

Juris Doctor (JD) Program

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Degree Requirements

Juris Doctor (JD)

Reminder: In addition to diploma requirements, there are character, fitness, and other qualifications for admission to the bar. Prior to matriculation, applicants are encouraged to determine what those requirements are in the state(s) in which they intend to practice.

Graduation Requirements

Students must successfully complete the following:

- First-year courses
- One ethics course
- An upper-level research and writing requirement
- 6 units of experiential credits in designated courses
- Students starting the JD program in Fall 2023 or later must complete designated coursework that provides at least five class hours of instruction related to bias, cross-cultural competency, and racism (BCCCR courses). Students can satisfy this requirement by completing up to three BCCCR courses.
- Six semesters of full-time residency
- Earn at least 86 credit units (67 in Law Classroom Units [LCUs])*
- Earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00**

* The American Bar Association (ABA) requires that 67 credit units be earned in "regularly scheduled class sessions at the law school" or LCUs, per ABA Standard 304(b); LCU courses can also be identified via an online course listings search on the LCU attribute.

**Based on all courses taken, whether or not credit is earned.

Courses That Count Toward the Required 67 LCUs

- Coursework at the law school for which the student receives credit toward the JD degree by the law school **and** that is *not* listed below in the list of "Courses that do *not* count toward the 67 LCUs" requirement. (*The way that a course is graded is not the determinant of whether a course counts or not.*)

- Coursework for which a student receives credit toward the JD degree that is approved work done at another accredited U.S. law school and work done in a foreign study program (approved by the Registrar and the Graduate and International Programs Office)
- Seminars or upper-level coursework requiring a substantial paper or project that is *not supervised research*
- Clinics (*includes all courses with the word "Clinic" in the official course title*)

Courses That Do *Not* Count Toward the Required 67 LCUs

- Coursework completed in another department, school, or college of Washington University (*including the 9 units transferred from dual degree programs*)
- Student activities such as law reviews/publications, moot court, trial competition, teaching assistantships, competition board, and mediation/negotiation teams
- Externships, field placements, and supervised practicum (*includes all courses with the words "Externship," "Field Placement," or "Supervised Practicum" in the official course title*)
- Supervised research

Note: If a student graduates with a total of exactly 86 units, the maximum number of units that can be taken from the non-LCU credits is 19.

First-Year Courses

First-year students take three doctrinal courses per semester, plus Legal Practice and Legal Research Methodologies. Each semester, first-year students will have one doctrinal course in a small section of approximately 45 students. Legal Practice and Legal Research Methodologies are also taught in small groups and in workshop-style classes by instructors who provide individualized feedback on each student's research and writing projects. The Negotiation course runs over intersession (i.e., the week before the spring semester starts).

- Civil Procedure (4 credits)
- Constitutional Law I (4 credits)
- Contracts (4 credits)
- Criminal Law (4 credits)
- Property (4 credits)
- Torts (4 credits)
- Legal Practice I: Objective Analysis and Reasoning (2 credits)*
- Legal Practice II: Advocacy (2 credits)*
- Legal Research Methodologies I and II (1 credit for year; posted to spring semester)*
- Introduction to Negotiation & Dispute Resolution (1 credit)

Legal Practice and Legal Research*

The law school divides research and writing into two separate programs. The required writing component is called **Legal Practice**, and the required research part is called **Legal Research Methodologies**. Students take both courses each semester during their first year of law school. Although these courses are separate, they are coordinated so that writing projects utilize legal research skills. Upper-level law students can also elect to take separate advanced research and writing courses. Although such upper-level courses are purely elective, they are highly encouraged as a way to hone the legal research and writing skills needed for the successful practice of law.

First-Year Legal Practice and Research Courses

Legal Practice I and II is a two-semester, 4-credit graded course taught in the fall and spring, respectively, by full-time professors of practice, who often serve as informal course advisors.

- Students meet twice a week in small groups to discuss writing projects with their professors. This allows students to build on their previous week's work and to further develop their analytical skills.
- Students receive significant individual written feedback on their major writing projects, which can include office memoranda, client letters, settlement letters and agreements.
- Trial court and appellate briefs are usually used in oral argument during the advocacy section, whereas oral presentations on a writing project typically occur each semester. Legal Research Methodologies I and II is a required 1-credit, two-semester course that is also graded. Classes are taught by lecturers in law who are attorneys as well as law librarians.
- Students are introduced to primary sources of law (e.g., cases, statutes, regulations) as well as secondary sources (e.g., form books, law periodicals, treatises).
- Students learn how to use finding aids such as digests and online indexes.
- Students are instructed on how to devise an efficient research plan.
- Emphasis is placed on the use of materials in electronic formats.

Upper-Level Legal Practice and Research Courses

Seminars are offered during the fall and spring semesters. Upper-level students are required to take at least one seminar, but many take more than one before graduating. Most seminars are 3-credit courses offered by faculty in their areas of specialty that also give students the opportunity to delve deeply into advanced research and writing in a small-class-size setting.

Advanced Legal Research is a graded 2-credit course that is typically offered in the spring. This course provides intensive hands-on training in statutory interpretation as well as in the use of both free online legal sources and subscription databases that contain foreign and international law information. Students are also instructed in the use of hard-copy legal resources as both primary and secondary materials.

Upper-Level Courses

Upper-level students fulfill the remaining 56 credit units by tailoring their studies to fit their individual interests. Students may take a variety of courses to meet the upper-class writing requirement, ethics requirement, and applied lawyering/professional skills course requirements. Faculty members and administrators provide guidance regarding course selection.

For a list of current course offerings, please visit links from the Courses section of this *Bulletin*. For courses that satisfy the experiential requirement or to find ethics courses, search our online course listings under Law.