance of the activity as defined by the student's S.J.D. research proposal.

The Travel/Research Grant is reflected as financial aid and refunded through the recipient's bursar account. Recipients should contact the Director of J.D. Admissions & Financial Aid to determine how the award will impact financial aid eligibility. All grant requests must be processed prior to May 31 to be paid in the current academic year.

Questions should be directed to the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

S.J.D. students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, which is essential to credible legal research and the ethical practice of law.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the law school community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, copying, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, and tampering with the academic work of other students.

Plagiarism is intentionally or recklessly submitting work that uses, without proper acknowledgment, words, ideas, results, methods, opinions, or concepts that do not originate from the student. It does not matter whether the appropriated information is published or unpublished, academic or nonacademic in content, or in the public or private domain. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting work without proper citation, submitting as the student's own work content produced by generative AI, and submitting content that results from such a degree of outside assistance that it cannot reasonably be deemed the student's own work.

All submissions, including proposals and dissertations, must reflect the student's own analysis and voice. When in doubt, S.J.D. students should consult with their faculty supervisor.

Violations may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. For more information, please refer to the [Honor Code](#).

Academic Standing

S.J.D. students & candidates must maintain satisfactory progress throughout the duration of the S.J.D. degree program. To remain in good standing, candidates must remain enrolled full-time and submit an *Annual Progress Report* to demonstrate that satisfactory research progress is being made.

Class Attendance

Prompt and regular course attendance is required of all Dickinson Law students. Individual faculty members establish, announce, and implement a policy designed to ensure regular and prompt attendance for each course. With notice to students, faculty members may modify their methods for monitoring promptness and attendance during the semester. Viewing a class recording is not a substitute for class attendance and preparation, which is required for all class sessions (unless excused by the professor on an exceptional basis for good reason) and in order to remain in good academic standing with the law school.

Class Recordings

Most classes at Dickinson Law are recorded, and each professor has a policy governing student access to recordings. Students may ask their professors to provide access to class recordings via the request feature on the Canvas course page. Students are not permitted to make their own recordings of any part of a class by any means without prior express authorization of the faculty member. Unauthorized recording, distribution, or use of a class recording may be a violation of the Dickinson Law Honor Code.

Course Registration

S.J.D. students will be manually registered each semester for all required coursework by the Dickinson Law Registrar. With permission of the student's faculty supervisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, S.J.D. students may enroll in additional courses by assignment or with approval. Additional tuition & fees may apply.

Upon reaching candidacy, S.J.D. candidates may not enroll in additional coursework beyond what is specified in Table One without the approval of their faculty supervisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Additional coursework may include pro bono services, internships, and fellowships that require approval and concurrent enrollment in an independent study or externship course.

For detailed information on course registration policies, including add/drop, pass/fail, and auditing, see the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Degree Completion

Degree completion generally requires three years but must be completed within a maximum of five years from the date of matriculation. In consultation with the Dickinson Law Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the S.J.D. Program Committee may elect to remove any candidate that does not successfully complete the degree requirements within five years of matriculation.

Dickinson Law Review

Founded in 1897 as *The Forum*, the *Dickinson Law Review* is the fifth-oldest legal journal in the nation and the flagship publication of Penn State Dickinson Law. This is a student-run journal that serves the legal community by publishing articles and commentary on timely legal topics. Interested S.J.D. students may contact the [Editorial Board](#) for more information.

Disability Accommodations

Students with temporary or permanent medical conditions or physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities may be able to receive accommodations to eliminate barriers to their success. Accommodated students do not receive any advantage over others; rather, accommodations allow such students to not be at a disadvantage relative to other students as a result of conditions beyond their control. [Please see Disability Accommodations Process.](#)

Disputes

Penn State prioritizes fair and effective policies to resolve student grievances. If an issue arises, students are encouraged to address it with their respective faculty supervisor or within their program. If the issue remains unresolved, students may submit a written grievance to the S.J.D. Program Committee. See J.D. Student Academic Handbook for additional information.

Education Abroad & Exchange

Dickinson Law has a robust education abroad and exchange program portfolio. Given the degree structure and scholarly focus of the S.J.D. program, students and candidates are ineligible.

Experiential Learning

Given the degree structure and scholarly focus of the program, S.J.D. students may not enroll in [experiential learning courses](#), including pro bono, clinical, and externship programs. Moreover, S.J.D. students are not eligible to participate in Dickinson Law clinics.

English Language Accommodations

As part of the application process, all S.J.D. students submit information demonstrating their English language proficiency. As such, all admitted students should be sufficiently prepared for study in English at Dickinson Law. Dickinson Law does

not provide EFL tutoring, translation or interpretation assistance.

Exam Regulations

Students should carefully review and follow the specific instructions and directions prepared by their faculty members for course assessments. When taking a timed, in-class assessment, students may elect to type (using a laptop computer) or handwrite their answers using the answer booklets provided in the room. For more information, see the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

External Course Enrollment

With approval of one's faculty supervisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, S.J.D. students may enroll in courses offered at other Penn State campus locations during the first-year of residency. Additional tuition and fees may apply.

Faculty Supervisor

At the time of admission, each admitted S.J.D. student is assigned a primary faculty supervisor, who will meet regularly with the student/candidate, read and critique draft chapters/articles, provide feedback and guidance as needed, etc. (see Appendix One). The S.J.D. Program Committee may elect to appoint a co-supervisor if needed. Generally, a co-supervisor is appointed in circumstances such as when the proposed area of research is interdisciplinary and extends beyond any one area of disciplinary scholarship or faculty expertise.

In the event that a faculty supervisor is unable to continue in this role for any reason, the student or candidate must work directly with the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education to identify and confirm a new supervisor in order to continue in the program.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The S.J.D. program is designed to foster original and substantive contributions to legal scholarship. Accordingly, students are expected to demonstrate independent research and original thought in all submitted work. The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, GrammarlyGO, etc.) is prohibited unless explicitly authorized in writing by the course professor or faculty supervisor. Unauthorized use of generative AI may be considered excessive assistance and a violation of the academic integrity policy. For more information, please refer to the [Honor Code](#).

Grading

S.J.D. students who have successfully completed a course and earned credit for it will receive a "Credit (CR)" grade. Students will receive a grade of "No Credit" only if they would have received an "F" for the course. In the case of receiving a grade of "No Credit," students will not be awarded credits for the course. If the course is a required one, they will be required to retake it in order to fulfill the requirement.

Online & Distance Education

The current S.J.D. degree requirements do not require any online or distance education courses. With approval of the of the S.J.D. Program Committee, and the student's faculty supervisor, S.J.D. students may take up to 3-credits each semester in online or distance education during the first year of residency. An online or distance education course is one in which students are separated from the faculty member or each other for more than one-third of the instruction and the instruction involves the use of technology to support regular and substantive interaction among students and between the students and the faculty member, either synchronously or asynchronously.

Summer Enrollment

Dickinson Law does not regularly offer summer courses. An exception is a one-credit summer externship class. Enrollment in that course is limited to international J.D. students to satisfy the unique visa-related requirements for employment and Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for those students. Given the degree structure and scholarly focus of the degree program, CPT is generally not available to S.J.D. students. Only under unique circumstances would an S.J.D. student be able to access the summer externship program for a CPT required opportunity. Approval by the faculty supervisor and externship coordinator is required.

Textbooks

Students have a variety of options to buy, sell, or rent textbooks. Students may purchase textbooks from [the Penn State bookstore](#) and have them delivered. Review instructions for ordering textbooks [here](#). Students may also borrow textbooks, upon availability, from Dickinson Law's Lending Library. Used textbooks may also be available on Amazon and related online vendors. Students must acquire all required textbooks ahead of the start of classes.

IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE

International students, irrespective of degree candidacy, are supported by the [Office of International Students and Scholars](#) at Penn State Global for all immigration matters. Office hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm. EST Monday through Friday (closed 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm). Please do not hesitate to reach out to Penn State Global with any questions or concerns you might have. You can call 1-814-865-6348 or email DISSA-Adviser@psu.edu.

Academic Holds

International students may have a hold placed on their ability to register if they do not respond to requests to abide by Penn State regulations and policies (e.g., failure to complete [mandatory document check-in](#), failure to upload a local address, failure to provide a financial guarantee, etc.).

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

International S.J.D. students are generally ineligible to conduct off-campus internships, whether paid or unpaid. Curricular Practical Training (CPT), employment which is an integral part of an established curriculum, is potentially available to F-1 students who have been enrolled full-time for one academic year. Given the structure of the S.J.D. degree program, CPT is generally not available to S.J.D. students. [Please see Penn State Global for more information.](#)

Economic Hardship

At times, international students may face unforeseen economic hardship. In some circumstances, students may seek permission to engage in off-campus employment. Students should follow the [guidance](#) provided by Penn State Global.

Employment

Employment for F-1 and J-1 visa holders is limited and working without permission is a violation of status and a deportable offense. On-campus employment is permitted with certain restrictions. With permission, international students can work on-campus up to 20 hours during the semester and up to 40 hours during the winter and spring breaks. Students may work full-time on campus during the summer. [Please see Penn State Global for more information.](#)

F-1 and J-1 students may not work off-campus without permission from [Int'l Student and Scholar Advising](#). ISSA offers workshops every semester which explain the different types of off campus work permission available to F-1 and J-1 students.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is mandatory for all international students. Each international student will be automatically enrolled in the [Penn State Student Health Insurance plan](#) ("SHIP"). To waive out of this requirement, one must submit a waiver request at the start of the semester documenting proof of insurance coverage that meets Penn State's insurance requirements. SHIP does not cover visual or dental insurance. Health insurance charges are added to your semester bill. Please direct questions to the Student Health Insurance Office at UHS-insurance@psu.edu.

Maintaining Status

International students are supported by the [Office of International Students and Scholars](#) at

Penn State Global for all immigration matters. The Office assist students in maintaining their status, but ultimately maintenance of status is each student's responsibility. Students should carefully read information on [Maintenance of Status](#).

Optional Practical Training & Academic Training

Upon graduation, students who have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year are generally eligible for OPT which is temporary employment in their field of study for purposes of gaining practical experience. J-1 visa holders may similarly pursue a period of Academic Training. [Please see Penn State Global for more information](#)

Travel Notification

Before F-1 and J-1 visa holders travel outside of the United States, they should make sure to have a valid form I-20/DS-2019 with signature for re-entry. Students may annually request a travel signature through [iStart](#).

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Academic Calendar

Review the [academic calendar](#) to check when classes and exams begin, the deadlines to add or drop classes, and a list of school holidays.

Canvas

Canvas is Penn State's learning management system where one can access academic assignments and course materials. Professors usually use Canvas to communicate remotely with their students.

Course Catalog

Visit the Dickinson Law [website](#) for course descriptions. Not all courses are offered on a regular basis and may not be available in any particular semester. Information on course offerings, schedules,

and other course registration information can be found in [My Dickinson Law](#).

Daily Announcements

Daily email announcements, called Practice Greatness are distributed to students, faculty, and staff. Current and past announcements are posted in a searchable format on the Announcements Blog.

Email & IT Support

Students are requested to regularly check their Penn State [email](#) accounts for communications from Penn State and Penn State Dickinson Law. All important information will be sent to one's Penn State email account. The Dickinson Law IT office is located in Room 010.

Library Information

The Penn State University Libraries consists of 36 libraries at 22 locations throughout Pennsylvania. The [H. Laddie Montague Jr. Law Library](#), located on the Dickinson Law campus, provides a wide range of resources to support class work, address legal research questions, and conduct legal scholarship. The library also provides course supplements, such as Quimbee and West Study Aids. The law librarians can assist students with using the various legal research databases available at Dickinson Law including LexisAdvance, Westlaw, BloombergLaw, HeinOnline, and the Penn State e-Journal and e-Books catalogue. Students can also access many other legal databases, such as CALI, Fastcase, Case Text, and Ravel Law using their school account.

LionPath

LionPATH is Penn State's primary platform through which students may access information about billing, ordering textbooks, and other important account issues.

My Dickinson Law (MyDL)

MyDL is the Dickinson Law intranet (linked from the website homepage) where students can access detailed information on school policies, requirements, faculty, courses, etc. Students receive access to MyDL when setting up their Penn State email.

APPENDIX ONE:

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF S.J.D. FACULTY SUPERVISORS

The principal responsibilities for S.J.D. supervisors and examiners are set out below. Depending on the nature of the working relationship between the faculty supervisor (and co-supervisor, if appointed) and the student/degree candidate, the responsibilities may increase or decrease in any given semester. Major commitments include regular meetings with the student/degree candidate, committee/defense meetings, reading and critiquing drafts chapters/articles, and providing feedback and guidance as needed.

To recognize the time and effort required of faculty members serving in this essential role, supervising faculty will receive \$3,000 for the first year of supervision (\$1,500 per semester) and \$1,500 per year for each of the second and third years of supervision. Faculty members supervising multiple S.J.D. students, may be eligible for alternate compensation, including the possibility of course load reductions, subject to the approval of the Dean and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

General Responsibilities:

1. Be familiar with S.J.D. degree requirements and academic policies.
2. Meet with students at least once every six weeks during the first year and at least once per semester thereafter.
3. Advise students on research approaches, writing strategies, and provide substantive feedback.
4. Read and provide feedback on draft chapters/articles and the dissertation.
5. Respond promptly to student communications via agreed-upon methods.
6. Monitor student progress, including compliance with deadlines and academic requirements.
7. Assist the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education with enforcement of program requirements, as necessary.
8. Encourage student participation in Penn State Dickinson Law academic and community events.

Admissions:

1. Review the applicant's complete admissions file, including the proposed research plan.
2. Interview the applicant to assess academic fit, research preparedness, and interest alignment.
3. Consult with the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education to determine if the applicant should be admitted under the faculty member's supervision.
4. Confirm, in writing, one's willingness to supervise the applicant before an offer of admission is extended.

During Residency:

1. Ensure the student completes the required residency period and required courses (Research Methods and Research Colloquium).
2. Support the student in preparing Candidacy Submissions.
3. Review and provide constructive feedback on Candidacy Submissions.
4. Appoint and chair a Candidacy Committee (typically consisting of 2-3 Dickinson Law faculty members).
5. Facilitate the public Candidacy Defense and assess the student's readiness for advancement to candidacy.
6. In the event that a faculty supervisor is unable to continue in this role, assist with identifying and confirming a new supervisor.

Post-Candidacy:

1. Stay in regular contact with the candidate at least once a semester and review draft chapters as they are ready for comments.
2. Ensure that each candidate submits an Annual Progress Report to the S.J.D. Program Committee each year, usually in May. The faculty supervisor and the S.J.D. Program Committee will review and determine whether the progress

being made is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If a candidate does not show satisfactory progress, the S.J.D. Program Committee may decide to remove the candidate from the program.

3. Collaborate with the candidate to maintain momentum toward dissertation completion (typically within 3–5 years of enrollment).

Dissertation Defense:

1. In consultation with the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education, recruit a Committee of Examiners (minimum three members, at least two from Dickinson Law).
2. Serve on the Committee of Examiners. The Supervisor may not act as the chair of the Committee of Examiners.
3. Assist the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education with the coordination and scheduling of the dissertation defense. Oversee the smooth distribution of copies of the draft dissertation to the Committee of Examiners. Ensure that the chair of the Committee completes all forms to be filed with the University.
4. Read the submitted dissertation and form an initial view as to whether the dissertation meets the standards required for degree

conferral. (Refer to [GCAC-607, Dissertation – Research Doctorate](#) and [Research Degree Policies](#) for guidance. Penn State’s Graduate School has also provided useful reference information, [Thesis and Dissertation Information](#) that includes a detailed [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#) including format review, etc.).

5. Attend the Dissertation Defense, ask questions, and confer with the other examiners to determine whether the dissertation passes as is, requires minor adjustments to be submitted to the examiners for approval within a period stipulated by the examiners, or is considered not to meet the standard for the degree. Sign the relevant documents required by Pennsylvania State University.
6. Recommend whether the dissertation is, in the view of the examiners, publishable (if not already published in some form).