

**I. ACADEMIC RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES BYLAWS  
(Revised 6/12/09)**

**Section 1 Graduation Requirements**

1.1 Degree Conferred

The degree of Juris Doctor (J.D.) is conferred upon all graduating students.

1.2 Degree Requirements: General

A student is eligible to receive the J.D. degree when the student has satisfied all of the following requirements, which requirements must be completed within four calendar years of the student's matriculation date, except in those cases set forth in section 13.3.8:

1.2.1 Credit hours. Successful completion of 88 semester credit hours of approved course work.

1.2.1.1 "Successful completion" means a final grade of 62 or better in a graded course and a final grade of Satisfactory (S) or Distinguished Satisfactory (S+) in an ungraded course. When a student elects the S/U option in a graded course [see section 4], a "Satisfactory" grade requires a numeric grade in the course of 69 or better.

1.2.1.2 "Approved course work" includes all regular College of Law courses, seminars and clinics;

all approved transfer course work [see section 1.4]; all approved transient work as a visiting student [see section 1.3]; and all co-curricular programs [section 8] and courses in other schools and colleges approved for law school credit [see sections 9 and 10].

1.2.2 Grade point average (GPA). A final cumulative grade point average of 69.000 or better for all course work undertaken in graded courses. There is no grade “forgiveness” if a student retakes a failed course; both grades are included in the computation of the student’s final grade point average.<sup>1</sup>

1.2.3 Graded hours. Successful completion of approved course work in graded courses as follows:

1.2.3.1 GPA of 72: A student whose final cumulative grade point average is 72.000 or better must successfully complete at least 66 semester credit hours of graded course work. A student’s remaining 22 required credit hours may be satisfied by successful completion of ungraded course work.

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<sup>1</sup> This provision applies to students entering the College of Law on or after the Fall 2006 semester. Students who entered the College of Law prior to the Fall 2006 semester must have a final cumulative grade point average of 67 or better to graduate.

1.2.3.2 GPA below 72: A student whose final cumulative grade point average is below 72.000 must successfully complete at least 72 semester credit hours of graded course work.<sup>2</sup> A student's remaining 16 required credit hours may be satisfied by successful completion of ungraded course work.

1.2.4 Required courses. Successful completion of the following courses:

1.2.4.1 First-year courses: Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law I, Contracts, Criminal Law, Legal Writing I & II, Legislation & Regulation, Property, and Torts.<sup>3</sup>

1.2.4.2 Upper-level courses: Constitutional Law II and Professional Responsibility.

1.2.4.3 Retaking required courses. A student who fails a required course will ordinarily be assigned to a different instructor when retaking the course.

1.2.5 Residence.

1.2.5.1 Six semesters. A student's course of legal studies must extend over not fewer than six

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<sup>2</sup> This provision applies to students entering the College of Law in or after the Fall 2009 semester. A student who entered prior to the Fall 2009 semester whose final cumulative grade point average is below 70.000 must complete 72 credit hours of graded coursework.

<sup>3</sup> This provision applies to students entering the College of Law in or after the Fall 2010 semester.

academic semesters as a full-time student. An academic semester consists of not fewer than 13 weeks of instruction (65 days), excluding final examinations and reading periods. [See ABA Standard (a)-(c).]

1.2.5.2 Residence credit: full-time study. To receive full residence credit for an academic semester, a student must be enrolled for 12 or more hours of credit and must successfully complete at least nine hours of credit. A student who enrolls for 12 or more hours of credit, but successfully completes fewer than nine hours of credit, receives residence credit in the proportion of hours successfully completed over twelve ( $n/12$ ).<sup>4</sup> A student does not receive increased residence credit by enrolling for more than 12 hours of credit.

1.2.5.3 Residence credit: part-time study. A student who enrolls for fewer than 12 hours of credit during a regular academic semester receives

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<sup>4</sup> Effective Fall 2009. A student who enrolled for in 12 or more credit hours in a semester prior to Fall 2009, but successfully completes fewer than nine hours of credit, receives residence credit in the proportion of hours successfully completed over nine ( $n/9$ ).

residence credit in the proportion of hours successfully completed over 12 (n/12).

1.2.5.4 Summer sessions. A student may receive pro rata residence credit for study during a summer session on a basis that fairly apportions a student's effort to the usual residence period. [See ABA Standard 304(d).] Ordinarily, the residence credit earned for full-time study during a summer session is based on the number of days of instruction in proportion to a regular academic semester (n/65), excluding final examinations and reading periods. [See ABA Standard (a)-(c).]

1.2.5.4.1 FSU summer session. For the seven-week summer session in Tallahassee, a student who enrolls for and successfully completes six or more hours of credit receives 0.5 residence credit. A student who successfully completes fewer than six hours of credit receives residence credit in the proportion of hours successfully completed over 12 (n/12). A student does not receive more than 0.5 residence credit by enrolling for more than six

hours of credit, except as provided in 1.2.5.4.2 and 1.2.5.5.

1.2.5.4.2 FSU summer externships. A student who enrolls for and successfully completes an externship offered by the FSU College of Law receives 1.0 residence credit for a 12-hour externship and 0.75 residence credit for a 9-hour externship.

1.2.5.4.3 FSU summer abroad program. A student who enrolls for and successfully completes four or more hours of credit at the FSU summer program in Oxford receives 0.308 residence credit (20/65). A student does not receive more than 0.308 residence credit by enrolling for more than four hours of credit.

1.2.5.5 Online classes that qualify for law school credit count toward the residency requirement as would any other class taken at the law school. A student does not receive additional residence credit for any weeks that overlap in an academic semester or summer session.

1.2.5.6 Waiver. For good cause, the Dean or the Dean's designee may waive up to two-tenths (0.2) of a residence credit.

1.2.6 Upper-level writing requirement (ULWR).

1.2.6.1 To satisfy the upper-level writing requirement, a student must (1) successfully complete a law school course, seminar, or Directed Individual Study (see section 6) requiring a research paper of substantial length and involving at least one written critique of a rough draft; and (2) write a final draft of the required research paper that meaningfully responds to the professor's critique of the rough draft.

For each student enrolled in a course for which the student can earn ULWR, the professor shall assign the student a grade for the course and certify whether the student has written a paper that satisfies the ULWR.

1.2.6.2 Only full-time members of the FSU College of Law faculty, including clinical faculty and legal writing instructors, may supervise and certify a student's satisfaction of the ULWR.

1.2.6.3 Only a graded course or seminar may be taken to satisfy the ULWR, with the exception of a DIS (see section 6.5.) A student may not elect to take it on an S/U basis.

1.2.6.4 A DIS may not be taken to satisfy the ULWR during a student's last semester or term of law school.

### 1.2.7 Skills Training

1.2.7.1 A student must receive substantial instruction in "skills training."<sup>5</sup>

1.2.7.2 A student may satisfy the "skills training" requirement by successful completion and receipt of credit in a class certified by the Dean or his designee as including "substantial instruction in 'other professional skills generally regarded as necessary to effective and responsible participation in the legal profession,'" as that term is used in the ABA accreditation standards.

1.2.7.3 A student may also satisfy the "skills training" requirement by successful completion and

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<sup>5</sup> This requirement shall apply to students who matriculated at the FSU College of Law as first year students on or after August 2006, and to all other students who matriculated at the FSU College of Law on or after May 2007.

receipt of credit in a class certified by the Dean or his designee as providing select students in the class with skills training, if the professor in the class indicates to the Law School Registrar that the student's work in the class involved "substantial instruction in other professional skills."

1.2.8 Pro bono service.

1.2.8.1 Twenty hours of pro bono service. To satisfy the pro bono service requirement, a student must complete 20 or more hours of pro bono legal work. The work may not be performed until after a student's completion of the first year of law school. The pro bono requirement must be completed 30 days prior to graduation.

1.2.8.2 "Pro bono legal work" means –

1.2.8.2.1 legal work on behalf of an indigent individual;

1.2.8.2.2 uncompensated legal work in conjunction with an individual lawyer, law firm or organization on behalf of a disadvantaged minority, victims of racial, sexual or other

forms of discrimination, or those denied their human or civil rights; or

1.2.8.2.3 other uncompensated legal work on behalf of the public interest.

1.2.8.3 “Work on behalf of the public interest” means legal work that is designed to present a position on behalf of the public at large on matters of public interest." Public interest work does not include the direct representation of litigants in actions between private persons, corporations or other representations of litigants in which the financial interests at stake would warrant representation from private legal sources.

1.2.8.4 The Dean or the Dean’s designee must approve in advance all legal work that may be used to satisfy the pro bono requirement and must certify a student’s satisfaction of the requirement.

### 1.3 Special Rules: Transient Work

An FSU College of Law student may be given credit towards the J.D. degree for up to 30 semester credit hours of approved course work taken at another ABA-accredited law school as a visiting student (a “transient student”). Though not required, it is recommended that the other law school

also be a member of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). The following special rules apply to work done as a transient student.

- 1.3.1 Requests to visit as a transient student at another law school and all course work to be undertaken at that school must be approved by the Dean or the Dean's designee in advance of registration at the other school. Ordinarily, only third-year students are approved to visit as a transient student at another law school, but a second-year student may be approved under special circumstances.
- 1.3.2 Academic credit towards the J.D. degree for work done as a transient student at another law school may be awarded only for course work successfully completed with a grade of 69 (C) or better or the equivalent. Credit for course work completed with a grade below 69 (C) will not be accepted for credit towards the J.D. degree.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.3.3 All credit for course work successfully completed (grade of 69 or better or the equivalent) as a transient student at another law school will be indicated as an "S" on the student's FSU transcript and will not be used in the calculation of the student's final grade point average.
- 1.3.4 One-half (½) of the credit hours for course work successfully completed as a transient student at another law school will be

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<sup>6</sup> Effective Fall 2009. Academic credit may be awarded for course work successfully completed prior to Fall 2009 with a grade of 67 (C) or better or the equivalent.

deemed “graded hours” for the purpose of calculating the graded credit hour graduation requirement. (See section 1.2.3.)

#### 1.4 Special Rules: Transfer Students

A student who transfers to the FSU College of Law from another law school must satisfy all of the prescribed graduation requirements for the J.D. degree, except as otherwise provided in this section 1.4.

1.4.1 Minimum credit hours. At least 45 semester credit hours of approved course work must be successfully completed at the FSU College of Law. This requirement will not be satisfied by credit earned under the auspices of another law school or through graduate-level courses at FSU or Florida A & M University.

1.4.2 Graded hours. At least three-fourths (3/4) of the credit hours of course work that is successfully completed at the FSU College of Law must be graded hours. Credits earned as a visitor will not proportionately reduce the number of graded hours required for graduation.

1.4.3 Transfer hours. The Dean or the Dean’s designee must approve all credit hours, required courses, and residence credit that may be applied to satisfy the FSU College of Law graduation requirements. Transfer credit may be awarded only for course work successfully completed with a grade of 69 (C) or better or the equivalent.

## 1.5 Waiver of Graduation Requirements

Under exceptional circumstances, a graduation requirement may be waived in accordance with the following procedure.

1.5.1 Committee. A student may request to have a graduation requirement waived by filing a petition to do so with the College of Law Academic Waiver Committee. The members of the committee shall be appointed by the Dean.

1.5.2 Exceptional circumstances. The committee may waive a graduation requirement only upon a finding of exceptional circumstances. Normally, the circumstances must be beyond the student's control and not have been reasonably foreseeable.

1.5.3 Decision.

1.5.3.1 A majority vote of the committee to reject a waiver request is final.

1.5.3.2. A unanimous vote of the committee to grant a waiver request is final.

1.5.3.3. A majority vote of the committee to grant a waiver request results in the request being referred to the faculty. If a majority of the voting faculty approves the waiver, the waiver will be granted.

1.6 Graduation With Honors

A graduate receiving the J.D. degree will be awarded the degree with honors when the graduate's final cumulative grade point average is --

1.6.1 Summa Cum Laude (highest honors): 93.000 or above

1.6.2 Magna Cum Laude (high honors): 89.000 to 92.999

1.6.3 Cum Laude (honors): 84.000 to 88.999