



University at Buffalo

School of Law

**GENERAL
ACADEMIC
REQUIREMENTS,
POLICIES AND CODE OF
STUDENT CONDUCT**

FOR J.D. STUDENTS

Note to J.D. Candidates: You are subject to the requirements and policies stated herein. Please review this booklet carefully and retain it for future reference while you are enrolled in the Law School.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document contains information about SUNY Buffalo Law School's General Academic Requirements and Code of Student Conduct which will be important to you throughout your law school career. These Requirements are reviewed annually and may be changed. You are responsible for keeping informed of all changes. Extra copies are available each August from the Records and Registration Office. SUNY Buffalo law students must satisfy certain academic requirements in order to maintain good academic standing and in order to be eligible to graduate. Many of these requirements are imposed by the bodies responsible for accrediting SUNY Buffalo Law School: the American Bar Association (ABA), the Association of American Law Schools, the New York State Court of Appeals, and the New York State Education Department. In addition, law students must fulfill their academic requirements with honesty and integrity in compliance with the policies of the University and Law School. Because a failure to satisfy academic requirements can have significant consequences, it is important that you read this document carefully. All students are required to sign the "Acknowledgment" page at the end of this document and return it to the Records and Registration Office. Your signed "Acknowledgment", which is included in your permanent file, provides the Law School with a record that you have received a copy of the General Academic Requirements and Policies and Code of Student Conduct; it also allows you to sit for Law School exams in your first semester and to register for courses in subsequent semesters.

When you register for your courses each semester, you will need to refer to this document in order to determine whether you will be able to satisfy your academic requirements in time for your planned graduation date and to arrange for any waivers or approvals that you might need in order to take the courses you have selected. For example, you may need to obtain prior approval from an instructor and the Registrar in order to take certain courses such as an Independent Study and externships (see "[Independent Study](#)", III.B(3)). The Records and Registration staff are available to answer your questions and to provide any necessary forms that you will need. In most cases, the Registrar will be able to help you with your questions or concerns regarding the academic requirements and to provide approvals or waivers in appropriate circumstances. In addition, the Vice Dean for Student Affairs has responsibility for academic advising and for resolving issues that arise regarding the application of the academic requirements in particular cases.

Membership in the legal profession requires conduct that meets exacting and demanding ethical standards. As persons preparing for that profession, SUNY Buffalo Law School students are required to meet the highest standards of the profession, including but not limited to honesty, integrity, and professionalism and a commitment to treat others with respect, dignity and courtesy. SUNY Buffalo Law School hereby establishes the "SUNY Buffalo Law School Code of Student Conduct" (see "[Code of Student Conduct](#)", V.) – rules by which its students shall be governed – as participants in any law school activity, and in relationship to any other member of the law school community.

The University at Buffalo also has a Student Code of Conduct, to which all students of the University, including law students, must adhere. These rules may be found at

<http://www.studentaffairs.buffalo.edu/judicial/rulereg.shtml>. Student conduct alleged to be in violation of the SUNY Buffalo Law School Code of Student Conduct will be governed solely according to policies and procedures described therein. However, some behavior may lead to allegations of violations of both the Law School and University codes. In such cases, alleged violations will be adjudicated solely under the provisions of the Law School Code. Absent extraordinary circumstances, law students will not be subject to multiple adjudications (i.e., Law School and University) for the same conduct. However, in such circumstances, where the Law School Code sets a higher standard for student conduct than that set by the University's Code, law students will be held to the standard set by the Law School.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in the Academic Requirements, Policies and Code of Student Conduct:

- (1) "Academic year" means the period of study at SUNY Buffalo Law School consisting of the Fall and Spring Semesters, and including the January Bridge Term as part of the Spring Semester.
- (2) "Approved law school" means a law school that appears on the list of law schools accredited by the American Bar Association.
- (3) "Block" means a period of study lasting approximately four weeks during a semester.
- (4) "Bridge Term" means Block 4 of the academic year, which is the first block of the Spring Semester and which is scheduled during January.
- (5) "Credit hours" means semester hours of credit.
- (6) "Dean" includes an acting or interim dean.
- (7) "J.D." means the "Juris Doctor" degree, the first professional degree in law granted by a law school.
- (8) "R&R" means the Records and Registration Office, Room 304 O'Brian Hall.
- (9) "Registrar" means the Assistant Dean of Records and Registration/Registrar.
- (10) "Residence requirement" means the minimum number of credit hours that a student must take in a particular semester or summer session in order to receive credit toward the J.D. for resident study at an approved law school.
- (11) "Student Services" means the Student Services Office, Room 314 O'Brian Hall.
- (12) "SUNY" means The State University of New York
- (13) "UB" means the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

III. GENERAL ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

A. Credit Hours and Residence Requirements

The Law School requires students to satisfy minimum credit hours and residence requirements in order to be eligible to graduate (see "[Graduation Requirements,](#)" III.H.). Only courses taken subsequent to matriculation in law school can be used to satisfy the J.D. requirements. It is the responsibility of each student to determine whether he or she has satisfied these requirements.

These requirements have been developed in conformance of the American Bar Association and the New York State Court of Appeals requirements for the J.D. Program. If you have any questions about whether your planned course of study is in conformance with these requirements, please consult the Registrar.

1) TOTAL REQUIRED CREDITS: Students are required to complete for credit the first-year curriculum consisting of 32 credit hours as prescribed by the faculty, plus at least 58 credit hours in upper-division courses. You will need to complete for credit a total of at least ninety (90) credit hours in order to be eligible to graduate (see [“Graduation Requirements,” III.H](#), for further details).

- First-year required courses: 32 credit hours
- Upper-division courses: 58 credit hours
- TOTAL: 90 credit hours

2) ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS: Students must meet all academic requirements. Most law students can satisfy their academic requirements in three academic years if they carry a credit load of 15 credits per semester. In exceptional circumstances, however, it is possible for students to complete their academic and residence requirements in a period of time that is longer or shorter than three years. Regardless of whether students enroll for the conventional three academic years of law study, accelerate their law school study, or take a reduced course load in any semester, they must complete the required total of ninety (90) credit hours in addition to satisfying the residence requirements.

A) THREE YEAR PROGRAM. In order to satisfy the academic requirements in three academic years, students must typically register for 15 credits each semester to complete the degree in six semesters of full-time study. Thus, students who complete the first-year required curriculum in two semesters should plan to complete their upper-division academic requirements in four semesters order to graduate in three academic years.

B) ACCELERATED STUDY. With the approval of the Registrar, students can complete their degree in two-and-one-half (2-1/2) years by completing the required ninety (90) credit hours in five semesters plus two summer sessions of six (6) credits each summer. An overload of courses in several semesters in order to earn extra credit hours cannot be substituted for two summer sessions of six (6) credit hours each (see [“Summer Session,” III.B\(5\)](#)). Thus, the breakdown for accelerated study is as follows:

- First-year requirements: 32 credit hours in two (2) semesters in residence
- Upper-division requirements: 58 credit hours in three (3) semesters and two (2) summer sessions of six (6) credits each
- TOTAL: 90 credit hours in five (5) semesters plus two (2) summer sessions

C) EXTENDED STUDY. With the approval of the Registrar, students whose circumstances warrant enrollment for a reduced course load for one or more semesters may extend their law study for up to four academic years. For example, students could complete the degree in 3 ½ academic years (7 semesters and 2 summers), or four academic years (8 semesters). Students taking a reduced course load generally register for nine (9) to twelve (12) credit hours per semester, **HOWEVER, STUDENTS MUST REMEMBER THAT THEY MUST TAKE AT LEAST 6 CREDITS TO BE CONSIDERED FULL-TIME FOR FINANCIAL AID PURPOSES.**

- To obtain approval to take a reduced course load in any semester, students should write to the Registrar requesting approval and explaining the reason(s) that they would like to register for a reduced course load in that semester.

3) FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY: As stated above, students receiving financial aid must enroll for a minimum of six (6) credit hours in any semester in order to be eligible for financial aid for that semester. **THIS REQUIREMENT IS NOT WAIVABLE.**

4) MAXIMUM YEARS TO COMPLETE J.D.: In order to be eligible to graduate, students must complete all the required credit hours and satisfy their residence and academic requirements within five (5) calendar years of the date that they matriculated in law school.

5) OVERLOAD: Students who want to register for more than fifteen (15) credit hours in any semester must receive prior approval from the Vice Dean for Student Affairs. Courses taken in the January “Bridge Term” are not included in the fifteen credit-hour limit for the Spring Semester. Students are not permitted to take more than three credits in the “Bridge Term.” This limitation is not subject to waiver. For terms other than the Bridge Term, permission to register for a course overload of up to three (3) additional credit hours will be granted only in exceptional circumstances such as the occurrence of a personal illness or a family emergency in the previous semester and only if the Vice Dean for Student Affairs is satisfied that the student is capable of handling the additional academic work. In any event, students are not permitted to register for more than eighteen (18) credit hours in any semester.

- To obtain approval to register for a course overload, students should obtain a “Petition for Waiver of Faculty Policy” from the Records and Registration Office and file it with the Registrar.

B. Special Course and Credit Requirements

1) FIRST-YEAR REQUIRED COURSES: All students (including transfer students) must complete the first-year curriculum that is prescribed by the faculty. First year students may not take any courses outside the prescribed first year curriculum.

2) UPPER-DIVISION REQUIRED COURSES: After completing the first-year curriculum, all students must complete the following additional requirements:

- A qualifying Law School seminar. The seminar must provide a minimum of three (3) credit hours and require a substantial research and writing project. With the prior approval of the supervising faculty member and the Vice Dean for Student Affairs, the seminar requirement may be satisfied by taking an Independent Study for three (3) credit hours.
- Advanced Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing. This is a one-semester, three-credit continuation of the two-semester Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing course that students take during the first year. This course must be taken during the second year. Students who wish to ensure their eligibility for the New York City Program in the spring of their second year must take Advanced Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing during the fall of their second year. In extraordinary circumstances, permission to take the course during the third year may be granted by the Vice Dean for Student Affairs.
- Ethics and the legal profession. Students must take three or more credits of instruction in ethics and the legal profession. Courses that satisfy this requirement will be so designated by the Registrar. This requirement must be taken in the second year.
- Qualifying additional research or writing-intensive experience. Students must complete one additional course that provides an intensive experience in legal analysis, research, or writing. This requirement may be satisfied by completing any of the following courses:
 - A second qualifying Law School seminar of three or more credits;
 - A qualifying advanced course in legal writing, analysis, or research;
 - An Independent Study of three or more credits;
 - A clinical course;
 - A qualifying course in trial or appellate advocacy;
 - A qualifying externship.

Qualifying courses that satisfy this requirement are so designated by the Registrar. With the exception of the seminar and independent study options, this requirement may be satisfied by earning one or more credits in a qualifying course.

- [For students matriculating **on or after July 1, 2016.**] Experiential Course(s): One or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours, including either a simulation course, a law clinic, a judicial internship, an externship, or another approved field placement that is primarily experiential in nature. Approved experiential courses must meet all four of the following criteria: (1) integrate doctrine, theory, skills, and legal ethics, and engage students in performance of professional skills; (2) develop the concepts underlying the professional skills being taught; (3) provide multiple opportunities for performance; and (4) provide opportunities for self-evaluation. A simulation course must (1) be designed to be reasonably similar to the experience of a lawyer advising or representing a client or engaging in other lawyering tasks in a set of facts and circumstances devised or adopted by a faculty member, and (2) include (a) direct supervision of the student's performance by a faculty member; (b) opportunities for performance, feedback from a faculty member, and self-evaluation; and (c) a classroom instructional component. Courses that qualify for these credits will be so designated in registration materials. Advanced Legal Analysis, Writing & Research may be among those courses that are so designated. To satisfy the requirement, a grade of C or above must be earned in the experiential course.
Non-Duplication: Courses may not be used to satisfy more than one requirement under this Section. For example, a course that satisfies the seminar or the qualifying additional research or writing-intensive experience cannot also count as one of the experiential courses.

3) INDEPENDENT STUDY:

A) THREE-CREDIT INDEPENDENT STUDY. An upper-division student who wishes to pursue a special research interest under the guidance of a faculty member may earn three (3) credit hours in one semester for an independent research and writing project. Students undertaking independent research meet periodically with the instructor supervising the research for discussion, review, and evaluation of the research project. The proposed study should require a substantial investment of time and effort and should promise a significant product that makes an original contribution to the understanding of law or that reflects pursuit of a specialized interest not covered in standard offerings in the curriculum. The finished research paper should be comparable in scope and quality to a student note or comment in a law review or social science journal. Students are limited to one independent study absent extraordinary circumstances (see below) and prior approval by the Vice Dean for Student Affairs.

- To register for an Independent Study, the student should prepare and submit to R&R (1) a written research proposal approved by the supervising full time faculty member and (2) an "Independent Study Request" form signed by the full time faculty member and the Registrar.

- Students may not receive independent study credit for work performed in internships, externships, clinics, for work as a research assistant, or for a law review note.

B) ADDITIONAL CREDIT FOR AN INDEPENDENT STUDY: In very special, limited circumstances, such as where continuation of work on a project will facilitate publication of an independent research paper or allow completion of an ambitious social science research project, a student may receive permission to continue an Independent Study in a subsequent semester for additional credit up to a maximum of three (3) credit hours.

- Registration for additional credit to continue an Independent Study project requires approval by the supervising faculty member and the Vice Dean for Student Affairs. Students must complete and submit to R & R the forms entitled “Petition of Faculty Waiver Policy” and “Independent Study Request.”

4) COURSES TAKEN AT ANOTHER ACADEMIC UNIT AT UB: With the prior approval of the Vice Dean for Student Affairs, students may apply toward their J.D. credit requirements up to a maximum of nine (9) credit hours of graduate-level courses taken in another academic department or school at UB. These courses must be taken during one or more semesters or summer sessions in which the student is enrolled in the J.D. program. Only courses taken subsequent to matriculation in law school can be used to satisfy the J.D. requirements. Online, laboratory, recitation, directed reading, thesis and/or dissertation guidance courses are not eligible for J.D. credit. For purposes of determining academic eligibility and computing Honors upon graduation, the grades of C+, C, and C- will be treated as C’s (see [“Eligibility Standards,” III.E;](#) and [“Graduation Requirements,” III.H.](#)

Students who wish to receive credit toward the J.D. for courses taken during law school at an academic unit at UB outside the Law School should complete and submit to R&R the form “Request for J.D. Credit for Courses Taken Outside the Law School” prior to enrolling for the course. Students cannot receive credit toward the J.D. for courses offered through the UB Study Abroad Program except for SUNY Buffalo Law School Exchange Programs.

5) SUMMER SESSION: SUNY Buffalo Law School offers a limited number of law courses in its Summer Session. Students may also take courses during the summer session at another ABA approved law school. Such summer study may include a summer program of legal studies in a foreign country that is administered through an approved law school. The course or courses completed may be applied toward the credit-hour requirements needed for graduation. Students must complete a minimum of six (6) credit hours in order to satisfy residence requirements for a summer session. No more than six (6) credit hours per summer can be applied toward the academic requirements for the J.D. For courses taken during a summer session at another approved law school, only grades of “C-” (or their equivalent) or better will be accepted for credit. SUNY Buffalo Law School will not accept transfer credit for summer session courses taken at another law school on a “pass-

fail” basis nor will we accept online, laboratory, recitation, directed reading, thesis and/or dissertation guidance courses for J.D. credit. (see also [“Graduating with Honors,” III.D\(9\).](#)).

- Requests for permission to attend the summer session at another approved law school and for approval of credit for taking specific courses must be made in writing and approved in advance by the Vice Dean for Student Affairs. Students should file a “Petition for Waiver of Faculty Policy” and a copy of the brochure for the summer program indicating the courses that they wish to take.

6) TRANSFER CREDIT FROM ANOTHER APPROVED LAW SCHOOL: Transfer credits for courses satisfactorily completed at another approved law school may not exceed one-third (1/3) of the total credits required by SUNY Buffalo Law School. Presently the maximum number of credit hours that can be transferred to SUNY Buffalo Law School from another approved law school is thirty (30) credit hours. Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades will not be accepted as transfer credits nor will *online, laboratory, recitation, directed reading, thesis and/or dissertation guidance courses count for J.D. credit*. In addition, only credits in which a student earned a C- or better will be accepted.

7) LIMITS ON CREDIT for Clinical Courses, Independent Studies, and Other Non-class Offerings:

A) CLINICAL COURSES: Clinical courses can comprise no more than twenty (20) credits of a student’s total credit hours in law school. Credit hours from courses that do not have regular classroom meetings of specific duration throughout the semester and courses taken in other academic units at UB (see paragraph “b” below) are deducted from the twenty-credit maximum for clinical and similar courses. For example, a student who takes nine (9) credit hours in the School of Management may take no more than eleven (11) credit hours in a Law School clinic.

B) NON-CLASS OFFERINGS AND OUTSIDE COURSES: The Law School imposes a limit on the total credit hours that law students can apply toward their academic requirements for non-class courses related to legal training and for courses taken outside the Law School. A combined maximum of twelve (12) credit hours may be taken in the following courses: Advanced Trial Technique, Externship, Judicial Clerkship, Independent Study or courses taken in other academic units at UB. Each of these courses, however, has individual limits on the number of credit hours for which students can enroll. For example, a maximum of nine (9) credit hours earned in another department or school at UB can be applied toward the J.D. in the Fall and Spring semesters (see [“Courses Taken at Another Academic Unit at UB,” III.B\(4\).](#)). Any student who wishes to enroll in these courses who has reached or will reach and exceed the twelve (12) credit limit with the addition of these courses must seek prior approval from the Vice Dean for Student Affairs to enroll in the additional courses outside the law school.

C. The Academic Calendar

1) THE ACADEMIC YEAR: The academic calendar of the Law School consists of a Fall Semester and a Spring Semester that run from late August or early September to graduation in May. The January “Bridge Term” is considered part of the Spring Semester for purposes of registration, grade reporting on student transcripts, credit requirements, and financial aid. In addition, the Law School offers a limited number of courses in its Summer Session.

2) BLOCKS AND THE BRIDGE TERM: The Law School calendar is also divided into “Blocks,” each of which is approximately four weeks long. Most three-credit courses are taught over three blocks, similar to the conventional semester schedule. The Blocks, however, allow instructors the opportunity to offer intensive one- or two-credit courses that meet in one or two blocks. The Fall Semester consists of Blocks 1, 2, and 3, during which classes are scheduled over a period of twelve to thirteen weeks. The Spring Semester consists of Blocks 4, 5, 6, and 7, during which classes are scheduled over a period of sixteen weeks beginning in January. Block 4, held in January of the Spring semester, offers students single-block intensive courses that range from one-credit practice-oriented courses to three-credit seminars on theoretical or doctrinal topics. Upper-division students may register for a maximum of three (3) credit hours during Block 4. Similar to the Fall Semester, most three-credit courses in the Spring Semester are scheduled for the twelve-week period, similar to the conventional semester, that consists of Blocks 5, 6, and 7.

D. Grading and Related Policies

Most courses at the Law School are letter-graded by the instructor of record using the grades presented below. Students who matriculated in Law School in Fall 1999 and earlier had an alternate grading scale. Please contact the Records and Registration Office if you would like an explanation of that grading scale.

1) GRADED COURSES:

- A Superior work which is significantly better than the normal range of performance expected of JD and LLM candidates
- A- High quality work that is better than the normal range of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates
- B+ Professionally qualified work which is at the high end of the normal range of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates
- B Professionally qualified work which is within the normal range of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates
- B- Professionally qualified work that is at the low end of the normal range of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates

- C Professionally qualified work that is at the lowest end of the range of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates
- D Work which is acceptable for academic credit but demonstrates a minimal level of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates
- F Work which is not worthy of academic credit
- >F< Failure due to findings of Academic Dishonesty. No academic credit.

* Please note that A- and B- Grades were instituted in Fall 2006

2) PASS-FAIL COURSES: Although as a general rule SUNY Buffalo Law School courses are graded using the A through F grading system, designated courses may be evaluated on a “pass-fail” basis. Designation of a course as “pass-fail” is not at the option of the student or the instructor, but is determined by the SUNY Buffalo Law Faculty as a body. In a course designated as “pass-fail,” the instructor evaluates student work for the course using the “S” and “U” grades described below:

- S Professionally qualified work which is within the normal range of performance expected of JD or LLM candidates
- U Unsatisfactory work that is not worthy of academic credit.

3) OTHER GRADING NOTATIONS: The following non-grade notations may appear on student transcripts in appropriate circumstances:

- I Incomplete. The student has not completed the assigned work for the course and the instructor granted additional time to complete the work. An “I” is not given in cases where a student has failed to complete a final examination. In order to receive a passing grade a student who has received an Incomplete must complete all course requirements pursuant to the Policy for Extensions. If a student fails to meet these requirements the “I” converts to an “F.”
- N Auditing a course. No grade given or credit awarded.
- R Resigned a course. No academic credit.
- W Total withdrawal from course due to documented medical, family, or other circumstances as approved by the University
- Z Year-Long course in which a final grade is given for both semesters at the completion of both semesters.

4) CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA): As of Fall 2010 the SUNY Buffalo Law School allows GPA computation on a scale of 0.0 to 4.0 with the following quality point system (prior to Fall 2010 grades did not carry any computational value and therefore the Law School did not allow GPA computation):

A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C	2.00
D	1.00
F	0.00
>F<	0.00

Your SUNY Buffalo Law School Grade Point Average (“GPA”) is computed by dividing the grade points (quality points x credit hours) assigned to each grade by the credit hours attempted for courses graded with an “A” through “F” grade only. For example, earning a “B” grade in a 4.00 credit hour course would yield $(3.00 \times 4.00) / 4.00 = 3.00$ GPA.

If you earn an “F” these credit hours count as attempted hours and therefore **are used** when calculating your GPA, however, grades of “S,” count toward total hours completed but **not** in the computation of your grade point average.

5) REPEATING COURSES: *Required* courses in which a student receives an “F” or “U” grade must be repeated for a passing grade. Students have the option of repeating other courses in which they receive an “F” or “U” grade. Both instances of the course will appear on the transcript.

Students may not repeat courses in which they earned a “D” grade.

6) EXTENSIONS POLICY: All exams and papers for the completion of a course work are due at the end of the exam period unless another date is otherwise agreed upon by the professor and a completed extension form is filed in the Records and Registration Office. Under no circumstances will extensions be granted (for Fall and Spring classes) past the first day of classes in the subsequent Fall semester.

A final grade of “F” will be entered on transcripts for all course work not completed by the appropriate deadline. This grade is not subject to appeal or change.

7) CHANGE OF GRADE POLICY: Except in cases of administrative or ministerial error (e.g., erroneous computation of the grade on a numerically graded exam), or findings of Academic Dishonesty, neither the Registrar nor the instructor is able to change a grade that was given to a student unless the voting faculty, on the petition of the faculty member who gave the grade, authorizes the change of grade. Instructors should not

change grades for reasons such as saving a student from academic or financial aid penalties, or enabling students to graduate.

If a student has a question about a grade given for an exam or course the student should contact the professor's faculty assistant who will arrange a time for the student to review their exam and/or grades within the course. If further questions exist the faculty assistant may contact the instructor to review the grading for the course to ensure no mistakes have been made. If the instructor feels an error has been made he or she may contact the Law School Registrar who will review the documentation, and, if satisfied, change the grade.

Under no circumstances may students contact the instructor to petition for a higher grade, as grade changes are not allowed except in circumstances noted above.

8) CLASS RANK: Beginning with the Class of 2011 the Law School calculates a set of class ranks for each class year based upon GPA calculations at the end of the first year and after the Fall and Spring semesters in subsequent years. GPA Benchmarks at the 5%, 10%, 15%, 20% and 25% intervals are provided to students and they can choose to calculate and report their rank (e.g., in the top 10%) to third parties as they deem appropriate. The Law School will not publish this rank and it will not appear on transcripts so students must submit a written request to the Records Office if they would like their rank confirmed for a third party.

Transfer students may only use their credits earned at SUNY Buffalo Law School towards their GPA computation, and, therefore, class rank.

Dual Degree students who enter with one class year and graduate with another will utilize their ranking at the completion of their first year until they are ranked again at the completion of the fall semester of their second year.

For the Class of 2010 and previous classes the Law School did not have a formal ranking policy, however, students were allowed to provide an "estimated class rank" based upon number of credit hours of certain types of grades. For an explanation of this former policy please contact the Records Office.

9) GRADUATING WITH HONORS: The faculty may award the J.D. degree with honors - summa cum laude, magna cum laude, or cum laude - to those students in good standing who have achieved a superior academic record during law school. The faculty awards such honors in its sole discretion.

E. Eligibility Standards

1) ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

For students matriculating or re-matriculating prior to July 1, 2012: A first-year student who receives four (4) or more "D," "F," or "U" grades will be ineligible to continue in the

J.D. program. In addition, any student who accumulates during his or her law school career seven (7) or more “D,” “F,” or “U” grades in courses at SUNY Buffalo Law School or in approved graduate-level courses in other academic units at UB will be ineligible to continue in the J.D. program. In the event that a first-year student receives a fourth “D,” “F,” or “U” grade or a student beyond the first year receives a seventh “D,” “F,” or “U” grade after classes have begun for a later semester, the student will be allowed to complete that semester. In such a case, the student will become ineligible to continue in the J.D. Program at the end of the later semester.

For those students enrolling or re-enrolling after July 1, 2012:

- a. Any student earning a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or lower after two or more semesters of attendance shall be placed under academic supervision.
- b. A student under academic supervision is subject to the following requirements as conditions of that student’s continued enrollment:
 - i. The Vice Dean for Student Affairs must approve the student’s course program for the student’s next semester in residence. The Vice Dean may condition such approval on the student’s enrollment in any courses that, in the Vice Dean’s determination, may assist in improving the student’s academic skills, including but not limited to courses providing academic support, bar passage preparation, and writing instruction.
 - ii. The student may not hold office in any student organization or participate in any organized extracurricular activity such as moot courts, journals, trial competitions, or mediation competitions.

A student who has been placed under academic supervision will remain under such supervision until the student earns a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

For Students enrolling or re-enrolling after July 1, 2013:

- a. No student who entered this law school as a first year student and has earned a cumulative GPA of less than 2.50 after enrollment for the first two semesters will be eligible to enroll for any subsequent semester.
- b. No student who entered this law school as a first year student and has earned a cumulative GPA of less than 2.67 after enrollment for four semesters will be eligible to enroll for any subsequent semester.
- c. No student who entered this law school as a transfer student and has earned a cumulative GPA of less than 2.67 after enrollment for two semesters will be eligible to enroll for any subsequent semester.
- d. No student who has earned a cumulative GPA of less than 2.67 when completing the requirements for graduation, may be awarded a degree.
- e. Any student excluded from registration or degree receipt under the previous three sections may petition the Committee on Academic Standards and Standing for relief from such exclusion on the grounds that the failure to meet minimum standards was the result of unusual or extraordinary circumstances

- preventing or interfering with normal academic performance. Extraordinary circumstances do not include any personal, family or health issues that might have been addressed by taking a leave of absence at the time such issues arose.
- f. Any student earning a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or lower after two or more semesters of attendance shall be placed under academic supervision.
 - g. A student under academic supervision is subject to the following requirements as conditions of that student's continued enrollment:
 - i. The Vice Dean for Student Affairs must approve the student's course program for the student's next semester in residence. The Vice Dean may condition such approval on the student's enrollment in any courses that, in the Vice Dean's determination, may assist in improving the student's academic skills, including but not limited to courses providing academic support, bar passage preparation, and writing instruction.
 - ii. The student may not hold office in any student organization or participate in any organized extracurricular activity such as moot courts, journals, trial competitions, or mediation competitions.

A student who has been placed under academic supervision will remain under such supervision until the student earns a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

2) RELATED RULES:

- a. Any student who resigns (accepts a grade of "R") from more than one course within any academic year will be automatically placed under academic supervision, without regard to cumulative GPA. The Vice Dean for Student Affairs may grant exceptions from this rule on the grounds of unusual or extraordinary circumstances preventing or interfering with normal completion of the registered courses, such as health emergencies or family disorder. An exception may not be granted on the basis of the student's employment obligations.
- b. A student who does not complete a required first-year course may not enroll in any third or following semester unless that student's course load for each such semester includes all of the uncompleted courses that are offered in such subsequent semester. No request for relief from this rule will be entertained if based on either employment obligations or the desire of such student to enroll in a course offered at a time that conflicts with the time the missing first-year course is offered.
- c. A student who does not complete a required upper-level course may not enroll in any subsequent semester unless that student's course load for such semester includes all of the uncompleted courses that are offered in such subsequent semester. No request for relief from this rule will be entertained if based on either employment obligations or the desire of such student to enroll in a course offered at a time that conflicts with the time the missing course is offered.
- d. A student who does not complete a required course must successfully complete that course the next semester it is offered. If the student does not successfully

complete that course the next semester it is offered, the student will not be eligible to enroll for any subsequent semester.

- e. If a student takes a leave of absence for medical reasons, the student will not be eligible to re-enroll without presenting a letter from a physician opining that the student is medically capable of completing a full course load.
- f. Measure of Satisfactory Academic Progress for purposes of eligibility for federal financial aid:
 - i. For enrollment during the first two semesters plus the following summer session (1L students) – 2.00 GPA.
 - ii. For enrollment after the third semesters (2 and 3L years) – 2.50 GPA.
 - iii. Students must complete 70% of attempted credits. Grades that count as attempted but not completed include: I, R, U, W and F grades

3) PETITION FOR REINSTATEMENT: Students declared ineligible to continue in the J.D. program may petition the Academic Standards and Standing Committee (ASSC) for reinstatement. The petition must demonstrate that (a) if the student is reinstated, he or she will be able to complete the J.D. program within the time limits established by the New York Court of Appeals and by SUNY Buffalo Law School, or have a good reason for a waiver of these time limits, and (b) that the failure to meet minimum graduation requirements was a result of unusual or extraordinary circumstances preventing or interfering with normal academic performance. These circumstances include but are not limited to one or more of the following conditions:

- physical or mental illness or disability preventing a student from performing academically even with reasonable accommodations based on a documented disability;
- financial hardship that interfered with academic work; or
- personal problems such as death or serious illness of a family member.

Students petitioning for reinstatement must establish to the satisfaction of the ASSC that the conditions have been resolved or will no longer interfere with their academic performance.

4) ATTENDANCE IN CLASS: The right to continue registration in a course or seminar, to take examinations in a course, or submit a paper for a seminar is conditioned upon regular attendance in classes in that course or seminar. Failure to comply with attendance requirements may be treated as failure to complete the work in a course or seminar and may be graded accordingly, i.e., by the faculty member's authorizing an administrative "F" or "U" grade. This requirement pertains to all courses and seminars, and its enforcement does not depend on additional warnings or reminders in particular course offerings.

5) LIMIT ON EMPLOYMENT WHILE ATTENDING LAW SCHOOL: Students who are registered for a full course load (i.e., those students who expect to earn their J.D. in two-and-a-half (2-1/2) or three (3) years) are expected to devote substantially all of their working hours to

the study of law. A student may not engage in employment for more than twenty (20) hours per week in any semester in which the student is enrolled for twelve (12) or more credit hours. THIS REQUIREMENT IS NOT WAIVABLE. Students whose employment for any semester will exceed the twenty-hour limit should register for a reduced course load for that semester.

F. Examination Policies

Students should adhere to the following general exam policies. More specific information about a particular exam is given prior to the exam period for each semester by the Registrar.

1) MAINTAINING ANONYMITY: Professors should not be contacted regarding an exam after the last class session (or review session), including questions regarding take-out exams. In addition, students must never contact an instructor regarding the rescheduling of an exam--such inquiries should be directed to Records and Registration in 304 O'Brian. Such requests will not be granted automatically. Students should also refrain from contacting instructors about performance on an exam until grades are posted since this prevents anonymity.

2) CONDUCT DURING EXAMS: Students are expected to follow the directives and requests of examination proctors, Records and Registration staff, the Vice Dean for Student Affairs and the Registrar, and any other Law School employee involved in the administration of examinations, projects or papers before, during and after an exam.

3) FAILURE TO COMPLETE AN EXAMINATION:

- A student who picks up an examination is expected to complete it during the scheduled examination period. A student who does not complete an examination will be graded on what he or she submits during the examination period unless an exception is granted on petition to the Vice Dean for Student Affairs.
- Exceptions will be granted only in extreme cases and only if (1) prior to completing the examination, the student has notified the Vice Dean for Student Affairs (645-6223, 314 O'Brian Hall) of the reason for the inability to complete the examination; (2) thereafter the student establishes the reason for such inability to the clear satisfaction of the Vice Dean for Student Affairs, and (3) the Vice Dean determines that the circumstances are such that equity requires that the student be permitted to be re-examined.

4) STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities should submit a written request for examination modifications to the Vice Dean for Student Affairs, Melinda Saran, Room 314 O'Brian Hall. Students who have not identified themselves as a student with a disability should see Dean Saran as soon as possible as they will need to provide appropriate documentation of their disability to qualify for modifications.

5) RESCHEDULING EXAMINATIONS Prior to the Start of the Examination Period:

- In addition to requests based upon documented medical conditions, a student may request to change an examination date to the very next available date subsequent to the scheduled date only if he or she has:
 - two examinations scheduled on the same day;
 - three or more examinations on consecutive calendar days;
 - four or more examinations to be completed in one calendar week (Mon. – Fri.).

Note: For purposes of rescheduling, papers and projects are not considered exams

- Absent the written documented permission of the Vice Dean for Student Affairs, all examinations, papers, and projects that have been rescheduled for personal or medical reasons must be taken no later than two weeks after the end of the examination period.

G. Individuals with Disabilities

1) POLICY: SUNY Buffalo Law School does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in its program of legal education and provides full opportunities for the study of law and entry into the profession by qualified individuals with disabilities.

2) DEFINITION: For purposes of the General Academic Requirements and Policies, an “individual with a disability” is defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §706, as further defined by the regulation on post-secondary education, 45 C.F.R. §84.3(k)(3), by 34 C.F.R. pt. 104, and by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§12101 et seq.

3) REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION: The essence of proper accommodation of qualified individuals with disabilities is individualization and reasonable accommodation. The use of the term “qualified” requires a careful and thorough consideration of each student’s qualifications in light of reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are those that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program, that can be provided without undue financial or administrative burden, and that can be provided without lowering academic or other essential performance standards. Students with disabilities should obtain the Procedure Manual for Students with Disabilities from the Office of the Vice Dean for Student Affairs.

H. Graduation Requirements

1) MINIMUM CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION: All J.D. candidates must complete for credit the first-year program of 32 credit hours, as prescribed by the faculty, plus 58 credit hours in upper-division courses, for a total of ninety (90) credit hours (see [“Total Required Credits,” III.A\(1\).](#)).

2) MINIMUM SATISFACTORY GRADES REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION: For all law school classes, J.D. candidates must earn A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, or S grades in a minimum of eighty (80) credit hours of law school or other approved courses out of the total of ninety (90) credit hours required to receive the J.D. degree.

3) WAIVER OF SATISFACTORY GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION: The faculty, in its discretion, may waive the eighty-hour requirement and award the J.D. degree to a student who has earned at least seventy-eight (78) credit hours with A, B+, B, C, or S grades and who has satisfied all other graduation requirements. Such a waiver may be granted only in cases where the deficiency is the result of an unsatisfactory grade earned in the student’s final semester and where the faculty determines that the student’s overall record is sufficient to satisfy the minimum graduation requirements. In making its decision regarding such waiver, the faculty may take into account extraordinary factors, such as serious illness, which may have affected the student’s performance in the semester in question. No waiver of this requirement shall be granted, however, unless the student’s overall record shows sufficient “A” and/or “A-“ grades to compensate for the unsatisfactory grades the student earned during his or her attendance in the J.D. program.

- Students can apply for a waiver of the eighty-hour requirement through the Office of the Vice Dean for Student Affairs by completing and submitting the form, “Petition for Waiver of Faculty Policy,” available in R & R.

IV. TRANSFER STUDENTS

A. Request to Transfer or Visit Away

1) NOTICE. Students who intend to apply to transfer out of SUNY Buffalo Law or visit another law school must complete the Initial Request to Transfer or Visit Packet from the Records Office. Filing the form does not bind the student to transfer or to visit away but notifies R&R to begin the paperwork necessary to complete the transfer or visit application for the student. It is especially important to complete this step for students who wish to visit away so the visiting program is approved prior to any registration at the visiting school. If students decide to indeed transfer out of SUNY Buffalo Law they must notify Records and Registration to drop any registered courses to avoid being billed as soon as possible

2) TRANSCRIPTS. Transcripts requested to be sent to transfer schools will be produced after all grades have been recorded. Transfer/Visiting schools will not process applications with incomplete transcripts.

V. CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

A. Misconduct

1) EXAMPLES OF MISCONDUCT. Under this code, a student may be subject to disciplinary action when he or she engages in unprofessional conduct, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Making any written or verbal statement to a Law School employee that contains any material misrepresentation or omission related to admission, financial aid, academic credit, standing, grading, employment or any matter related to enforcement of this code.
- b. Making any material misrepresentation to individuals not affiliated with the Law School with regard to grades, class rank, academic standing, honors, or involvement in any law school activity.
- c. Submitting plagiarized work in any law school activity, including but not limited to courses, seminars, clinics, externships, clerkships, practicum placements, competitions and efforts to seek employment. In this code, plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of verbatim or nearly verbatim language of others without the use of quotation marks, footnotes and/or other appropriate source attribution; the substantial misappropriation of another's ideas without appropriate attribution; and the substantial misappropriation of another's work, organization or pattern without appropriate attribution.
- d. Submitting for academic credit the same or substantially the same work that has already been submitted (or is simultaneously being submitted) for academic credit in another course or academic program or work previously completed to satisfy employment, voluntary or other obligations in a setting outside the Law School.
- e. Submitting for academic credit work completed by another.
- f. Misrepresenting one's presence or absence or that of another in a class or other law school activity for which attendance is taken.
- g. Violating any policy regarding an examination or other written product or presentation to be submitted for evaluation. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Possessing or consulting, during an examination, any source of information not expressly authorized by the assigning faculty member.
 - ii. Giving, receiving or exchanging any unauthorized information with regard to an examination prior to or during the examination, including viewing the examination materials of another student during the examination.
 - iii. Intentionally breaching the confidentiality of the grading process.

- iv. Discussing any aspect of an examination with a student scheduled to take the examination who has not yet done so.
 - v. Removing an examination (in any form, including electronic) or a student's notes (including one's own) regarding an examination from the examination room without authorization.
 - vi. Taking an examination for another student or allowing another person to take one's own examination.
 - vii. Intentionally breaching the security of an examination in any way
 - viii. Failing to stop writing or otherwise responding to an examination once the examination time limit has been reached.
 - ix. Collaborating with another student or students on an examination, project or other class assignment without express faculty permission.
 - x. Intentionally distracting or disturbing others or otherwise interfering with or disrupting the administration of an examination.
 - xi. Using a false or misleading excuse to postpone the taking of an examination or submission of a paper or other assignment at the regularly scheduled time.
- h. Intentionally disrupting a class or other Law School sanctioned or sponsored activity.
 - i. Intentionally stealing, destroying, damaging, defacing or hiding Law School property or that of another law student or employee of the law school, including electronic data.
 - j. Removing library materials from the Law School Library without authorization.
 - k. Using Law School student access to databases licensed at this university for outside employment, other activities unrelated to Law School courses, research or activities, or in any way that violates licensing agreements.
 - l. Threatening, harassing, assaulting or intentionally interfering with the work of a Law School student or employee.
 - m. Failing to cooperate with the investigation of any allegation of misconduct under this code.
 - n. Failing to report to Law School authorities any misconduct under this code.

B. Procedures

1) INITIAL COMPLAINT. If a student has reason to believe that a student may have committed an act of misconduct, as defined above, he or she shall report the suspected or alleged misconduct to the Vice Dean for Student Affairs and provide documentation, where applicable, of the suspected or alleged misconduct. This process may also be initiated by a member of the law school faculty or staff.

2) NOTICE. The Vice Dean for Student Affairs shall notify, in writing, the student or students suspected or accused of the alleged act of misconduct. Such notice shall include copies of any applicable documentation (e.g., a copy of the paper with the allegedly plagiarized sections highlighted along with a copy of the source material with the applicable sections highlighted). Copies of such notice shall also be provided to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and, where applicable, the faculty or staff member who initiated the complaint. Where the allegation is one of academic dishonesty and a grade is due to be entered, the Vice Dean for Student Affairs shall provide a copy of the notice to the Registrar with the direction to enter a grade of Incomplete (“I”) until the matter is resolved. Any such notice is confidential and shall be kept separate from the student’s other Law School records.

3) INVESTIGATION. The Vice Dean for Student Affairs will consult with the student within a reasonable period of time but as close as possible to the report and notice of the suspected or alleged misconduct. As part of the investigation, the Vice Dean for Student Affairs may consult with faculty, staff, students and/or others who may have some knowledge of the suspected or alleged misconduct. The Vice Dean for Student Affairs shall consult with and report to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs on the results of the investigation.

4) INFORMAL RESOLUTION MEETING. During the investigation, the Vice Dean for Student Affairs shall offer the opportunity for the student to meet with the Vice Dean for Student Affairs and the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs in an attempt to resolve the matter.

- a. If the allegation is one of academic dishonesty, the faculty member involved may also attend such meeting. Neither the faculty member nor the student shall be represented or accompanied by an attorney or any other advisor, and no record of this informal meeting need be preserved. As a result of this meeting, with the agreement of the faculty member, the student may consent to appropriate sanctions including but not limited to:
 - i. Admonition – An oral statement to the student that he or she has violated a Law School standard of academic honesty.
 - ii. Revision of Work – Requiring the student to replace or revise the work in which dishonesty occurred. (A grade of Incomplete will be entered pending replacement or revision of the work.)
 - iii. Reduction in Grade – With respect to the particular assignment/examination or the course.
 - iv. Mandatory Resignation – To be indicated on the transcript by an “R”.
 - v. Failure for Reason of Academic Dishonesty – To be indicated on the transcript by an “>F<”.
- b. If the suspected or alleged misconduct does not involve academic dishonesty, the student will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Vice Dean for Student Affairs and the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs in an attempt to resolve the matter. The student shall not be represented or accompanied by an attorney

or any other advisor, and no record of this informal meeting need be preserved. As a result of this meeting, the student may consent to an appropriate sanction including but not limited to:

- i. Admonition – An oral statement to the student that he or she has violated the Code of Conduct, with or without a written statement of admonition placed in the student’s file.
- ii. Warning – An oral statement to the student that he or she has violated the Code of Conduct and that further misconduct may result in more serious disciplinary action, with or without a written statement of warning placed in the student’s file.
- iii. Censure – A written reprimand detailing the violation and a warning of more serious disciplinary action if the student engages in further misconduct in violation of the code, with a written statement of censure to be placed in the student’s file.
- iv. Probation – A specified period of time during which the student will be excluded from certain Law School privileges and activities and/or required to meet certain specified conditions in order to avoid more serious disciplinary action. A written statement of this sanction and the reasons for it will be placed in the student’s file.
- v. Suspension – Exclusion from enrollment and other Law School privileges or activities for a specific period of time. A written statement of this sanction and the reasons for it will be placed in the student’s file.
- vi. Expulsion – Termination of the student’s enrollment either permanently or for an indefinite period of time, with conditions for later enrollment (if any) to be specified. A written statement of this sanction and the reasons for it will be placed in the student’s file.
- vii. Restitution – In addition to, or instead of, any of the above sanctions, financial reimbursement for damage, destruction or misappropriation of property.

5) DETERMINATION AND RECOMMENDED SANCTION. If no informal resolution is agreed to, the Vice Dean for Student Affairs will provide a written report of the investigation with findings to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and a copy to the student. The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs shall review this report and shall advise the student of the sanctions that will be recommended to the Dean.

6) APPEAL. The student may appeal the recommended sanction(s) to the Code of Conduct Adjudication Committee (CCAC), composed of three members of the voting faculty, including the chair, chosen annually by the Law Faculty Committee on Committees. Neither the Dean nor the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs may serve on the CCAC. The student shall be entitled to a hearing before the CCAC, if he or she requests. The CCAC

shall give the student reasonable advance notice (not less than 72 hours) of the hearing. If any member of the CCAC is a complainant or witness or has any other conflict of interests in the adjudication, he or she shall recuse himself or herself and be replaced by another faculty member designated by the Committee on Committees. If a member of the CCAC is otherwise unable to serve, he or she shall be replaced by another faculty member designated by the Committee on Committees.

The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and/or Vice Dean for Student Affairs shall provide the CCAC with a written statement of the evidence against the student and the names of potential witnesses. The CCAC shall convey this information to the student prior to the hearing, and shall indicate the range of possible sanctions that might be imposed if the student is found guilty.

7) ADJUDICATION HEARING. At the hearing, the student shall be entitled to present evidence on his or her own behalf, examine all evidence against him or her, and cross-examine all witnesses against him or her. No party may be represented by an attorney or anyone else, but the student may be accompanied by an advisor of his or her choice, who may advise but not represent him or her during the proceedings. The technical and formal rules of evidence applicable in a court of law will not be controlling, and the CCAC may hear any and all relevant material and reliable evidence that may contribute to an informed result. The chair of the CCAC may exclude irrelevant or unduly repetitious evidence or cross-examination.

8) DETERMINATION OF GUILT AND RECOMMENDED SANCTIONS. If a majority of the CCAC's members find that the student committed an act of misconduct, the CCAC shall recommend that the Dean impose one or more of the following sanctions to which a majority of its members agree:

- a. In the case of academic dishonesty, any of the sanctions that the Instructor could have imposed as a consequence of an informal resolution meeting (Admonition; Revision of work; Reduction in grade; Mandatory resignation from the course; or Failure for reason of academic dishonesty) as well as Censure, Probation, Suspension or Expulsion, as those sanctions are defined above.

Regardless of other sanctions, if a student is found guilty of academic dishonesty, a statement shall be placed in the student's academic record along with a description of the act of dishonesty. Such statement shall be disclosed to the Character and Fitness Committee or similar body of any jurisdiction for which the student seeks admission to the bar.

- b. In the case of any other violation of the Code of Conduct, any of the following sanctions: Admonition, Warning, Censure, Probation, Suspension, Expulsion and Restitution, as defined above.

9) FINDING OF NOT GUILTY. If a majority of the adjudication committee's members find that the student has not committed an act of misconduct under this Code, the matter shall be deemed closed and all copies of documentation, other than of a confidential file maintained separately by the Vice Dean for Student Affairs, shall be destroyed.

10) NOTICE OF DECISION. The student shall be notified of all decisions (including any finding of guilt and recommended sanctions) by letter, a copy of which shall become part of the confidential file maintained separately by the Vice Dean for Student Affairs. If the student has been found guilty, the letter shall advise the student of the sanction(s) recommended to the Dean.

11) DEAN'S DECISION. The final determination of the sanction(s) to be imposed is to be made by the Dean of the Law School. In his or her discretion, the Dean may impose any sanction approved in this Code, except that he or she may not impose a sanction more severe than that recommended by the adjudication committee. The Dean shall make his or her decision solely upon the basis of the report and findings of the CCAC.

12) APPEAL. The decision of the Dean is final and neither the student nor any other person shall have a right of appeal from that decision.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the General Academic Requirements, Policies and Code of Student Conduct for J.D. Candidates.

DATE _____

PRINT NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

Newly admitted students who do not sign and file this acknowledgment with the Records and Registration Office are not eligible to sit for exams in their first semester nor to register for courses in subsequent semesters.