

INTRODUCTION

Dear Students,

This on-line Handbook is intended to assist you in navigating the policies and procedures at the UH Law Center and the University of Houston. It is intended to bring together rules, policies and procedures from various sources that are important to law students. All students are responsible for being familiar with the contents; therefore, students are strongly encouraged to review all policies carefully.

Although every effort has been made to make this Handbook accurate and complete, the information provided is subject to change or correction. All updates will be announced in Daily LEX and the Handbook will be updated with the changes duly noted.

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- * Students must receive a passing grade.
- ** See details in section L regarding this requirement.
- ***See section H.

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Note: *All required courses should be completed in residence at the Law Center.*

Students should complete all first year courses before taking any upper division courses. Exceptions to this rule, which are rare, must be requested by petition to the Office of Student Services.

K. SENIOR WRITING REQUIREMENT

(Applies to students entering before fall 2013) The upper class writing requirement is a prerequisite to graduation from the Law Center. The writing requirement can be satisfied by:

The completion of a paper of publishable quality and suitable length by members of the Houston Law Review, Houston Journal of International Law, the Houston Business and Tax Law Journal, the Houston Journal of Health Law & Policy, or Journal of Consumer and Commercial Law with the determination of publishability to be made by the faculty advisor. The length of any paper submitted to meet the senior writing requirement must be at least 35 pages including footnotes. The editor of the law review or journals will submit the names of the students who are qualified to receive course credit for their work on the law review or journal and a separate list for those students who are also seeking course credit for their senior writing requirement. At least one of the faculty advisor(s) to the law review or journal must review all papers that are submitted to meet this requirement, and no paper can satisfy it unless such an advisor states that it is of suitable length and quality. The lists will be maintained in Student Services. Each journal will be responsible for keeping the papers submitted to satisfy the writing requirement on file for at least one (1) year.

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The successful completion of a seminar paper meeting the following requirements:

The seminar must earn either two or three credit hours.

The papers, regardless of credit hours, must be a minimum of 35 pages in length including footnotes. Professors have the discretion to require longer papers than the minimum.

(Revised 5/2008)

Two or more drafts of the paper must be completed.

The paper must be of sufficient quality that it can properly receive a grade no lower than a "C."

The paper must be completed during the semester in which the student enrolled in the course. The sponsoring faculty member must submit the grade by the deadline for all other grades in that semester. Students should ensure that their papers are completed and submitted by the

professor's required deadline.

The paper must be original and must demonstrate research, analytical, and writing skills.

The paper may not previously have been submitted to any other instructor in connection with any other course at the Law Center or elsewhere, nor may research have been done in whole or in substantial part in connection with a student's outside employment.

Planning Completion of the Senior Writing Requirement:

While the senior writing requirement may be completed in the third year, second year students are allowed to take seminars. Seminars are rarely offered during the summer. Students are presumed to have had ample opportunity to select a seminar appropriate to their areas of interest. Students may take more than one seminar during their law school careers.

Students should not expect to be able to satisfy the senior writing requirement either through an independent study paper or through registration in a seminar or independent study at another law school. Students who apply to complete the balance of their degree requirements at another institution as visiting students and who have not satisfied the senior writing requirement may not be permitted to complete their work elsewhere. Exceptions will be made only where it can be demonstrated that the reason for completing degree requirements elsewhere is unavoidable and the student was not aware in time to have a completed seminar.

Upper Level Writing Requirement – (*Applies to students entering fall 2013 and after*) – To graduate, students must satisfy the Upper Level Writing Requirement.

- a. The purpose of this requirement is to provide significant faculty instruction in writing to students who have completed the first year of law school and to allow for a diverse writing experience.
- b. Classes that satisfy this requirement will give substantial focus to writing instruction. Classes may be worth 2 or 3 credit hours.
- c. Either of the following classes satisfy this requirement:
 - 1) Writing Seminars (WRS). Students in a Writing Seminar must complete a paper that is original and demonstrates the student's research and writing skills. Regardless of credit hours, the final version of the paper must be at least 10,000 words, including footnotes. Instructors may require longer papers.
 - 2) Writing Courses (WRC). Students in a Writing Course must complete several kinds of practical writing assignments. These may be expository exercises (*e.g.*, drafting client letters, research memoranda, court documents, and short articles similar to those that appear in bar journals) or transactional or litigation drafting assignments (*e.g.*, contracts and other business agreements, wills or other estate planning instruments, pleadings,

and discovery documents). Assignments must be no more than 2,500 words each, when feasible. Instructors have discretion over the kind and number of assignments students complete; however, students must complete at least 5,000 words of writing over the course of the semester.

- d. For all classes that satisfy this requirement, at least one draft of every assignment must be completed, though prior drafts need not be as long as, and may be in a different form than, the final version students submit. Faculty will provide detailed feedback to students on prior drafts. In addition to completing at least one draft, students will turn in a final version of every assignment.
- e. Classes that satisfy this requirement can be taken in the second year but preference in class selection is given to third year students.
- f. All writing assignments must be completed during the semester in which the student is enrolled in the class.
- g. Students may not submit work they previously completed in any prior class.
- h. Students must receive a grade no lower than a “C” in the course.
- i. Students who apply to complete the balance of their degree requirements at another institution as visiting students and who have not satisfied this requirement might not be permitted to complete their work elsewhere. The decision rests with the dean’s office.

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L. OTHER TYPES OF RESEARCH AND WRITING EXPERIENCES

(Research and Writing Opportunities that Do Not Meet the Senior Writing Requirement)

Special Research and Writing (graded)

Students can gain valuable research and writing experience by writing an independent research paper under the direct supervision of a faculty member. Research projects will be graded on the ordinary grading scale from A to F.

The first step to enrolling in Special Research and Writing is to identify a professor to serve as the project supervisor. Students should ask professors who teach subjects related to their area of interest. It is wise to have some ideas about possible paper topics before approaching a faculty member.

Note: *Students must receive special permission from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to have anyone other than a tenured or tenure-track professor supervise this course.*

Once the student has identified the professor and secured her permission, she should register for the Special Research and Writing course by submitting a signed petition form to the Office of Student Services.

Students are able to earn up to four credit hours of Special Research and Writing. A one credit hour paper should be 15 pages long, plus footnotes; a two credit hour paper should be 25 pages long, plus footnotes; a three credit hour paper should be 40 pages long, plus footnotes; and a four credit hour paper should be 55 pages long, plus of footnotes. The supervising professor may establish more demanding standards.

The paper must be completed during the semester in which the student registers to receive the credits. Students whose grades are not submitted within this time frame may be administratively withdrawn from the course. Students will not be given a tuition reimbursement for the course in which the "W" was received. Credit for Special Research and Writing is not intended for open-ended projects.

Directed Research Assistance (serving as a faculty research assistant or Academic Enrichment Assistant Tutor for pass/fail credit)

Professors engage in a number of exciting and challenging research projects in addition to their teaching obligations. Law Center policies permit students to earn academic credit for serving as a research assistant for a law professor. Students may also receive pass/fail academic credit for working as a tutor in the Academic Enrichment Program. One cannot earn both academic credit and pay for performing the same research or doing the same work.

The number of credit hours associated with this research work is related to the number of hours worked. Sixty hours of research for a faculty member will equal one hour of academic credit. Students are able to earn up to four credit hours of Special Research and Writing.

There are a few important factors to remember about Directed Research and the Academic Enrichment Program credit:

The credit students earn will be graded pass/fail. In addition, the professor may withdraw a student from this credit for unsatisfactory performance.

Directed Research credit can never satisfy the senior writing requirement.

Faculty members must closely supervise the research and will award credit only if, in the good faith opinion of the faculty member, the work was academically credit-worthy. No faculty member shall be permitted to supervise more than four hours of research assistance for credit in any semester.

Students interested in participating in Directed Research generally find suitable experiences in one of two ways. First, a student can approach faculty who are teaching or writing in her areas of interest and indicate her willingness to serve as a researcher for credit. Second, a student can look for notices posted by faculty members who are seeking researchers for credit. In either case, it is wise to approach the professor with an updated resume and a letter indicating the basis of interest in the professor's research project. Once the student has identified the professor and secured his permission, she must register for the Directed Research credit by submitting a signed petition form to the Office of Student Services.

Note: *Students must receive special permission from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to have anyone other than a tenured or tenure-track professor supervise this course.*

Students interested in participating as tutors in the Academic Enrichment Program should contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Duplicate Credit Prohibition

Students may not receive credit for one research and writing project by submitting it for credit more than once. This means that the same paper cannot be used for two seminars, for law review and for a seminar, for Special Research and Writing and a seminar, etc.

M. DEAN'S LIST

To be eligible for the University of Houston Law Center Dean's List, a student must have completed at least nine credit hours of graded course work during the fall or spring semester and must have earned a grade point average of 3.33 (B+) or better. Dean's List honors will be calculated each fall and spring semester after all grades are finalized. Dean's List is based on semester GPA's only.

N. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Effective for classes entering August 2010 and after - Good Standing and Academic Suspension:

To be eligible to continue at UHLC in good standing, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.33 or above at the completion of each semester or summer session. A student on probation will be permitted to continue without an appeal according to the guidelines below:

A student whose cumulative GPA is at least 2.167 after 30 hours; or

A student whose cumulative GPA is at least 2.25 after 45 hours.

If a student's cumulative GPA does not fall within the guidelines above s/he will be subject to academic dismissal. If s/he wishes to continue at UHLC, s/he must appeal to the Executive Committee, as provided below.

While on academic probation students may not do the following:

1. Hold a leadership role within student organizations (or significant role, i.e. President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer);
2. Participate in Externships or Clinics;
3. Participate in Moot Court or Mock Trial teams;
4. Engage in employment without permission;
5. Take graduate courses outside of the UHLC;
6. Take courses Pass/Fail;
7. Receive permission to visit other Universities;
8. Register for more than 13 credit hours without permission; or
9. Serve as an Academic Enrichment Program tutor.