



LL.M. PROGRAM (MASTER OF LAWS)

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF STUDENT HANDBOOK

All law students are charged with knowledge of the contents of this handbook, the *University of Houston Student Handbook*, and all official communications posted on the official Law Center bulletin boards, via e-mail, Daily Lex, and in the semester class schedules. Students are responsible for complying with all requirements, rules and regulations set out in the respective documents.

Every effort is made to keep this Handbook accurate and complete. Therefore, the information provided herein is subject to change or correction at any time. Other rules, policies, or procedures may be added as necessary.

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I. **ACADEMIC MATTERS**

A. Conduct Requirements

Law students are bound by the University of Houston (UH) Student Life policies found in the *University of Houston Student Handbook*. These policies address disruption of university operations, including classroom conduct and the use of university computers or networks. The sanctions can be severe – including suspension. Students are strongly encouraged to carefully review these policies. The University of Houston Law Center LL.M. Program (Master of Laws) Student Handbook is available online at <http://www.law.uh.edu/llm>.

B. Character and Fitness Issues

All UH Law Center students are under a continued obligation to notify UH Law Center of any criminal or disciplinary matters that occur before and after admission, and during their enrollment. This includes any citations or charges other than Class C misdemeanor traffic violations.

C. Attendance Requirements

The Law Center has a minimum 80% attendance policy for students. Any student who attends fewer than the minimum percentage of classes may be dropped automatically from the class. Faculty members are free to impose stricter attendance standards. Faculty members may consider those who come in late or leave early as absent or may decline to let a late student attend that day.

Faculty members use different methods to account for attendance. These include before-class roll calls, use of a seating chart, or requiring students to make an honor system certification at the end of the course. Many faculty members provide their attendance policy in writing at the beginning of the semester. It is the student's obligation to ensure that s/he has been counted present.

Falsifying class attendance is a violation of the Honor Code. See section 3.06.

D. Semester Course Load Requirements

Minimum Load: LL.M. students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours each fall and spring semester. Permission to register for an underload (less than three credit hours) requires the approval of the student's course advisor and submission of a General Petition form to the LL.M. Admissions office.

A standard load for a full-time student during a regular (fall or spring) semester is 9 to 16 hours. Students have the option of attending during the summer and may take up to a maximum of 7

hours in a six-week session or 12 hours over the entire summer.

The standard load for a part-time student during a regular semester is 3-8 hours.

For financial aid loan deferment and continued eligibility, students must be enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours per semester. Students receiving financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Advisor to verify that the number of credit hours, especially an underload, does not alter their financial aid package.

Students on a visa are responsible for ensuring that the number of credit hours taken each semester is consistent with their visa restrictions or requirements. Refer to the International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSSO) website; <http://www.uh.edu/oisss/> for additional information.

E. Continuous Enrollment – Program Completion

LL.M. candidates must maintain enrollment each fall and spring semester of at least 3 credit hours. There is no continuous enrollment requirement for the summer semester(s).

Students registering for less than 3 credit hours for the fall or spring semester OR requesting a leave of absence for the fall or spring semester must complete a General Petition form. General Petitions are available online at <http://www.uh.edu/oisss/>. Petitions must be approved by both the Executive Director of Global and Graduate Programs and the Director of LL.M. Admissions.

Students who are not registered for courses or are on an approved leave of absence will not have access to their UH email account.

All course requirements must be fulfilled within a three-year period beginning from the student's initial matriculation. Any extension of this period must be approved in writing by the Director of LL.M. Admissions. Requests for extensions or waivers will only be granted after the showing of extenuating circumstances. Without a waiver, any student who exceeds the stated time is automatically withdrawn from the program and must reapply for admission if he or she wishes to be considered for a resumption of studies. Depending upon the circumstances, credit may be forfeited, or re-admission made impossible by University of Houston policies to which the UH Law Center must adhere.

F. Degree Requirements

Energy, Environment and Natural Resources

- Complete a minimum of 24 credit hours to include 15 credits of energy, environment, or natural resource courses.
- Maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester.
- Students who earned their law degree outside of the United States are required to complete Introduction to American Law (5319)* and Legal Writing (5397)* their first semester. Fall admission, only.
- Students have the option of writing a minimum length 50-page thesis.

Health Law

- Complete a minimum of 24 credits to include 18 credits of health law courses.
- Maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester.
- Health law students are required to take Advanced Health Law (5108)*
- Students who earned their law degree outside of the United States are required to complete Introduction to American Law (5319)* and Legal Writing (5397)* their first semester. Fall admission, only.
- Students have the option of writing a minimum length 50-page thesis.

Intellectual Property & Information Law

- Complete a minimum of 24 credit hours to include 15 credits of intellectual property or information law courses.
- Maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester.
- Students who earned their law degree outside of the United States are required to complete Introduction to American Law (5319)* and Legal Writing (5397)* their first semester. Fall admission, only.
- Students have the option of writing a minimum length 50-page thesis.

International Law

- Complete a minimum of 24 credits to include 15 credits of international law courses.
- Maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester.
- Students who earned their law degree outside of the United States are required to complete introduction to American Law (5319)* and Legal Writing (5397)* their first semester. Fall admission, only.
- Students have the option of writing a minimum length 50-page thesis.

Tax Law

- Complete a minimum of 24 credits to include 18 credits of tax law courses.
- Maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester.
- Federal Income Tax (5459) is a prerequisite and must be completed before enrollment in advanced courses. The course may be taken during the first semester as an LL.M. candidate, but the course cannot be credited toward the 24- credit hour degree requirement or the required 18 credits of tax-specific coursework. (Internationally educated students can take this course for both degree and specialty credit.)
- Students who earned their law degree outside of the United States are required to complete introduction to American Law (5319)* and Legal Writing (5397)* their first semester. Fall admission, only.
- Tax law LL.M. students are required to take Tax Research (5151)* and Tax Ethics (5288)*.
- Students have the option of writing a minimum length 50-page thesis.

LL.M. in U.S. Law

- Complete a minimum of 24 credit hours including two required courses: Introduction to American Law (5319)* and Legal Writing (5397)*. The two required courses must be taken during the student's first semester.

- Maintain a 2.0 grade point average every semester.
- Fall admission, only.

*These courses are only offered in the fall semester and should be taken the first semester of enrollment.

G. *Dual Degree*

LL.M. students who are concurrently admitted to two concentration programs are required to meet the specialty curricular requirements of each program, complete 36 credit hours and maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester. Students are entitled to a maximum of 6 hours of credit that will count toward each specialty. The course(s) must be recognized as a specialty course within both degree plans that the student has been admitted to and may be awarded retroactively. Dual degree candidates must fulfill the concentration credit hour requirement and writing requirement, if applicable, of each program to which they are admitted. Requirements must be met within four years of initial admission to the LL.M. program.

H. *Hours and GPA Requirements*

The grade point average for the degree will be calculated based on the first 24 credit hours (36 credit hours for students completing a dual degree). Additional hours will be counted only if earned during the semester in which the 24th (36th) credit hour is earned.

Students may take graduate courses toward the LL.M. degree in other departments (6 credit hour maximum). The courses must be approved prior to registration by the student's course advisor, the sponsoring instructor, and the Director of LL.M. Admissions. A grade of "C" or better is required to receive credit. The grades earned in these other graduate school courses will not be calculated into the student's Law Center grade point average.

All grades of "I" (Incomplete) must be completed no later than two weeks after the student's last final exam unless an extension has been approved by the Student Affairs Office. An incomplete that is not made up within one calendar year is automatically converted into an "F" grade.

I. *Curriculum*

1. Course Advisor

Upon enrolling in the LL.M. Program, each student is assigned a course advisor. *All courses must be approved by the student's course advisor prior to registration each semester* and for the first fall semester only, using the *LL.M. Course Approval Form* available from the LL.M. Admissions office. Students are responsible for knowledge of current program requirements.

2. Coursework

In most courses, LL.M. students will be enrolled with J.D. students. In some advanced subjects,

there may be a preponderance of LL.M. students, and in selected courses, LL.M. students may be given additional assignments commensurate with their advanced standing.

LL.M. students may not receive credit in the LL.M. program for coursework that is substantially the same as that taken in the student's J.D. program. If there is doubt, the student should request written approval from their course advisor.

LL.M. students can earn an aggregate total of four (4) credits in Special Research and Writing (SRW) and a UH Law Center clinic, with no more than three (3) credits earned in SRW courses. When participation in a UH Law Center clinic requires six (6) credit hours, LL.M. students can only apply an aggregate total of four (4) credits towards their LL.M. degree program.

LL.M. students cannot use externship course credit as course credit towards their degree program.

3. First Year Courses for internationally educated LL.M. students

Students who earned their law degree outside of the United States can register for Law Center courses designated as "first year." Certain first year courses designated as "FLLM Only" are specifically set aside for foreign lawyer enrollment. Any first-year courses that are not designated "FLLM Only" require special approval via the LL.M. Admissions Office. First year courses are Constitutional Law (5488), Contracts (5409), Criminal Law (5303), Civil Procedure (5406), and Torts (5418). Courses taken, or credits earned as an LL.M. student cannot be transferred to the J.D. program at the University of Houston Law Center.

4. Special Research and Writing

Special Research and Writing (SRW) permits LL.M. students to earn a maximum of three (3) credits for writing an independent research paper under the supervision of a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Adjunct professors may not supervise Special Research & Writing without special permission from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Enrollment in Special Research and Writing is through submission of a petition with the approval of both the student's course advisor and the supervising professor.

To register, submit the completed Special Research & Writing Petition to the LL.M. Admissions office. The form is available in the LL.M. Admissions office or online at <https://www.law.uh.edu/llm/current/SRW.pdf?>

Students can earn one, two, or three credits:

- To earn one hour of credit, the paper must be at least 15 pages in length (typewritten, double-spaced, letter size paper), exclusive of footnotes.
- To earn two hours of credit, the paper must be at least 25 pages in length (typewritten, double-spaced, letter size paper), exclusive of footnotes.

- To earn three hours of credit, the paper must be at least 40 pages in length (typewritten, double-spaced, letter size paper), exclusive of footnotes.

Two or more drafts of the paper must be completed. The paper must be of sufficient quality to receive a **grade no lower than a C**. The paper must be the student's original work and must demonstrate research, analytical, and writing skills. Finally, the paper may not previously have been submitted to any other instructor, for publication or in connection with any other course at the Law Center or elsewhere or have been done in whole or in substantial part in connection with a student's outside employment.

Approval is given with the understanding that the paper will be turned in to the supervising faculty member in time for the grade to be submitted with all other grades for that semester. Students whose grades are not submitted to that schedule may be administratively withdrawn from the course. They will not be given an "I" (incomplete) and allowed to have the grade changed later. To receive credit for the course, the student must re-enroll in Special Research and Writing and pay additional tuition for the new enrollment. Students will not be given tuition reimbursement for the course in which the "W" was received.

Credit for Special Research and Writing is not intended for open-ended projects: papers must be submitted by the end of the semester in which the course is taken.

5. 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 Special Research and Writing and a seminar, etc. In addition, any paper written for a course (except as noted under "Seminar Substitute") cannot be used to satisfy the Master's thesis. Moreover, any research that is done in whole or substantial part in connection with outside employment cannot be submitted for course credit.

J. LL.M. Writing Requirement

There is no thesis requirement in the LL.M. program. However, students may choose to write a thesis.

Students interested in writing the optional thesis must obtain the permission of their course advisor and adhere to the thesis guidelines and requirements outlined in this Master of Laws Handbook.

K. Masters' Thesis Guidelines

Overall, the thesis should present a relatively original idea or ideas, should demonstrate mastery of research skills appropriate to the field, and should be analytical and/or critical, as opposed to merely descriptive. It is required to be of publishable quality as determined by vote of the student's thesis committee.

Students are encouraged to publish their approved final thesis. The Graduate Studies Committee and/or the primary thesis advisor may be able to assist in identifying appropriate journals.

The thesis can be written through the Masters' Thesis Course or a Seminar (with the approval of the student's course advisor). Seminars are not offered during the summer session(s).

L. Masters' Thesis Course

The Masters' Thesis course will be graded, and students must receive at least a "B" to receive credit. Registration for the course is only by submission of the "Thesis Course Petition" to the Director of LL.M. Admissions. The petition requires identification of the thesis topic, thesis advisor, and committee members. Ideally, the topic will be approved before the end of the prior semester to give the student adequate time to research and write the first draft. Students cannot register online for the Masters' Thesis course; registration will be made by the LL.M. Admissions office.

Topic Approval

You should start your topic approval by consulting your advisor who can help you identify an appropriate thesis advisor. The thesis advisor, who serves as the chair of your thesis committee, will then help you identify the other members of your committee. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to ask faculty members to serve as the principal advisor and/or committee member. The primary thesis advisor and at least one member of your committee must be regular, tenure track faculty members.

1. Thesis Calendar

The first draft of your thesis paper should be submitted to your primary thesis advisor no later than the sixth week of classes. The primary thesis advisor will set the actual deadlines for submission of subsequent drafts for each student. The student works directly under the supervision of the principal thesis advisor until the final draft is ready for submission to the full committee.

The final draft of the thesis paper (the draft that has been reviewed by your primary thesis advisor and approved for submission to the committee) should be submitted not later than the last day of classes of the semester in which the thesis course is taken. Copies should be submitted directly to each member of the student's thesis committee, with a copy of the "Thesis Approval Form" attached to each copy. The form should be completed by the primary advisor/reader and returned to the Director of LL.M. Admissions.

2. Revisions

Students may receive further recommendations for revisions before the completed thesis is approved. If the thesis is not completed at the end of the semester, the student will receive an "I" (Incomplete) in the course.

3. Disapproval

If the thesis is disapproved, the student will be required to apply for graduation for the next semester.

M. *Thesis Technical Requirements*

1. The thesis should be:
 - double spaced typewritten or computer-generated
 - 12-point font
 - one-inch margin
 - letter-size paper
 - in a protective cover
2. It should have a title page including: the title of the paper, student's name, date submitted (month and year), the type of degree sought (LL.M. and area), the name of the degree-granting institution (University of Houston Law Center), and the names of the three committee members (specifying the principal advisor).
3. Following the title page, there should be a one-page abstract (summary description) of the thesis.
4. There should be a table of contents on a separate page following the abstract.
5. The minimum length for the text of the thesis is 50 pages of text, exclusive of footnotes.

N. *LL.M. Seminar Substitute for Masters Thesis Course*

- The student must inform the seminar instructor that she/he is going to use the seminar paper as a thesis.
- The seminar instructor must be tenured or tenure track.
- The seminar must be approved by the student's advisor.
- The student must obtain the signature of the seminar instructor and their course advisor on the Seminar Substitute Approval form. The form should be submitted to the Director of LL.M. Admissions by the 12th class day of the enrolled semester.
- The paper must meet all the technical requirements for the thesis (see above).
- The student must meet the seminar instructor's deadlines for turning in:
 - A written statement of the research issue, with a preliminary bibliography
 - A research agenda showing what additional research will be done.
 - An outline of the paper
 - A first draft
 - A final draft
- The student must receive a grade of at least a "B".

Once approved, submit an unbound copy of the thesis to the Director of LL.M. Admissions. It

will be bound and cataloged into the Law Center library's collection.

O. *Cross Enrollment: Non-Law Graduate Courses & Visiting Students*

LL.M. students can take graduate courses in other UH departments. However, eligibility for financial aid may require enrollment as a full-time student at one institution, and non-law courses may not count towards the required course load. Students considering cross-enrollment should check with the Office of Student Affairs and the financial aid advisor about this.

1. Tuition charged will be the rate for non-law classes.
2. Courses must be graduate-level courses.
3. Approval must be obtained prior to enrollment using a LL.M. petition signed by the student's advisor and the Director of LL.M. Admissions. The petition should include the course number and course description.
4. Only 6 hours of non-law credit can be counted towards LL.M. degree requirements.
5. A grade of "B-" or better must be received to obtain law credit.
6. The grade will not be calculated into the Law Center grade point average.
7. Students who count non-law courses as part of their credit must petition for an overload if the total enrollment is greater than 16 hours.

P. *Other Law School Credit*

A student may request permission to take up to six semester hours of credit at another approved (ABA-accredited) law school. Required courses must be completed at the Law Center. Rules regarding transfer of credit from other law schools (including summer abroad programs) are as follows:

- The student must be in good standing.
- Credit will not be given for internships, clinics, or independent study at another law school.
- Only courses in which a "B-" or better is received will be credited towards hours earned. Only graded courses may be taken; no pass/fail.
- The grade received at another institution is **not** calculated into the Law Center grade point average.
- **Approval must be obtained prior** to enrollment using an LL.M. petition signed by the student's advisor and the Director of LL.M. Admissions. The petition should list the specific course(s) and course number(s) for which credit is sought and have a course description attached.
- It is the student's obligation to inquire as to whether coursework at another institution unduly overlaps with coursework taken or to be taken at the University of Houston. The approval of a general petition asking for approval of coursework at another law school does not indicate that this overlap has been reviewed.
- Permission will not be granted in most situations for a student to receive credit for courses completed at another law school in Houston except for courses not offered

at the University of Houston Law Center.

Note: A minimum of 18 credit hours toward the LL.M. degree and all concentration-required credits must be completed at the Law Center.

Q. *Final Examinations*

1. Anonymous Grading

Most courses have one exam at the end of the term. Prior to taking exams each semester, students will be issued an exam number by the Office of Student Affairs. This is the number to be used for all exams for that semester only. Faculty members submit grade sheets with exam numbers and grades to the Office of Student Affairs for processing.

LL.M. students, in addition to the exam number should include the notation "LL.M."

Staff members within the Office of Student Affairs correlate exam numbers to names, and then transfer the information to the official grade sheet. Professors who count class participation or other factors into the grade must submit their grades, along with a list of those students who are to receive bonus/deduction points. The Office of Student Affairs applies/deducts credit, as applicable.

Courses in which seminar papers and seminar projects are the basis for the grade are not subject to the same grading system.

2. Scheduling Examinations

The law faculty has adopted the following policy concerning the time of taking final examinations. Faculty members may not make exceptions. Requests for exceptions should be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs

- a. All examinations should be taken on the date scheduled. Exceptions for alternate dates will be made only for illness or emergency or a conflict with another exam.
- b. Students will be expected to provide reasonable documentation for exam rescheduling requests that are based on emergency or illness.
- c. Unless designated as a "take home" exam, all examinations must be taken in assigned examination rooms.

3. Foreign LL.M. Students – Additional Exam Time

Foreign LL.M. students (students who earned their law degree outside of the United

States) are allowed an additional 1/3 of the time allotted for the timed exam. The additional time allotment is not applicable to 5197-U.S. Legal Skills, or the two required courses (5319-Intro to American Law and 5397-Legal Writing). The Law Center does not distinguish between foreign students whose first language is English and students for whom English is a second language: they ALL receive the extra time. *Students eligible for extra time should notify professors of their status one week before the exam.* An exam that requires students to turn in the exam within 24 hours or more, is not treated as a timed exam and therefore the additional time for Foreign LL.M. students is not applicable.

Foreign LL.M. students can bring a *bilingual dictionary* into the examination room. They MAY NOT bring a law dictionary into the exam room.

R. *Extenuating Circumstances Involving Examinations*

1. Exam Conflicts:

An exam conflict is defined as (1) two exams scheduled on the same calendar day or (2) an exam scheduled in the evening and an exam the following morning. In extremely compelling cases, which do not meet the technical rules for a "conflict," exceptions will be considered, if supported in writing by the deadline stated in the academic calendar (approximately six weeks before the final exam period begins).

For "exam conflicts," there is a right to have one of the conflicting exams rescheduled. The request for rescheduling due to exam conflict must be made to the Office of Student Affairs by the deadline for doing so posted each semester. The Office of Student Affairs will select which of the conflicting exams will be rescheduled to an alternate date at the end of the exam period. For "illness or emergency" cases, the Office of Student Affairs will verify the legitimacy of such a claim and set the date for makeup exams with the student.

2. Medical Problems:

Students too ill to take an exam must provide a physician's verification. A student who becomes ill before an exam should immediately call the Office of Student Affairs. Students should not start an exam if they are feeling ill. Absent extraordinary circumstances, once an exam begins illness will not be an excuse.

3. Students with Disabilities:

Students who have disabilities that require accommodations in the exam process or scheduling should discuss these early in the semester with the Office of Student Affairs. An exam accommodation form should be completed each semester and returned to the Office of Student Affairs. Exam accommodations may include a separate exam room, additional time, readers, use

of computer, or an amanuensis. Appropriate accommodation will be arranged on a case-by-case basis. Documentation of the disability may be required to verify certain disabilities.

4. Students with Other Compelling Circumstances:

Students with compelling circumstances such as a death in the family, a serious personal crisis, etc., should contact the Office of Student Affairs. If the situation merits, alternative exam arrangements will be made. Airline reservations do not justify a compelling circumstance since the students have notice of exam times at the time of registration. Employment requirements are not a justification for alternative exam dates, except in extremely unusual situations. Participation in extracurricular activities is not considered a compelling circumstance. Students with questions about this policy should ask the Office of Student Affairs before enrolling in the course.

5. Computer Exam Policy

Absent approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs upon a showing of good cause based on the nature of the exam or other unusual circumstances, Law Center instructors may not prohibit or deter students from drafting and presenting answers to exams on a computer equipped with Law Center approved security software. Faculty may permit students to draft answers to exams on a computer not equipped with security software provided the faculty member reasonably believes that such procedure would not materially advantage students based on factors other than understanding of the course material.

S. *Grades and Grade Appeals*

Except for the 5197-U.S. Legal Skills course, LL.M. students cannot take courses as Pass/Fail. LL.M. students are graded on the same scale as J.D. students, but their grades are not included in the curve when computing the J.D. average for the class. Thus, LL.M. students do not necessarily get “higher” grades – nor do their grades, whether higher or lower, affect the J.D. average. In other words, a “B” paper should be a “B” whether it is written by a J.D. student or by an LL.M. student. The LL.M. student’s “B,” however, is not used in calculating the class average for purposes of the mandatory mean.

Law Center Grading System

Grading System: Letter grades will be given to students in all courses and seminars. The letter grades and their numerical equivalents on a four-point grading scale are as follows:

A = 4.00	B- = 2.67	D+ = 1.33
A- = 3.67	C+ = 2.33	D = 1.00
B+ = 3.33	C = 2.00	D- = 0.67
B = 3.00	C- = 1.67	F = -0-

T. *Grade Change Policy*

After an instructor has submitted a grade to the Office of Student Affairs the instructor may change the grade only if it was incorrect due to an arithmetical, administrative, or other mechanical error. If an instructor discovers an arithmetical, administrative, or mechanical error in reviewing one student's exam and discovers that the same error was also made in grading exams of other students, the instructor must change the grades of all students affected by the error. A grade may not be changed as a result of a substantive reevaluation of a student's work or otherwise except by vote of the faculty upon the instructor's request.

A student requesting a grade change from the instructor must request it as soon as possible, but in no event no later than 90 days after grades are posted on the VIP system.

All grade changes must be made by the instructor within 30 days of the request or within 90 days after grades are posted on the PeopleSoft system, whichever is later.

If an instructor changes a grade in a first-year course after grades are posted, the mean grade of the class after the change must meet the mandatory curve requirement. The instructor must adjust grades where necessary to meet the mandatory curve requirement.

U. *Grade Appeal Process*

Students should meet with the professor to review the exam as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days after the grades are published on the University system. Per the Law Center's grade change policy, the instructor may change the grade only if it was incorrect due to an arithmetical, administrative, or other mechanical error. Therefore, the purpose of the review with the professor is not to reevaluate, but rather to check for administrative errors and to assist the student in understanding the grading process. It is helpful for the professor to show the student a model or sample answer and explain to the student how the students' answer was scored.

If, after meeting with the professor, the student wishes to appeal for a grade, the appeal should be made in writing to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. A copy of the appeal will be forwarded to the professor. The professor must provide a response to such petition within a reasonable period of time (typically not to exceed 10 business days). A written response will be provided to the student and professor as soon as possible, typically not later than 10 working days following receipt of professor's response. If, after receiving the written response, the student wishes further appeal, such appeal should be made to the Graduate and Professional Studies Committee (GPSC).

Note: See *Grievance Policy for Graduate, Professional, and Post-Baccalaureate Students of the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog*. www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/garr/grievance_pol.html

V. *Obtaining a Transcript*

1. Grade Report:

Students can check their grades through PeopleSoft at the end of each semester. If a hard copy is needed, the student can print the grade screen.

2. Transcripts:

Official transcripts must be requested from the Office of the University Registrar. Please see the following website for ordering information:

<http://www.uh.edu/about/offices/enrollment-services/registrar/transcripts/>

Unofficial transcripts may be obtained through the MYUH Student Center.

W. *Graduation*

There are five steps in the graduation cycle. **First** is the graduation "check" process which is performed by the Director of LL.M. Admissions during the next to the last semester of attendance. The objective is to find and correct any problems before students begin their last semester. To track your graduation standing please refer to your degree plan audit conducted each semester by the LL.M. Admissions Office.

The second step involves the application process. Every University of Houston student must file a graduation application online through PeopleSoft by the posted deadline date. The approximate deadlines are in February for May graduation; in June for August graduation; and in September for December graduation. The actual deadlines are published in *The LEX* each semester and the online Academic Calendar. Any student who files to graduate and is disapproved must file a new application for the next graduation period.

The third step is the commencement ceremony held in May of each year. Graduation candidates for May and August, and graduates from the previous December, are eligible to participate. This is a hooding ceremony only. Diplomas are mailed after your final grades have posted in PeopleSoft and you have been approved by the appropriate graduation analyst for the Law Center.

The fourth step involves the actual approval/disapproval process. Once an applicant's grades for the last semester have been received, the records are reviewed to ensure that the applicant has met all graduation requirements. If so, the applicable documentation is approved and returned to the University's graduation office. Two to three weeks later, the diploma is mailed to the graduate. Therefore, those candidates planning to relocate shortly after the end of their last semester should update their mailing address in PeopleSoft to ensure their diploma is mailed to the correct location.

The last step is that all UH and UH Law Center student financial accounts must be settled in full

before graduation will be allowed.

X. *Good Standing and Academic Suspension*

- Students admitted to the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources, Health Law, Intellectual Property & Information Law, International Law or Tax Law programs must maintain a 2.5 grade point average every semester.
- Students admitted to the LL.M. in U.S. Law program must maintain a 2.0 grade point average every semester.

A student **MUST** immediately contact the LL.M. Admissions Office when they become aware that their grade point average has fallen below the requisite standards.

The following policy was adopted in February 2006.

1. At the end of the semester in which an LL.M. student completes 9 or more hours of coursework, and for all semesters thereafter, the student must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 for concentration students and 2.00 for LL.M. in U.S. Law students. Students who fail to meet this requirement will be administratively withdrawn from the program, with the opportunity to petition for readmission. This requirement is based on hours attempted rather than hours passed.
2. LL.M. students are expected to meet or exceed the 2.50/2.00 grade point average every semester (depending on degree plan). If a student fails to meet this expectation in any given semester but has a *cumulative* grade point average set forth in paragraph 1, the student will (1) receive a warning letter, and (2) be required to meet with the Executive Director of Global and Graduate Programs to discuss the student's progress in the program.
3. On petition for readmission under paragraph 1, or after meeting with the student under paragraph 2, the Executive Director of Global and Graduate Programs has the option of recommending to the Executive Committee that the student be allowed to continue with the program *or* that the student should be withdrawn from the program.
4. Students who fail to meet the required grade point average under either paragraph 1 or paragraph 2 for a second semester will be administratively withdrawn from the program, subject to petition for readmission.
5. Readmission

All suspended students have the right to apply for readmission to the Law Center. Such petitions will be acted upon by the Graduate Legal Studies Committee.

Suspended students may be readmitted only upon showing substantial likelihood of satisfactory completion of the curriculum. The following are examples of bases for

readmission which may be favorably considered:

- a) resolution of a family crisis
- b) resolution of a financial crisis
- c) completion of course(s) that might assist academic performance in law school.
- d) overcoming a serious illness

The Graduate Legal Studies Committee has the discretion to readmit a student on stated conditions, including the condition that the student begins over again. The previous grades are changed to a Withdrawal ("W"), but the fact of previous enrollment will remain on the student's previous permanent record.

A readmitted student whose grades subsequently fall below the required GPA will be dismissed from the Law Center with no opportunity for readmission.

Y. Leaves of Absence/Withdrawal

Students must file a General Petition to request a leave of absence or to withdraw from the LL.M. Program. Failure to do this could prejudice the student's chances of being readmitted at some later date. Students who do not receive approval to withdraw have no automatic right to continue in the LL.M. Program. Students who have medical reasons or other personal situations may be asked to provide documentation.

Students who seek to withdraw or drop courses for medical reasons after the normal deadlines should submit documentation as requested on a form available in the Office of Student Affairs. Students are responsible for checking the University refund policies published in the class schedules. Refunds are not available past the stated deadlines even where there are compelling reasons to permit the drop/withdrawal.

II. JOINT JD/LLM DEGREE

A. *Application and Admission*

A UH Law Center J.D. student can apply to the Joint Degree program after all grades are reported for the 1L year through the fall semester of the 3L year. Part-time students may apply to the program after receiving all grades for their summer 1L courses.

Students visiting UH Law Center can apply and be admitted to an LL.M. specialty program. Application can be made prior to or during the visit to the Law Center. A visiting student must finish at least one semester of the 3L year at UH Law Center and complete a minimum of 12 credits. Upon graduation from the visiting student's home school, the visiting student must complete 15 LL.M. credits at UH Law Center before the end of the third long UH Law Center semester, not including summers.

Joint Degree applications are processed by the Graduate Legal Studies Committee according to its normal admissions process for the LL.M. degree.

B. *Coursework*

The Joint JD/LLM degree requires completion of 105 credits. Within the 105 credits, students must complete the required number of specialty-specific credits required by the LL.M. program to which the student is admitted:

- Energy, Environment and Natural Resources: 15 credits of EENR coursework
- Health Law: 18 credits of health law coursework to include Advanced Health Law (5108)
- Intellectual Property & Information Law: 15 credits of IPIL coursework
- International Law: 15 credits of international law coursework
- Tax: 18 credits of tax coursework to include Tax Ethics (5288) and Tax Research (5151) plus completion of Federal Income Tax (5459). Federal Income Tax is not included in the 18-credit requirement.

Credits for specialty coursework taken before admission to the Joint Degree program are counted toward degree completion.

C. *Grading*

A Joint Degree student is treated as a J.D. student, for purposes of the grade curve, through the semester in which 90 credits are completed, even when LL.M. courses are taken that semester. In any given semester a student is either completely a J.D. student and included in the J.D. curve for all courses, or completely an LL.M. student and not included in the J.D. curve.

LL.M. students are required to maintain a minimum 2.50 grade point average. Only specialty concentration courses are used to calculate the LL.M. grade point average, regardless of whether a course is taken under the J.D. curve.

D. *Class Standing and Honors Designation*

Class standing, and honors designation are against whatever class with whom a Joint Degree student graduates. The J.D. class standing is calculated on all credits graded on the J.D. curve.

E. Joint Degree Program Withdrawal

Students who complete 90 credits under the J.D. curve can leave the Joint Degree program with the permission of the Executive Director of Global and Graduate Programs. The student will graduate as a regular J.D. student if all the generally applicable requirements for J.D. graduation are met.

Specialty credits earned as an LL.M. student (not in the J.D. grade curve) will carry-over if, later, the Joint Degree student wishes to complete the LL.M. degree. The Joint Degree student can obtain the LL.M. by taking the minimum number of specialty credits (including any carry-over) and has up to three non-summer semesters after exiting the Joint Degree program.

III. STUDENT INFORMATION AND SERVICES

A. Financial Aid

Students should apply for financial aid as soon as possible after deciding to attend school. Effective October 1, 2016, students will use prior-prior year (PPY) tax information to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Students should begin this process as soon as possible after October 1st, preceding the start of enrollment and/or the application process.

Students interested in applying for financial aid at the Law Center should meet the following criteria:

1. Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.
2. Be registered with Selective Services (if required)
3. Be enrolled in at least 6 hours)
4. Make satisfactory academic progress.

The total financial aid award the university can offer may not exceed the cost of education (COE) that is determined by the university. Based on the information that the student provides on the FAFSA, an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be determined. The COE minus the EFC equals “financial need”. From this information, the university will e-mail an award offer.

The types and amounts of financial aid that can be awarded is based on financial need. Many of the programs are awarded on a first come basis to accepted applicants. The available programs are:

- Grants
- Federal Perkins Loans
- Federal or State Work Study
- Federal Stafford subsidized and unsubsidized loans

Students may contact the University of Houston Law Center Financial Aid Advisor at (713) 743-2269 or via e-mail at lawfinaid@uh.edu.

B. Emergency Loans

The Law Center has small emergency loans (maximum amount \$300) available. These loans are designed for students who have truly short-term needs, e.g., their student loan check has been delayed, a check from parents has been delayed, etc. Students who have chronic financial problems or bigger needs should explore other options. These loans are at no interest and are to be repaid in 30 days. Please allow 3-5 days for processing the paperwork once a request has been submitted. All paperwork is available in the Office of Student Affairs.

The following guidelines apply to the emergency loans:

1. Students may receive only one emergency loan each semester.
2. Students with a poor record with the university accounting office are ineligible.
3. Students who are 30 days from degree completion are ineligible.
4. Students with poor academic standing are ineligible.
5. Students who have been delinquent in repaying previous emergency loans are ineligible.

C. Scholarships & Awards

Law students who received a Dean Merit Scholarships as first-year students must remain eligible by achieving the GPA stated in their initial award letter. Dean Merit Scholarships are generally divided into two semesters, and the student is required to remain in good standing. Questions about scholarships should be directed to the Director of LL.M. Admissions.

Any information regarding additional scholarship opportunities is posted regularly in the Briefly, the Daily Lex and on the Financial Aid web page.

There are a limited number of monetary awards given each year at the Dean's Awards Program. Many of these are based on academic achievement or on service. Information regarding the available awards and criterion will be posted in Briefly several weeks prior to the program. The available awards may differ slightly from year to year.

D. Students with Disabilities

The Law Center is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for disabled students, including learning disabled students and those with health impairments, as well as those with other disabilities.

Students whose disabilities may require some type of accommodation, including course load modification, exam accommodation, or other accommodations are encouraged to discuss these with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs as early as possible. Appropriate modifications/accommodation will be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Students requesting accommodation will be required to provide appropriate documentation of the disability. For students with learning disabilities, documentation must meet the following requirements:

1. It must be prepared by a professional qualified to diagnose a learning disability, including but not limited to a licensed physician, learning disability specialist, or psychologist.
2. It must include the testing procedures followed, the instruments used to assess the disability, the test results, and an interpretation of the test results.
3. It must reflect the individual's present achievement level, be as comprehensive as possible, and be dated no more than three years prior to the student's request for services; and
4. It must include test results for at least the following characteristics: intelligence, vocabulary, reading rate, reading comprehension, spelling, mathematical comprehension, memory, and processing skills.

The UH Counseling and Testing Center can do assessments for a fee. Students who are interested in having an evaluation should contact the center directly at (713)743-5440.

Students who need auxiliary services, such as readers, interpreters, or note-takers, etc., should discuss these with the Office of Student Affairs. Students may also wish to discuss the availability of services with the Center for Students with Disabilities by calling (713)743-5400.

Students who identify barrier problems should bring those to the attention of the Office of Student Affairs.

E. *Problems (Personal, Health, Financial, Academic)*

The Law Center genuinely desires to make reasonable accommodations for problems that affect the student's academic performance, as well as to provide a resource or referral to help assist in resolving some of these problems.

1. Personal Problems

It is not unusual for law school to put stress on personal relationships. Depending on the situation, options such as reduced course loads, a leave of absence, or some other administrative adjustment may be available to the student. Other personal problems that may benefit from similar accommodations include changing jobs, moving, a family crisis such as illness or death in the family, etc.

Other personal problems that may affect the student's performance could include a hostile environment in the classroom or elsewhere in the Law Center.

Students are encouraged to discuss these problems with faculty members and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Discussions with representatives in the Office of Student Affairs are confidential unless the student is advised that there is a need to discuss the situation further with others.

2. Health

Physical or mental health problems can adversely affect a student's academic performance. Students may wish to seek counseling from the University Office of Counseling and Testing <http://www.uh.edu/caps/services/students.html> at (713)743-5454, or from the University of Houston Health Center at <http://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/services/medical-services/> (713)743-5151. As with personal problems, the Law Center may be able to make administrative adjustments to allow the student to recover to good health. These may include course load adjustments, leaves of absence, etc. Students with health problems at exam time should refer to the section of exam policies in I.O. to determine their options. Students with health problems that are adversely affecting their academic performance should discuss these with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. These discussions are confidential unless the student is advised that there is a need to discuss the situation further with others.

3. Financial

Financial problems may necessitate a leave of absence, a change of status to part-time, or some other remedy. These should be discussed with the Law Center Financial Aid Advisor or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. These discussions are confidential.

4. Academic

Students with academic problems, i.e., those who feel they are not performing to the best of

their ability, should discuss these with the faculty member, or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. It is not uncommon for students to have difficulty adjusting to the law school academic environment. Legal education, with its unique demands, can be an even more difficult adjustment. Students should not feel embarrassed about discussing these problems with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs or with individual professors.

Students who think they may have a learning disability should contact the Counseling and Testing Services Center (713)743-5440 for an evaluation.

Students may also wish to contact the Learning Support Services Center on campus (713)743-5411 to determine if any of their programs could be of assistance.

F. *Grievances and Petitions*

1. Complaints Involving Faculty Members and Other Students

Complaints involving faculty members, other students, and student organizations should be discussed initially with either the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally, but if that is unsuccessful, the student will be advised as to the next appropriate step. Complaints about the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs should be made to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Complaints about the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs should be directed to the Dean of the Law Center.

2. Honor Code Complaints

These should be addressed to the course advisor. See section I.

3. Complaints about Violations of Building Use Policy.

These should be addressed to Robert Gonzalez, Facilities & Projects Manager (713)743-2205 or email lawbuildinghelp@central.uh.edu

4. Students with Disabilities

Requests for accommodation should be directed first to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, with appeal to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students with disabilities who feel that their requests for accommodations have not been appropriately addressed by the Law Center should address these complaints to the Executive Director of Affirmative Action (713)743-8835.

G. *Complaints that implicate the ABA Standards*

As an ABA-accredited law school, University of Houston Law Center is subject to the ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools. The ABA Standards may be found at http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html. Any student

at the law school who wishes to bring a written complaint to the administration of the law school of a significant problem that directly implicates the school's program of legal education and its compliance with the ABA Standards should do the following:

Submit the complaint in writing to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. If the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs is not available, then submit the complaint to the Director of Student Affairs. The writing may be delivered in any manner, including, U.S. mail, fax, or hand delivery. All complaints shall be retained for at least seven years or until the next accreditation of the Law Center.

If the complaint identifies the person complaining, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs or the Director of Student Affairs will acknowledge the complaint within three business days of receipt of the written complaint. Acknowledgement may be made by email, U.S. mail, fax, or by personal delivery.

Within two weeks, the administrator, or the administrator's designee, shall address the complaint, and when the student is identified offer to meet with the complaining student. If there is a meeting, the student will either receive a substantive response to the complaint, or information about what steps are being taken by the law school to address the complaint or further investigate the complaint.

If further investigation is needed, when the investigation is completed, the student shall be provided a response to the complaint explaining what steps are being taken by the law school to address the complaint within two weeks after the completion of the investigation. If the complaint is anonymous or the student chooses not to meet, the complaint should be addressed within similar time periods. A writing describing the resolution of the complaint shall be retained with all complaints.

IV. LAW CENTER POLICIES

A. *Student Records and Confidentiality*

1. *Providing Outsiders with Student Schedules and Directory Information* Frequently, relatives, employers, etc., will ask to know where they can find a specific student. OSA determines whether the inquiry allows the provision of any information as guided by UH policy. UHLC will not provide course schedules to anyone. If an emergency justifies notifying a student, an OSA staff member will go to the class session to make the notification.
2. *Releasing Eligibility Information to Student Organizations* When possible, the list of students eligible for a student organization is released to the course advisor for that organization. When that is not feasible, one or two representatives of the organization are given the list of eligible individuals. Students to whom this information is released are advised that the information is confidential, and the student is not to release the names to anyone else without approval of the administration. Once invitations have been accepted, those who have become members may have their names published.

B. *Nondiscrimination Policy and Protected Classes*

UHLC is committed to ensuring the equality of opportunity in legal education for all persons, including applicants for admission, enrolled students, and graduates, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, religion, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected status; and for this policy UH includes in the term “protected class” sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The facilities and/or services of UHLC may be denied to all individuals whose behavior contravenes UH and UHLC policy in this area.

C. *UHLC Building Policy*

The facilities included within this policy are the John M. O’Quinn Law Building, the Law Library within that building, and the grounds and parking lots surrounding the building (collectively “UHLC Building” or “Building”).

1. *Use of the Building*

The Building is open to the public from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After hours, the Building will be accessible to UHLC students, instructors and staff through electronic access points that work with the Cougar Cards.

If there are problems with Cougar Card access, contact OSA. For damaged or lost cards, contact the UH Cougar Card office.

Food and drinks are allowed in reservable rooms as indicated in the room reservation system rules. Use of alcohol is prohibited unless permission is granted in advance from the ADAA’s office.

2. *Animals in the UHLC Building*

The presence of animals at UH may pose a safety concern, which places UH at risk of potential liability. Therefore, as a general rule, animals are not allowed on campus. The exceptions to this policy are:

- Service animals, under this policy:
https://uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/_docs/sam/01/1c12.pdf
- Research animals authorized by UH policy.

3. *Security*

In case of emergency, you should call the Campus Police at 713-743-3333.

UHLC has security officers onsite. Their contact number is 713-743-5806. They are available on weekends. For Monday through Friday, they operate in two shifts: an afternoon shift beginning at 3 p.m., and a night shift beginning at 11 p.m. and ending at 7:30 a.m. Thus, they are not present during the day when the building is open but are available for evening assistance.

Non-emergency security problems should be reported to OSA.

D. Logo and Brand Content Policy

Student organizations may use the names “University of Houston” or “University of Houston Law Center” or “Houston Law” on tee shirts, mugs, etc. Use of the logo or other brand content of either UH or UHLC requires permission. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact OSA. The links below are also applicable:

<https://www.uh.edu/marcom/guidelines-policies/>

<https://uh.edu/marcom/resources/uh-brand-student-organizations/>

E. UHLC Communications Policy

The Daily Lex is the UHLC “paper of record.” Everyone in the UHLC community will receive the Daily Lex via their UH assigned e-mail account. All official communications will be posted in the Daily Lex. Students will be held responsible for all information that is posted in Daily Lex.

The Daily Lex will not carry commercial announcements.

There are several physical bulletin boards located throughout the UHLC building. The label determines the exclusive use of the board. If there is no label, the board is open for students to announce student organization events and activities or other events on UHLC premises that are relevant to members of the UHLC community. Please be sure to remove the posting in a timely manner.

All notices from individuals or agencies not directly associated with UHLC are limited solely to the large board located across from the snack bar. Students representing such agencies must abide by this procedure.

F. Policy Regarding Computer Use During Class

While computing enhances legal education, improper use of computers during class can be a problem. Sometimes they are used in ways likely to distract others. Sometimes, even though they do not distract others, their use proves a distraction for the students using them. How to balance the utility of computers with their potential for self-distraction is a complex issue of classroom control that should generally be addressed by the instructor for a course. Accordingly, UHLC issues the following policy regarding classroom computer use. This policy is subject to revision without prior notice.

During class, students may not use computers in a way likely to distract other students from appropriate classroom activities. Playing games or watching movies are examples of computer use that is distracting. An instructor may not waive this policy any more than the instructor can waive other policies designed to prevent classroom disruption. Each instructor teaching a class has the option of further limiting use of computers during class hours or during selected class hours to prevent self-distraction.

These limits may include (without limitation) forbidding use of computers altogether, forbidding certain uses of computers such as Internet surfing, chat rooms, e-mail, or other uses often not generally related to legal education. Provided the instructor has notified the class in advance of the computer use policy, preferably in writing, the instructor may treat violations of their rules as either a lack of preparation, a constructive lack of attendance, or, in appropriate circumstances, as a disruption of the class. Instructors may enforce their computer use restrictions by all reasonable means, including requiring students to disable (or, where feasible, remove) network access cards and prohibiting computers on desks.

This computer use policy is subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act, which may require accommodations for students who require use of electronic devices.

G. UH Policies

Students are also governed by some UH policies issued for graduate students, although in many areas local UHLC policy supersedes (for example, in the area of attendance based on UHLC's ABA accreditation). There are also generally applicable UH student policies, such as in the area of sexual harassment or misconduct.

The UH Student Handbook and other General Academic Regulations and Requirements can be found here: <http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=22&navoid=6361>

For example, the generally applicable UH student code of conduct is here: <https://www.uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/>

Many of the UH policies are available in its MAPP system of policy documents: <https://uh.edu/policies/mapps/>

For example, the Freedom of Expression Policy under the MAPPs for Student Affairs is: <https://uh.edu/policies/docs/mapp/13/130101.pdf>

V. ADMINISTRATION

The current UHLC administration is listed here:

<https://www.law.uh.edu/about/administration/>

For most student matters, staff in OSA, and the ADSA, who is the staff leader for OSA, are your first resource. Like most law schools, the official hierarchy of UHLC begins with the Dean, and after that operational authority rests with the ADAA. However, most matters for your time at UHLC, beyond the instructors for your courses, will be serviced by OSA and other service functions with the school, such as the Career Development Office (CDO) or the LawIT department.

ALBERTUS MAGNUS

“Albertus Magnus” or Albert the Great is the name of the imposing bronze statue on UHLC’s grounds. Everyone has seen him, but how many know anything about him?

Albert the Great was a medieval theologian and “Man of Universal Knowledge.” Born in Lauingen, Bavaria sometime between 1193 and 1206, he was a bishop, doctor (Doctor Universalis) and saint of the Roman Catholic church, having as one of his students Saint Thomas Aquinas. Albert’s lifetime (d. 1280) neatly coincided with the thirteenth century’s “Golden Age of Scholasticism,” and his literary production covered as least forty years. A dominant figure, he was an influential teacher, an experienced traveler, a keen observer of life and nature, and the one learned person of the “Golden Age” to be called “the Great.” Albert was cited by name even before his death, a rare occurrence in medieval authorship.

The UH bronze statue was purchased in 1970 through the efforts of the UH Art Acquisition Committee. It is one of the major art works acquired by UH since September 1966, when the Board of Regents’ Building Committee unanimously approved a motion to set aside a small percentage of all construction cost for future building projects to acquire art.

“Albertus Magnus” is the best-known work of German sculptor Gerhard Marcks, and is considered his finest by many scholars and artists. The UH acquisition was made from a special cast in Dusseldorf by permission of Marcks and his family.

With his open law book and profound expression, Big Al (as he is informally called) is the bigger-than-life symbol of the legal profession for UH students and faculty. He is also considered a good luck symbol, as evidenced by a golden toe protruding from an open sandal: the well-rubbed bronze rabbit’s foot of students on their way to exams.