

Chapter 5 Academic Standards & Policies

I. Function of These Standards

A. Comprehensive Rules and Interstitial Rulemaking

The function of these academic standards is to provide comprehensive rules for governing the academic rules to be applied to students of Appalachian School of Law (the School). To the extent the rules fail to provide adequate guidance for administering a particular aspect of the students' academic program, the Dean may adopt temporary rules which shall have full force and effect until the Faculty adopts a permanent standard.

B. Adoption and Amendment

The academic standards are adopted by majority vote of the Faculty and are subject to amendment by a majority vote of the Faculty.

C. Notice

These standards are notice to all applicants, students, faculty members, and others of the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures described herein. This notice exists without regard to whether one has actually taken the opportunity to read the standards; the School will deal with all interested parties on the assumption that they have informed themselves as to these standards.

D. Availability

The School will make efforts to provide reasonable access to these standards to interested people. This access may include availability of the standards at the School's law library.

II. Status of Students

A. Full-time

All students must be full-time students, except those who have received special permission from the Chief Academic Officer. Full-time students must enroll in the complete prescribed sequence of courses for each semester in which they are enrolled. No full-time student may work more than twenty hours per week during any week in any term or semester for which the student is enrolled. The student bears the burden of proving compliance with this work limitation, and the School, at its sole discretion, may at any time require the student to provide proof of compliance. Any student who cannot prove satisfactorily the student's compliance with the work limitation shall be regarded as a part-time student. Furthermore, violation of the work limitation is a Student Conduct and Academic Integrity violation and is therefore subject to potential sanctions through that process.

B. Part-time

ASL does not have a part-time program. Special permission from the Chief Academic Officer is required to enroll in less than 12 credit hours in a semester. Such permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and where the student can demonstrate that he or she will still be able to graduate in a timely manner. A part-time student is any student: working more than twenty hours per week or taking eleven or fewer credit hours in a semester.

III. Curriculum

A. Prescribed Curriculum

1. Prescribed Curriculum Generally

All students enrolling in the spring of 2023 through the fall of 2023 must take the following courses, in the sequence specified by the Faculty: Appellate Advocacy or Legal Writing with a Purpose; Bar Essays: Strategies and Skills ; Bar Subject Review I & II; Building a Professional Identity I & II; Civil Procedure; Constitutional Law I & II; Contracts I & II; Criminal Law; Criminal Procedure; Evidence; Externship; Intentional Torts; Introduction to ASL Legal Studies; Legal Process I & II; MBE: Strategies and Skills; Negligence; Professional Responsibility; Property I & II. Additionally, all students must complete eight hours of Practicum courses (two hours of which must meet the Upper-Level Practicum Writing Requirement) and one Seminar course meeting the Seminar Writing Requirement.

Beginning with the Class of 2027 (enrolling in the spring of 2024 and thereafter), all students must take the following courses in the sequence specified by the Faculty: Appellate Advocacy, Building a Professional Identity I & II, Business Associations, Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law I & II, Contracts & Sales I & II, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Externship, Family Law, Intentional Torts, Introduction to ASL Legal Studies, Lawyering Skills I & II, Legal Process I & II, Multiple Choice Strategies & Skills, Negligence, Professional Responsibility, Property I & II, Strategies & Skills for Bar Essays and Practical Skills Tests or Virginia Civil Procedure & Practice (for Virginia bar takers), and the student's choice of qualifying courses in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Statutory/Regulatory Interpretation. Additionally, all students must complete two credit hours of Seminar credit and six additional credit hours of experiential learning designated as "Practicum" or "Clinic" courses. Remaining hours to fulfill the 92 credit hour requirement are at the student's election, subject to course offerings and class sizes.

Graduation requirements for students who do not graduate on a standard 3-year schedule may be adopted by the law school to reflect course offerings.

2. Part-time Sequence

For part-time students, the sequence of courses is arranged by the student with the Chief Academic Officer; however, prior to graduation, the part-time student must complete all courses required of full-time students.

B. Deviations from Prescribed Curriculum

Absent permission of the Chief Academic Officer, full-time students may not deviate from the prescribed sequence of courses.

C. Failure to Complete a Course Successfully

Any student who, for whatever reason and in whatever fashion, does not successfully complete and receive credit in a required course must enroll in that course at the earliest available opportunity.

D. Seminar Writing Requirement

1. Seminar Requirement Generally

Except as provided below, each student must take a Seminar, in which, under the supervision of the faculty member teaching the student's Seminar, the student will complete one paper which is either an expository or argumentative writing of at least twenty double-spaced, typed (or word-processed) pages of text exclusive of footnotes. Each seminar shall provide individualized assessment including review of and feedback on at least one draft prior to submission of the final written product.

2. Independent Study

Students may, with the permission of the Chief Academic Officer, take an Independent Study on a particular topic to fulfill a general elective or the Seminar Writing Requirement. Students interested in pursuing an Independent Study must find a full-time professor who will agree to supervise their work and the Independent Study must be completed within one semester. Under no circumstances shall an Independent Study be approved for use as a substitute for a required course other than the Seminar Writing Requirement.

3. Law Journal

Students who successfully serve on Appalachian School of Law Journal of Law for the entire period they are eligible to do so, who are elected and serve as a member of the Board of the Journal, and who produce a note which the Board of the Journal and the Journal's Faculty Advisor deem publishable, may substitute such service for the Seminar Requirement or a two-credit upper level general elective course, at the student's choice. In such cases, the student shall be awarded two semester credit hours for "Law Journal" at the end of the student's final semester. Successful completion of service on the Journal will be determined by the Journal's Faculty Advisor. Students may receive a total of two (2) credits for Law Journal, regardless of the number of notes the student prepares.

4. Moot Court

Students who are selected by the Moot Court Program's Faculty Advisor(s) to participate in an interscholastic moot court competition, who do in fact participate in the competition, and who contribute substantially to drafting the competition brief, may substitute such service for a one-credit upper-level elective course. In such cases, the student shall be awarded one semester credit hour for "Moot Court" at the end of the student's final semester. Students seeking academic credit for moot court participation are expected to contribute to the Appalachian School of Law's Moot Court Board and its activities.

Student may earn a maximum of two (2) credits for participation in moot court, regardless of the number of competitions in which they participate.

Students who earn credit for participating in two interscholastic moot court competitions, along with the associated brief drafting, may substitute such service for the Seminar Writing Requirement. The Moot Court Program's Faculty Advisor(s) will review at least one draft and provide feedback and opportunity for revision of each of the student's briefs. If interscholastic competition rules prevent such review and feedback prior to submission of an independently prepared competition brief, that process may take place after the brief is submitted but before the seminar credit is awarded. In all cases the Moot Court Program's Faculty Advisor(s) shall determine the sufficiency of the brief prior to an award of seminar credit.

The Moot Court Program's Faculty Advisor(s) will determine whether students have successfully completed Moot Court service and are eligible for seminar or elective credit.

E. Upper-Level Practicum Writing Skills Requirement

Each student must successfully complete at least two (2) credit hours that have been designated by the Curriculum Committee or the Dean and Chief Academic Officer as satisfying the Upper-Level Practicum Writing Skills Requirement.

Beginning with the Class of 2027, there will no longer be an Upper-Level Practicum Writing Skills requirement. See paragraph A(1) above for explanation of the required curriculum.

F. Community Service Requirement

Students are required to complete 25 hours of community service each semester. During their first semester, students satisfy this requirement by taking the mandatory Building a Professional Identity I class. The

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Community Service Requirement may be waived by the Chief Academic Officer for students on Academic Probation.

G. Distance Learning Policy

Absent permission of the Chief Academic Officer, a student may not take more than four (4) credit hours in any term of distance learning courses, nor may a student take more than a total of fifteen (15) credit hours of distance learning courses. No student may enroll for credit in a distance learning course until that student has completed twenty-eight (28) hours toward the JD degree. Any distance learning course will count towards the maximum enrollment for the term in which the course is taken. These rules shall be interpreted in accordance with ABA Standards 306 and 311(e) and their interpretations

IV. Registration

A. Normal Registration Times

Registration times for each semester or term shall be set by the Chief Academic Officer.

B. Late Registration

Failure to register during the normal registration time for a semester or term will cause a student to lose any priority in registration.

C. Add/Drop Policies

1. Normal Time Period

Students may add or drop a course during the first week of the Fall or Spring semester or the first two days of a Summer Intersession, if space is available.

2. Absences Prior to Enrolling in a Section

Absences from class sessions prior to adding a new course will be counted toward the total number of absences from the class.

D. Withdrawal From Courses

At any time between the end of the add/drop period specified in Section IV(C)(1) and the mid-way point in a course, a student may, with permission of the Chief Academic Officer, drop a course and receive the grade of "W." The "mid-way point" means the time when 50% of the class minutes for a course have been held. At any time after the mid-way point in a course, a student who withdraws from a course shall receive the grade of "F." A student who withdraws from all courses and is granted a leave of absence shall receive the grade of "W" for all courses. A student who is academically dismissed shall be administratively withdrawn from any courses in which they are currently enrolled at the time of the dismissal and receive a grade of "W." Requests for course withdrawal while an allegation of violation of the Code of Student Conduct or Code of Academic Integrity is pending shall be handled in accordance with the applicable Code.

E. Maximum Student Load

At no time may a student be enrolled in coursework that, if successfully completed, would exceed 20 percent of total coursework required by the School for graduation.

V. Attendance

A. Required Class Attendance; Computer Use

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Regular and punctual class attendance is required of all students in all courses. Attendance shall be taken in all courses. Attendance sign-in sheets shall be used, and students have the responsibility for making sure that they sign the sheet. Any student requesting that another person sign his or her name on the attendance sheet during a class that he or she did not attend, arrived late for or left early for; or any student who signs another student's name on an attendance sheet shall be deemed in violation of the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity policy (see Ch. 6 of the ASL Catalog & Student Handbook). Use of computers during class periods for any purpose other than note-taking is prohibited. The instructor may establish a more restrictive computer use policy.

B. General Rule

No student may miss more than fifteen percent (15%) of the class meetings in any course or seminar. A student who is tardy or who exits class early may be marked as absent. Under no circumstances shall a Professor be permitted to allow a student to "make up" an absence from a regularly scheduled class. Any student exceeding the maximum number of absences in a course shall receive the sanction set forth in Section V (E) of the Academic Standards.

Externship Orientations and Debriefings are not subject to this General Rule. Absences from Externship Orientations or Debriefings may be excused by the Externship Director, for good cause evidenced in writing by a student requesting an excused absence.

C. Instructor's Rule

An instructor may establish more restrictive class attendance policies if the students are notified in writing during the first week of classes. A student who is present but unprepared for class may be marked as absent if the instructor adopts this policy in writing during the first week of the semester. The student found to be absent because the student is unprepared shall be so advised by the instructor during or immediately after the class in question.

D. Exclusions

A student's absence from any class meeting due to the student's sincerely held religious beliefs, practices, or observances shall not be computed toward the maximum number of absences. See Appendix F for ASL's Religious Accommodations Policy.

Students who are members of the military on active duty should contact the Chief Academic Officer regarding any absences resulting from their service.

Students who are legally required to attend court should contact the Chief Academic Officer regarding any absences resulting from their court appearance.

E. Sanctions for Excessive Absences

Any student who misses more classes than allowed by the above formula or an instructor's particular policies shall not be permitted to take the final examination or submit additional work. A student who misses more than the allowed number of classes in a course has not met the course requirements, and though the absences may be for good cause, such as sickness or death in the family, the student should re-take the course rather than sit for the examination or attempt the graded assignments. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, a student may petition, in writing delivered to the Chief Academic Officer, for permission to withdraw and receive a grade of "W" as provided in Section V (G) of these Academic Standards. In all other cases in which absences are excessive, a grade of "F" shall be given.

F. Notice

Students must keep track of their absences. The School is under no obligation to notify students when their

absences exceed the limits noted above.

G. Extraordinary Circumstances

In extraordinary circumstances, a student who receives a failing grade due to excessive absences may petition the Chief Academic Officer for relief. Upon proof of extraordinary circumstances, such as serious personal injury or illness; serious illness, injury, or death of a member of the student's immediate family; attendance at school-sponsored academic events (such as interschool moot court, mock trial, negotiation, mediation, or client counseling competitions); or any other exceptional circumstance beyond the student's control which prevented the student from meeting attendance requirements, the Chief Academic Officer may withdraw the failing grade and grant a withdrawal ("W") in the course. Any petition for change of grade from an "F" to a "W" under this subsection must be made within two weeks of the date the student is notified that the student's absences exceed the limit, or within two weeks of the date that a grade of "F" due to excessive absences is mailed or posted. A decision of the Chief Academic Officer may be appealed to the Dean. The decision of the Dean upon appeal is final and not subject to further review or appeal.

VI. Examinations

A. Anonymity

1. Confidential Grading Numbers Assigned

Throughout each semester all students enrolled at the School are assigned five digit numbers to use instead of their name or Social Security number on School examinations. These grading numbers are confidential.

2. "Blind" Examination Grading

Instructors are expected to inform students about course evaluation procedures at the beginning of each course. Students enrolled in classes in which the primary means of evaluation is an examination receive a "blind" examination grade. In those courses, the instructors assign grades to examinations without knowing the name or identity of the test taker. After instructors turn in the "blind" examination grades for their courses, they have the opportunity to match student grading numbers with student names. Instructors will then calculate final grades based on the evaluation procedures announced at the beginning of the course, including reflecting credit for additional course work or assignments, class participation, and other factors relevant to evaluating student work.

3. Papers and Projects

In any course which requires papers or projects other than in-class or take-home examinations, the instructor for the course may, but need not, make such arrangements for anonymous grading of such papers or projects as he or she deems appropriate.

4. Retention of Work upon which Grades Are Based

The School will retain examinations and other written work on which a student's grade for a given course is based until the student has graduated, permanently transferred, withdrawn, been expelled, or been academically dismissed from ASL. Students will be permitted to review written work upon which a grade is based up to two weeks prior to the commencement of exams for the semester following the one in which the course was taken. If a student received a failing grade in a course and wishes to review written work upon which that grade was based, such review may take place within 30 calendar days after release of the grade; no student may review written work in any semester in which he or she is re-taking the course.

Exams and other written work may be stored and/or reviewed, at the option of the Professor, either in the Registrar's Office, or a secure area designated by the Registrar's Office, the Professor's office, or electronically in an ASL-controlled database. If a Professor chooses to retain written material in his/her office, the

Professor shall be responsible for the security of the material and shall only permit students to review the material in the Professor's, or a designated individual's, presence.

B. Departure from Examination Schedule

1. General Rule

Examinations, tests, and quizzes ("exams") shall be scheduled by the course instructor, except that final exams shall be scheduled by the Chief Academic Officer in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar.

All students shall take examinations as scheduled. No student has the right to defer an examination. A student who fails to sit for an examination when scheduled, or who does not defer an examination according to these procedures, shall receive a failing grade for that examination. Once a student receives notification of a grade, no petition for grade change shall be considered if the circumstances set forth in the petition demonstrate that the student should have, but did not, ask for an examination deferral.

2. When Deferral is Permitted

A student is permitted to defer an examination only for good cause. Good cause includes serious personal injury or illness; serious illness, injury, or death of a member of the student's immediate family; and any other similar emergency beyond the student's control which prevents the student from sitting for the examination when scheduled. The Deferral process is not applicable to requests for accommodations for schedules based on religious reasons. Students requiring an accommodation for an exam for a religious reason shall follow the procedure set forth in Appendix F, Religious Accommodations for Students.

3. Procedure for Deferral of Examination

No student may have a course quiz or mid-term deferred without first applying to the course professor for permission to defer the quiz or mid-term. No student may have a final examination deferred without first applying to the Chief Academic Officer for permission to defer an examination. Permission to defer an examination must be obtained prior to the scheduled examination day, unless the cause for deferral occurs on the examination day, and is due to circumstances beyond the student's control. Students who must defer a scheduled examination shall submit to the Chief Academic Officer a written statement setting forth the nature of the emergency as soon after the emergency arises as is practicable, and should submit supporting documentation of the illness or emergency. If the Chief Academic Officer grants permission to defer an examination, the Registrar shall notify the instructor whose examination is to be deferred. At the instructor's discretion, a new examination may be given to the student whose examination has been deferred. The revised examination date shall be set by the Registrar. The examination should be taken before the beginning of the next semester, except in extraordinary circumstances. Any appeal of the Chief Academic Officer's decision shall be made, in writing to the Dean. The decision of the Dean on appeal is final and is not subject to further appeal or review.

C. Take-Home Pass/Fail Remedy for Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of a student's excused omission of a scheduled examination, the Chief Academic Officer may approve having the student take an appropriate take-home exam for the course on a pass/fail basis or such other remedy as the CAO approves. The student taking an examination in this manner waives all right to anonymity.

D. Examination Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation for exam-taking. The Accommodations

Policy is set forth in Appendix E of the Catalog and Student Handbook. The procedures and forms used in requesting an accommodation are also set forth in Appendix E, or available from the Registrar's Office or on ASL's website at <http://www.asl.edu/accommodations/>.

E. Use of Typing or Computer Equipment on Examinations

1. Exam Software

Unless instructed otherwise by the professor, all exams will be completed using Exam4 and/or Scantron. Students must use school-approved exam software on examinations, as approved by the Registrar. In order to use exam software, students must comply with all requirements set forth by the Registrar.

2. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may be permitted to use additional devices or equipment as part of a reasonable accommodation. The Accommodations Policy, the procedures, and the forms used for requesting an accommodation are set forth in Appendix E of the Catalog and Student Handbook.

3. Technical Requirements & Troubleshooting

Students are responsible for having functional and reliable equipment in order to take examinations. The hardware/software used must be compatible with ASL's exam software. Students will not be given additional time for technical issues not related to ASL's services. The Information Services staff is not responsible for repairing student computers and other equipment. However, the Information Services staff will assist as they are available. Information Services does not maintain hardware/software for student use during exams. If you have questions about equipment compatibility, please contact Information Services at is@asl.edu.

F. Exam Administration Procedures

Rules for the administration of all examinations shall be prepared by the Registrar, or an individual designated by the Chief Academic Officer, and approved by the Chief Academic Officer each semester. These Rules shall be reduced to writing and distributed to all students at the beginning of each semester. A student who fails to comply with any examination rule may be subject to administrative sanction including a grade reduction, examination time reduction, or any other sanction deemed appropriate under the circumstances in accordance with Chapter 6, Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

VII. Grades and Grading Policies

A. Grades

1. Available Grades

For students entering fall 2020 and after, grades for all courses at the School shall be A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, I, W, X, P, AU, CR, and NC.

2. Course Credit

Grades A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, P are passing grades and confer credit for the course. The grade of F is a failing grade and confers no credit. Grades W, X, I, and AU are neither passing nor failing and they confer no credit. CR indicates credit conferred for courses transferred from other institutions, but no grade is assigned.

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3. Interpretations and Uses of Grades

i. A+

A grade of A+ is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is far above the level of a merely outstanding performance. This grade is reserved for rare occasions and often is given only once, if at all, in a particular course. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 4.3333.

ii. A

A grade of A is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is truly outstanding for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 4.0000.

iii. A-

A grade of A- is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is generally outstanding work (but lacks slightly the consistency associated with truly outstanding work) for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 3.6667.

iv. B+

A grade of B+ is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is very good, but not outstanding, work for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 3.3333.

v. B

A grade of B generally indicates good and acceptable performance for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 3.0000.

vi. B-

A grade of B- is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is generally acceptable (but lacks slightly the consistency associated with truly acceptable work) for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 2.6667.

vii. C+

A grade of C+ is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is minimally acceptable (but lacks slightly the consistency associated with generally acceptable work) for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 2.3333.

viii. C

A grade of C is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is marginally insufficient to demonstrate acceptable work for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 2.0000.

ix. C-

A grade of C- is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is insufficient to demonstrate acceptable work for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 1.6667.

x. D+

A grade of D+ is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that reflects more than minimal skill for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education, but clearly does not rise to the level of acceptable work. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 1.3333.

xi. D

A grade of D is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that reflects minimal skill only for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 1.0000.

xii. D-

A grade of D- is given to any student who completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that generally reflects some minimal skill (but no more) for a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education. This grade confers credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 0.6667.

xiii. F

A grade of F is given to any student who (a) completes the requirements for a course and does so in a fashion that is not acceptable at all and demonstrates none of the skill or talent generally found in a law student and future lawyer at this stage of his or her education or (b) does not complete the requirements for the course in a timely fashion or (c) violates Section V (B) of the Academic Standards. This grade confers no credit for the course and is calculated in the grade average at the numerical value of 0.0000.

xiv. I

No grade of I is ever given without the prior approval of the Chief Academic Officer. An I is given to a student who has not completed the requirements for a course in a timely fashion, but, having demonstrated good cause as to why the work is not complete, has arranged with the Chief Academic Officer and the instructor to complete the work within no more than six months, or when the sequence of curricular offerings warrants and the Chief Academic Officer has approved, a longer period not to exceed one calendar year. After one calendar year, an unresolved I becomes an F. At no time does an I confer credit for the course, and it is not calculated in the grade average.

xv. X

A grade of X is posted on the transcript if the student through no fault of his or her own has not yet received a grade for a course. This grade covers those situations in which a course is expected to take more than one semester to complete. The X grade does not confer credit for the course and is not calculated in the grade average.

xvi. W

Subject to section IV (D), a grade of W is posted on the transcript when a student withdraws from a course. This withdrawal may only be done with permission of the Chief Academic Officer. The W grade confers no credit and is not calculated in the grade average.

xvii. P

A grade of P is given to any student who passes a pass/fail course. This grade confers credit for the course, but is not calculated in the grade average.

xviii. AU

A grade of AU is given to any student who audits a course. This grade is not calculated in the grade average. A student may audit a course with permission of the instructor and the registrar.

4. Calculating Grade Averages

Students shall receive a "cumulative grade average" (or "GPA") that includes all letter grades received. This GPA shall be used for purposes of determining academic standing, graduation eligibility, Dean's List, Class Rank, and similar purposes.

The grade average is obtained in the following fashion: First, multiply the numerical value of each grade received by the number of credit hours for the course. This product is referred to as quality points. Second, add all of a student's quality points. Third, divide the sum of the student's quality points by the total number of credit hours for which the student has received a grade with numerical value (graded credit hours). The resulting number is the grade average.

No student shall be eligible to receive a class ranking until he/she has completed at least thirty (30) credit hours of numerically graded courses at ASL. Credits transferred from another law school or other graduate level programs will not be included in calculating a student's cumulative grade average.

B. Pass/Fail Grading

1. Pass/Fail Grading Generally

Any course in which grades with numerical value are not expected to be given will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Students who pass the course receive a P for the course. In order to receive a P, a student must perform at a level of work equivalent to a C- or above in a letter-graded course. Failure of a pass/fail course results in an F being posted on the transcript. This grade of F will be calculated into the grade average.

2. Pass/Fail Grading in Retaking Failed Course

Students who retake a failed course are graded in that course on a pass/fail basis.

3. Pass/Fail Only for Entire Class

Absent approval of the Chief Academic Officer, pass/fail grading may only be used for an entire class, and no student or students shall be given a pass/fail option either before or after grades with numerical value are released. Law Journal, Moot Court, Independent Study, and Assistantship credit shall be graded on a pass/fail basis.

C. Grade Standards

1. Generally

In all required courses graded on a numerical basis (except as provided in section 2 below), the total grade average for all students shall not exceed 3.0000 without approval of the Chief Academic Officer. For all courses that are designated as required first-year courses and that have an enrollment of 15 students or more, at least 15% of the students enrolled in the course must receive a grade of C or lower. The Externship course shall not be subject to a maximum grade average. However, no student shall receive a grade higher than "A" for the Externship course. Courses currently designated as required first-year courses graded on a numerical basis are Civil Procedure, Contracts I and II, Criminal Law, Intentional Torts, Introduction to ASL Legal Studies, Legal Process I and II, Negligence, and Property I and II.

2. Seminar, Practicum, and Elective Courses

For all sections of Seminar, Practicum, and Elective courses, the total grade average for all students in the section shall not exceed 3.3333 without the approval of the Chief Academic Officer.

3. Submission of Final Grades

Final grades are to be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer, who will check for their compliance with the grading standard. Grades in compliance will be recorded, and grades not in compliance will be returned to the instructor.

4. Failure to Bring Grades into Compliance

If an instructor, after a reasonable period of time, fails to bring the grades for a course into compliance with the grading standards, the Chief Academic Officer and Dean shall act in his or her discretion to bring the grades in compliance.

5. Changing Grades to Correct Arithmetical or Administrative Error or at the Instructor's Request

After an instructor has submitted grades to the Chief Academic Officer, the grades are final and may not be changed except as provided in this Part VII. The Chief Academic Officer shall freely allow changes requested by an instructor in the case of a grade which was incorrectly given as a result of an arithmetical, administrative, or other "mechanical" error. The Chief Academic Officer shall allow other grade changes requested in writing by an instructor only when the Chief Academic Officer determines that most extraordinary circumstances exist. Instructors must submit requests for grade changes within fourteen days of the release of grades to students for a semester or summer term or prior to the release of class ranks following the term, whichever comes first.

D. Dean's List and Class Rank

At the conclusion of each semester, the Dean will publish the Dean's List. The Dean's List is comprised of all full-time students who have completed at least 30 credit hours of numerically-graded courses at ASL and who rank in the top 25% of their class for the courses taken during that semester, based on cumulative grade average. Students who have received permission from the Dean to enroll as a reduced load or part time

student will be ranked with students who are at a similar stage of their progress towards a J.D. and have no more than eleven more or eleven less numerically graded credit hours than the part time student, and for purposes of degree honors will be ranked against the class they graduate with rather than the class they started with. As a result, December grads will be ranked with the students from the previous May. No Dean's List will be published for summer intersessions.

Continuously enrolled students of ASL who have completed at least thirty (30) credit hours of numerically-graded courses at ASL shall receive a class rank after the distribution of grades each semester. Such rank shall be based on grades in all numerically graded courses, including the Externship course, through the most recent completed semester. Transfer students, as well as students graduating in the Fall semester shall receive analogous class rankings once the requisite thirty (30) credit hours of numerically graded courses have been completed. Such analogous rankings will be calculated as if the student was continuously enrolled at ASL from the beginning of the first year of study, but shall not displace any continuously enrolled student. Analogous class rankings shall be denoted by an "(A)" on the student's transcript. Class rank will not be determined after summer intersessions.

VIII. Student Retention

A. Student Is on Notice of Own Grades and Grade Average

Every student shall be deemed to be on notice of the student's own grades and grade average as well as these rules for student retention. Any student who by virtue of these rules has been dismissed from the School, but who nevertheless attempts to continue enrollment and attendance in classes is responsible for tuition and fees charges incurred by the student's fraudulent attendance at the School.

B. Good Standing, Academic Dismissal, and Probation Status

1. Good Standing Defined

A student is considered to be in "Good Standing" at the School if (a) the student has not been dismissed for academic or non-academic reasons; (b) the student is not currently on academic probation, (c) the student does not have a currently-effective sanction of 'not in good standing' for violating the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity policy; (d) the student currently is in compliance with the Community Service Requirement, and (e) the student has a cumulative grade average of 2.3000 or higher.

2. Mandatory Intensive Academic Success

Students who are otherwise in good academic standing but whose academic performance, in the Chief Academic Officer's discretion, places them in danger of falling out of good standing, may be required to complete additional academic success programming. The additional programming, when directed by the Chief Academic Officer, shall be mandatory and substantial completion a pre-requisite to enrollment in further semesters at the School.

3. Academic Dismissal

A student shall be academically dismissed from the school and shall not be permitted to maintain enrollment or request probation status if his or her cumulative grade average falls below 2.0000 (i.e., GPA is 1.9999 or lower). There is no waiver of this standard.

4. Probation Status

- A. A student may be placed on probation status in accordance with this paragraph, if his or her cumulative grade average falls between 2.0000 and 2.2999 (inclusive).
- B. A student whose cumulative grade average at the end of Fall or Spring Semester falls between 2.0000 and 2.2999 (inclusive) will receive notice that he or she is being placed on probation status through the completion of the next semester (Spring or Fall)¹ and must fulfill certain terms and conditions of such status in order to maintain enrollment. One such term and condition is the requirement for the student to develop a proposed “Academic Improvement Plan” and submit the plan to the Chief Academic Officer within five business days of receipt of notice of probation status. Failure to do so will result in academic dismissal.
- C. The Academic Standards Committee (including the Chief Academic Officer) shall review the student’s Academic Improvement Plan within five business days of the student’s submission of the Plan to the Chief Academic Officer. The Committee may accept the student’s proposed Plan or revise such Plan and place additional terms and conditions upon the probation status. The Committee shall communicate its decision to the student, who shall be required to sign the Plan, agreeing to its terms and conditions. The student shall return it to the Chief Academic Officer within two business days of receipt of the Plan. Failure to do so will result in academic dismissal.
- D. The Academic Improvement Plan is a plan for improving the student’s academic performance and should be individually tailored for each student. Typical provisions that may be included in a Plan for the probationary semester are: reduced credit hour load, prohibition on outside employment during, limitations on extracurricular activities, repeating a course, and enrollment/participation in other academic support programs or activities.
- E. A student whose cumulative grade average remains below 2.3000 after any Spring or Fall semester in which he or she was on academic probation shall be academically dismissed from the School. Probation status may not be extended beyond the initial probationary semester. A student whose cumulative grade average improves to 2.3000 or higher after the probationary semester shall be returned to “good standing,” assuming the student meets the other requirements of Section VIII (B) (1) (“Good Standing Defined”). There is no waiver of this standard.

C. Re-starts

1. Re-start Available in Extraordinary Circumstances

The Academic Standards Committee, in its sole discretion, may allow a student who has been dismissed for academic deficiency to re-enroll and re-start ASL program if the Committee finds the student (a) faced extraordinary circumstances which unquestionably, greatly interfered with his or her ability to perform at the level he or she would perform in law school absent those extraordinary circumstances and (b) the extraordinary circumstances no longer exist. A decision by the Committee to allow a student to re-start must be by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Committee.

Students who have been academically dismissed from ASL, and are seeking readmission must apply using the regular application process for new students. Students who were previously dismissed from another law school, and are deemed by the Admissions Committee to be acceptable for admission, shall be referred to the Academic Standards Committee for final admission decision. The Academic Standards Committee may place any conditions it deems appropriate on the admission of such students.

All students applying to ASL following academic dismissal from ASL or another institution must apply through LSAC using the standard application but should include with their application an addendum addressing the

¹ If a student is enrollment for a Summer or January Intersession term after having been placed on probation status at the end of the immediately preceding Fall or Spring semester, the probation terms shall be imposed for that Summer or January term and shall continue through the completion of the next Fall or Spring semester.

readmission standards set forth above.

2. Effect of Past Performance

A student who is permitted to re-start will not receive credit for any courses taken before the re-start regardless of the grade received in the course. The prior performance will remain on the transcript. However, the transcript will clearly state that the student has re-started, and the prior grades will not affect the grade average.

3. Appeals

A decision by the Academic Standards Committee declining a student's request for re-start may be appealed by the student in writing to the Faculty as provided in Part XI of these Standards.

IX. Leaves of Absence, Visits, Readmissions, and Transfers

A. Leaves of Absence

The Chief Academic Officer may grant a leave of absence to a student who requests the leave. The term of the leave shall be clearly stated at the time the leave is granted. Any extension of the leave requires the permission of the Chief Academic Officer. A student who has not completed the first calendar year of the program and obtains a leave of absence may need to restart the first year from the beginning. Credit for prior completion of courses is granted at the sole discretion of the Chief Academic Officer. The decision of the Chief Academic Officer is final and is not subject to further review or appeal under these Academic Standards. Requests for a leave of absence while an allegation of violation of the Code of Student Conduct or Code of Academic Integrity is pending shall be handled in accordance with the applicable Code.

B. Visits to another Law School

The School will not accept more than six credit hours from visits to other law schools, including summer study. Acceptance of credit earned while visiting another law school is subject to the provisions of these Standards which control acceptance of transfer credit, see Section X (E). Notwithstanding the provisions of that section, no visiting student transfer credit will be granted for credit earned at non-ABA accredited law schools. In order to receive credit for any courses taken as a visiting student, official transcripts from the host school must be received by Registrar's office no later than January 31 for courses taken during the previous fall; June 30 for courses taken during the previous spring; September 30 for courses taken during the previous summer; or August 27 for courses intended to qualify a student for an August 31 graduation date.

C. Credit for courses taken outside the law school

After completing at least 30 credits either at ASL or as approved transfer credit, students may earn a maximum of 12 credit hours towards the J.D. degree from pre-approved graduate-level courses offered at other colleges or universities. Students are only permitted to apply credit towards the J.D. degree from courses pre-approved by the faculty and in which the student earns a grade of C or better. Students who successfully complete a course under this provision will receive a grade of Credit (CR) on their ASL transcript for the course.

Law students will receive 1 credit hour for each 750 minutes of scheduled class time in a semester regardless of the number of credit hours a course at another college or university is described as consisting of. A law student, therefore, may in some cases earn only 2 credits towards the J.D. for a course offered by another college or university for 3 credits.

For a list of courses currently pre-approved, please see the registrar. Proposals for additional courses to be approved under this provision may only be made in the semester prior to the semester in which the proposed course is offered and may be presented to the faculty only after consultation with and initial approval of the Chief Academic Officer.

D. Readmissions

A student who has left the School in good standing and other than to take a leave of absence may apply for readmission under this Section VIII (C) of these Standards. Applicants should submit an application, a short essay on their reasons for applying for readmission, and, if they have attended another law school subsequent to their departure, a letter of good standing from the dean of such school and an official transcript.

E. Transfers

A student who has attended another law school may be eligible for admission as a transfer student if the student has attended an ABA approved law school, the student is in good standing and is eligible to continue the study of law at that law school as demonstrated by a suitable letter from the dean of that school, and the student's performance at the law school of origin was of acceptably high quality, as documented by an official transcript. The transfer applicant must apply through LSAC, indicating on their application their desire to be considered as a transfer.

F. Transfer of Credits

The School will normally not accept more than 30 hours of transfer credits from other law schools. Grades of less than a C (or the equivalent) will not be eligible for transfer, and transfer credits will be treated on a pass-fail basis, notated on the academic transcript with the grade Credit Received (CR), for the purpose of computed grade point averages. Students receiving transfer credits must still meet the graduation requirements set forth in Part X of these standards, except that (a) transfer credits from courses substantially identical to the course required in Section X (A)(1) of these standards may be used to meet the course requirements of that section, and (b) up to 15 hours of transfer credits may substitute for the course requirements of that section even if not substantially identical, provided, however, that non-substantially identical substitutions may not be made for:

- (1) Contracts I and II, Intentional Torts, Negligence, Property I and II, Legal Process I and II, Criminal Law, and Civil Procedure ;
- (2) Professional Responsibility; and
- (3) the required Practicum courses.

Transfer credit for a course that requires a rigorous writing as defined by Section III(D) of these standards may be substituted for the Seminar Writing Requirements of Sections III(D) and X(A)(1) of these standards. Decisions regarding transfers, readmissions, and transfer of credits shall be in the sole discretion of the Chief Academic Officer or a faculty member (or members) appointed by the Dean. The School does not charge any fees associated with the acceptance or evaluation of transfer credit.

G. Sanctions

Failure to comply with the provisions on leaves of absence or with conditions on a leave granted shall be grounds for the Chief Academic Officer to impose any sanction he or she deems appropriate, including but not limited to refusal to accept transferred credits (regardless of the grade received), probation (with whatever conditions the Chief Academic Officer deems appropriate attached thereto), or dismissal.

X. Graduation

A. Requirements

1. Required Courses

Except as otherwise provided in these standards or by vote of the faculty, a candidate for graduation must have received credit in all courses specified in Section III(A)(1) of these academic standards and be in full compliance with the Community Service Requirement.

2. Total Hours

For classes entering in 2019-2020 academic year and after, a candidate for graduation must have received ninety-two semester credit hours. No more than a total of four of the required ninety-two hours may be in the form of Law Journal, Moot Court, Independent Study, or Assistantship credit.

3. Grade Average Requirements

A candidate for graduation must have a cumulative grade average for all courses that is 2.3000 or higher. There is no waiver of this standard.

4. Time for Completion of Graduation Requirements

All coursework credited towards completion of the J.D. degree must be completed no sooner than 24 months and no longer than 84 months after a student has commenced law study at ASL or a law school from which the School has accepted transfer credit.

B. Honors

1. Summa Cum Laude

Any student who graduates in the top five percent of the graduating class, based on cumulative grade average, shall be designated as graduating summa cum laude.

2. Magna Cum Laude

Any student who graduates in the top ten percent of the graduating class, based on cumulative grade average, shall be designated as graduating magna cum laude.

3. Cum Laude

Any student who graduates in the top twenty-five percent of the graduating class, based on cumulative grade average, shall be designated as graduating cum laude.

XI. Waivers and Appeals

A. Waivers of Academic Standards or Appeals of Decisions Applying the Academic Standards

In limited circumstances, these Academic Standards permit students to petition the Faculty for waiver of an Academic Standard. In very limited circumstances, students may also appeal to the Faculty a decision of the Chief Academic Officer, the Dean, or the Academic Standards Committee. The Faculty may grant or deny a written petition to the Faculty only in cases in which a Standard does not preclude a waiver petition or a decision by the Chief Academic Officer, the Dean, or the Academic Standards Committee is not final, binding,

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and subject to no further appeal under these standards. The Faculty may grant or deny a properly filed petition, with or without conditions.

B. Faculty Procedure for Waivers and Appeals

Petitions for waivers or appeals to the Faculty permitted under these Academic Standards shall proceed in the following manner:

- (1) The student shall submit to the Dean a petition to the Faculty on a single typed (or word-processed) page in which the student identifies the issues presented by the waiver petition or appeal. If the petition is not permitted under these Academic Standards, the Dean shall notify the student within 10 days following receipt of the petition, in which case the petition and notification need not be provided to the Faculty.
- (2) The Dean may, at his or her option, prepare a single page response to the student petition.
- (3) Copies of the petition and the response shall then be provided to every Faculty member.
- (4) If within ten days of the date the petition is distributed to the Faculty, one-third of the Faculty requests that the Dean place the petition on the agenda of the next Faculty meeting, the Faculty will hear the waiver petition or appeal on the merits. If fewer than one third of the Faculty requests that the petition be heard, the request is denied and the Dean shall so inform the student.
- (5) The Faculty may, but need not, grant the student an opportunity to appear before it, present supplementary documents or written arguments, appear through counsel, call or cross-examine witnesses, or take a transcription of an appearance.

C. Referral of Jurisdiction to the Faculty

1. In the Dean's sole discretion, the Dean may refer to the Faculty for its consideration any properly filed petition which a student originally presents to the Dean.
2. By a majority vote of the members of the Academic Standards Committee, the committee may refer to the Faculty for its consideration any properly filed petition which a student originally presents to the Academic Standards Committee.