

ACADEMIC POLICY

Pepperdine Law Online Programs

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ACADEMIC POLICY

1.00 Academic Standards Policy Objectives

1.10 Objectives: The objectives to be achieved by the academic standards of the School of Law are as follows:

- A. Providing The Best Education: To provide the best possible legal education to each student, including, but not limited to, knowledge about the nature and sources of law, legal principles, legal methods, legal analysis and reasoning, legal writing and advocacy skills, factual knowledge in selected fields, and professional attitudes.
- B. Meeting Accreditation Standards: To meet all professional and appropriate accreditation standards in the field of legal education for purposes of academic credit and recognition in the fields of both law and education.
- C. Enhancing The School's Reputation: To enhance the professional reputation of the School of Law as a producer of highly qualified graduates so that the degrees the School of Law issues will be recognized and accepted as evidence of excellence and achievement by the public and profession.
- D. Encouraging Personal Integrity: To provide a climate of professionalism, personal integrity, and responsibility of the highest order based upon academic excellence, industry, ingenuity, dependability, and honesty.

2.00 General Requirements

2.10 Approval by Dean or Academic Dean: All academic matters requiring the decision or approval of the Dean may, in the alternative, be decided or approved by the Academic Dean. Unless otherwise stated, any reference to the Dean means the Dean of the School of Law. All academic matters requiring the decision or approval of the Academic Dean may, in the alternative, be decided or approved by the Dean.

- 2.20 Requirement of Make-up Class: When a scheduled class does not meet or is dismissed significantly early, the lost time must be made up with another class period or comparable assignment.

3.00 Academic Enrollment

- 3.10 Academic Program and Calendar Year: There are three terms per calendar year. Each term is comprised of two eight-week sessions.
- 3.20 Definition of Enrollment Status: Students can complete the online MLS or online MDR degree on a full-time or part-time basis. Enrollment status is determined by the number of units enrolled during any given term. Full-time status requires 8 units of enrollment per term, and part-time status requires a minimum of 4 units per term.
- 3.30 Regular Class Attendance Requirement: Regular and punctual class attendance is required. All students are expected to attend all live sessions unless otherwise outlined in the course syllabus.

If a student is absent from a live session, the student is required to view the recording of the missed session. In the event three live class sessions are missed, absent a waiver from the Academic Dean (or designee), the student will be assigned an F for the course and will be required to take the course again at his or her own expense.

Students academically dismissed from class for violation of the attendance policy may petition the Academic Dean (or designee) for readmission to the class upon showing that the absences were caused by serious medical or similar reasons. To be readmitted, the student must make satisfactory arrangements with the professor involved to make up the missed class sessions.

Students may petition the Academic Dean (or designee) prior to their third absence from a live class to request a W in the course. If a waiver is granted, the student will be withdrawn from the course, assigned a W, and will be required to retake the course at his or her own expense.

- 3.40 Attendance in Assessing Grades: Individual professors have the discretion to use attendance in assessing grades for the non-examination portion of the course grade.

- 3.50 Enrollment Requirement: No student may attend classes or receive credit for any course for which such student is not enrolled.
- 3.60 Class Participation: Students must come to class prepared and ready to participate. Students must complete each unit's asynchronous coursework prior to that unit's live session. Class participation may make up a percentage of the overall course grade as determined by the professor.
- 3.70 Withdrawal from a Class: Students may withdraw from any course only by completing the Registration Adjustment Add/Drop Form. **The add/drop deadline is the end of the first week of each session.** After the deadline, approval of the Associate Dean of Admissions is required to add or drop a class. Approval of the Academic Dean (or designee) is required to drop a class without a "W" after the add/drop deadline.

Students who drop a class after a session is underway will ordinarily receive a tuition refund, less the \$150 withdrawal fee, based on the date the courses were dropped as follows:

- During 1st (first) week of classes ... 100%
 - 2nd (second) week of classes 50%
 - 3rd (third) week 25%
 - After 3rd (third) week 0%
- A. Notation of W: A notation of W for withdrawal will appear on the transcript for any withdrawal after the add/drop deadline. The notation of W does not affect the student's grade point average. In case of extenuating circumstances after the add/drop period, the Academic Dean (or designee) may extend the period allowed for withdrawal *without* the notation of W appearing on the transcript. In this instance, the student would be assigned an Incomplete (I).
- B. Grade of Incomplete: Students who have regularly attended a course but, due to circumstances determined by the Academic Dean (or designee) as being excusable, have failed to take a required examination, produce a required paper or assignment, or meet some other criterion necessary to the proper assessment of a course grade shall be given the grade of "Incomplete" ("I") for the affected course. The grade "I" shall not be computed in the hours completed or in the cumulative or term grade point average.

- 3.80 Time Limits on Completion: Students will have a 3-year (9-term) maximum to complete the degree. If additional time is needed, it must be approved by the Academic Dean (or designee). Required military deployment does not count as time towards this 3-year requirement.
- 3.90 Leave of Absence and Withdrawal: Students must speak with their Student Success Advisor (SSA) about any leaves of absence from the program and must then speak with the Student Success Manager to complete a Leave of Absence (LOA) form for any term, including summer, in which the student does not wish to enroll. Students will work with the SSA to develop a re-engagement plan.

Students may take only two leaves of absence during the duration of their program.

Students wishing to withdraw must speak with their SSA and any other program administrators or faculty as the Student Success Advisor deems necessary. Students must also complete a withdrawal form.

4.00 Program Curriculum & Requirements

- 4.10 General Requirements: The online MLS and online MDR degrees are 32-unit programs that include four major curricular components: Foundation Courses, Core Courses, Elective Courses, and Residency Courses. The charts below set forth the different courses.

The MLS will offer two tracks: the General Track and the Dispute Resolution Concentration. Students will generally complete the Foundation and Core classes first, but may enroll in electives while completing the required Core classes. Students will select either the General Track or the Dispute Resolution Concentration for their elective courses along the way.

All students will complete both Residency courses. The curriculum will typically be completed in 16 months, with four terms of eight units per term.

Undergraduate coursework must be completed prior to the start of classes.

- 4.20 Official Transcripts: Final official transcripts showing degree conferral are required for all applicants and admitted students.

In special circumstances, when official transcripts showing degree conferral are not available at the time of application, conditional admittance may be granted, but the University must receive complete

official transcripts prior to registration for the second term to continue in the program. Students in this category who cannot provide final official transcripts showing degree conferral prior to second-term registration will not be permitted to enroll in any subsequent term until their application file is complete.

For all others, including those with a conferred degree at the time of application, final official transcripts are required prior to the first day of the program.

4.30 Required Courses & Electives:

A. Online MLS Degree Requirements

REQUIRED COURSES FOR ALL MLS STUDENTS (22 UNITS)

Foundation Courses (4 units) – required	
LAW 5001	Introduction to U.S. Law and Legal Systems (2)
LAW 5002	Legal Research and Writing for Non-Lawyers (2)

Core Courses (16 units) – required	
LAW 5117	Administrative Law and Regulatory Compliance (2)
LAW 5115	Civil Procedure and Litigation (2)
LAW 5114	Constitutional Law (Structure and Rights) (2)
LAW 5110	Contracts (2)
LAW 5116	Criminal Law and Procedure (2)
LAW 5112	Negotiation Theory and Practice (2)
LAW 5113	Property (2)
LAW 5111	Torts (2)

Residency (2 units) – required	
LAW 5202	Law, the Legal System, and Society (1)
LAW 5201	Law in Practice (1)

GENERAL ELECTIVES (10 UNITS) All students are required to complete at least 10 elective units.

General Legal Studies Electives (10 units)	
LAW 5302	Business Organizations (2)
LAW 5304	Education Law (2)
LAW 5301	Health Law (2)
LAW 5305	Intellectual Property (2)

LAW 5306	Employment Law (2)
LAW 5402	Arbitration Practice and Advocacy (2)
LAW 5406	Employment Disputes (2)
LAW 5403	Cross-Cultural Conflict and Dispute Resolution (2)
LAW 5401	Mediation Theory and Practice (2)
LAW 5405	Psychology of Conflict and Communication (2)

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CONCENTRATION ELECTIVES (6 UNITS)

Dispute Resolution Electives (6 units)	
Students seeking to qualify for the Dispute Resolution Concentration must take Mediation Theory and Practice (LAW 5401), Arbitration Practice and Advocacy (LAW 5402), and one additional Dispute Resolution elective, as part of their 10 elective requirements.	
LAW 5402	Arbitration Practice and Advocacy (2)*
LAW 5406	Employment Disputes (2)
LAW 5403	Cross-Cultural Conflict and Dispute Resolution (2)
LAW 5401	Mediation Theory and Practice (2)*
LAW 5405	Psychology of Conflict and Communication (2)

*Required for Dispute Resolution Concentration.

B. Online MDR Degree Requirements

REQUIRED COURSES FOR ALL MDR STUDENTS (18 UNITS)

Foundation Courses (8 units) - required	
LAW 5001	Introduction to U.S. Law and Legal System (2 units)
LAW 5002	Legal Research and Writing for Non-Lawyers (2 units)
LAW 5112	Negotiation Theory and Practice (2 units)
LAW 5401	Mediation Theory and Practice (2 units)

Core Courses (8 units) - required	
LAW 5402	Arbitration Practice and Advocacy (2 units)
LAW 5403	Cross-Cultural Conflict and Dispute Resolution (2 units)
LAW 5405	Psychology of Conflict Communication (2 units)
LAW 5406	Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Employment Disputes (2 units)

Residency Courses (2 units) - required**	
LAW 5203	Dispute Resolution in Practice 1 (1 unit)
LAW 5204	Dispute Resolution in Practice 2 (1 unit)

**This requirement may be waived by the Managing Director of the Law School's Straus Institute if it is deemed the in-person residency travel component creates an extraordinary hardship. The law school anticipates that this waiver will be almost exclusively used for international

students unable to obtain a visa to the United States. Any student receiving such a waiver must take an additional two-unit elective course to earn the necessary 32 units for graduation.

ELECTIVE COURSES (14 UNITS) All students are required to complete at least 14 elective units.

Elective Courses (14 units)	
LAW 1242	Environmental and Public Policy Dispute Resolution (2 units)
LAW 1522	Advanced Mediation Seminar (2 units)
LAW 1932	Divorce and Family Mediation (2 units)
LAW 2282	Selected Issues: Apology, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation (2 units)
LAW 2282	Selected Issues: Entertainment (2 units)
LAW 2282	Selected Issues: Conflict Management and ADR Systems Design in Corporations and Organizations (2 units)
LAW 2282	Selected Issues: Ombuds (2 units)

MLS Elective Courses (up to 4 units)	
Online MDR students may satisfy up to 4 of their required 14 elective units by taking up to 2 courses (or 4 units) from the online Master of Legal Studies (MLS) program, excluding any courses taken to fulfill the Core requirements and excluding the MLS Residency Courses. Students may not enroll in MLS Residency Courses without prior authorization.	
LAW 5117	Administrative Law and Regulatory Compliance (2)
LAW 5115	Civil Procedure and Litigation (2)
LAW 5114	Constitutional Law (Structure and Rights) (2)
LAW 5110	Contracts (2)
LAW 5116	Criminal Law and Procedure (2)
LAW 5113	Property (2)
LAW 5111	Torts (2)
LAW 5302	Business Organizations (2)
LAW 5304	Education Law (2)
LAW 5301	Health Law (2)
LAW 5305	Intellectual Property (2)
LAW 5306	Employment Law (2)

5.00 Tuition and Student Accounts

- 5.10 Financial Responsibility Agreement: Students must agree to the Financial Responsibility Agreement every term before enrollment in classes is allowed.

5.20 School's Security Interest in Student's Academic Record: A student may not graduate, nor may such student receive any diploma, certificate, or transcript until all accounts, current or otherwise, have been satisfied in accordance with policies announced by the School of Law. Pepperdine University shall retain any diploma, certificate, or transcript, as security for such obligations until they are satisfied. This security interest shall not be discharged in bankruptcy or other creditor arrangements. Release of any such security interest prior to, or subsequent to, any default by the debtor shall not be considered a binding precedent or modification of this policy.

6.00 Maintenance of Academic Standards

6.10 Minimum Grade Point Average Requirement for Graduation: Students are required to maintain grades evidencing a satisfactory level of competence at all times. No student may graduate with a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.3.

Students who finish their online degree requirements with a grade point average below the required minimum for the degree may petition the Academic Dean (or designee) for permission to take up to ten (10) units, at their own cost, to increase the students' overall average to above the required minimum. Students not able to raise their overall average to the required minimum after completing additional units will not be awarded a degree.

7.00 Bases for Awarding Academic Credit:

7.10 Final Exams: Examination week will typically be the eighth week of each session. Final exams will typically be available from Friday afternoon through Sunday evening of the eighth week. All exams must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Pacific time on Sunday of the eighth week. Unless otherwise stated in the syllabus, all final examinations shall be timed and open book/open note. Students are required to adhere to Pepperdine Law's Honor Code applicable to these programs at all times.

Professors may hold a live session during the examination week for any makeup class sessions or for a final review.

Students are required to take final examinations at the scheduled dates and times unless the Academic Dean (or designee) approves an exception. Students may petition the Academic Dean (or designee) up to 24 hours before the final examination to request a Withdrawal or an Incomplete in the course. If a petition is granted and the student receives a W in the course, the

student will be withdrawn from the course and required to retake the course at his or her own expense. If a petition is granted and the student receives an Incomplete, the student will take the final exam the next time the course is offered.

Faculty cannot authorize any changes to the final examination schedule. However, students wishing to petition to reschedule a final exam should notify their professor, who will convey their request, when appropriate, to the Academic Dean (or designee). Students should not make arrangements solely with their faculty to reschedule final exams. A student may be excused from scheduled exams only under the following circumstances:

- A. A student may petition for a rescheduled final exam in the case of serious illness, personal hardship (such as the death or serious illness of a spouse, significant other, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, or other close family member), accident, or other emergency that arises during the examination period. The student requesting a rescheduled exam for such an emergency must have appropriate documentation demonstrating that the student was unable to take the examination at the scheduled time. In the case of an examination that is rescheduled for medical reasons, the student must be examined by a physician prior to or within 24 hours after the scheduled examination. Rescheduling in such genuine emergency situations beyond the student's control shall be governed as per below.
- B. All requests to reschedule final examinations must be made in writing using the "Petition for Examination Schedule Change" form. All requests must be approved by the Academic Dean (or designee).

Final examinations deferred under Section (A) must be made up as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days after the end of the examination period. If a student cannot take the examination within that time, the student will receive an Incomplete in the course and will be required to take the examination the next time the course is offered.

The intent of the above policy is to regulate only final exams.

- 7.20 Midterm Exams: Midterm examinations will typically occur the fourth week of each session. Midterms will typically be available from Friday afternoon through Sunday evening of the fourth week. All exams must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on Sunday. Unless otherwise stated in the syllabus, all midterm examinations shall be timed and open book/open note.

Students are required to adhere to Pepperdine Law's Honor Code at all times.

Students are required to take midterm examinations at the scheduled dates and times. Midterm and other interim exams may be rescheduled at the professor's discretion. Pursuant to Section 7.40 (F), students failing to take a required exam shall receive a grade of F on the exam.

7.30 Treatment of Transcripts for Repeated Course: When a student repeats a course, credit will be given for the course, and the letter grade received in the repeated course will be calculated into the student's overall grade point average. The student's original grade or notation will remain on the student's transcript but will not be calculated into the student's overall grade point average.

7.40 Assignment of Letter Grades:

A. Distinguishing Levels of Competence: The grade assigned to examinations, papers, and other indicia of learning progress are intended to facilitate meaningful evaluation of the relative degree to which the student has achieved the course objectives and to make a relative distinction between the levels of competence demonstrated by students.

B. Discretion of the Professor: All grades assigned to examinations, papers, and other indicia of learning progress shall rest within the sound discretion of the professor(s). All such grading will be done according to the grading policies stated herein.

C. Numerical Weight of Letter Grades: Letter grades shall be assigned the following numerical weights in the computation of grade point averages:

A+	4.33
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00

D-	0.67
F	0.00

- D. Medians: All courses must have a median grade of B+.
- E. Interim and Final Examinations: The final course grade shall be based on a final examination (or paper) and any of the following: class assignments, papers, participation, and other forms of assessment.
- F. Grade Upon Failure to Take Required Examination: Students who fail to take a final examination (or submit a final paper) or meet any other criterion necessary to make the proper assessment of a course grade and who fail to show circumstances excusing such failure will be assigned a course grade of F for the affected course.

Students who fail to take any required exam (including a midterm examination) or produce a required paper or assignment will receive a grade of F on that assignment. (See subsection 3.70 (A) for treatment of “Withdrawals” and subsection 3.70 (B) for grades of “Incomplete.”)

- G. No Credit for Grade of F: No credit shall be given for any course in which the student receives a course grade of F. A student must retake any required course in which such student fails to receive credit at his or her own expense.
- H. High Pass/Pass/Credit/Fail Courses: The Residency courses may be designated as High Pass/Pass/Credit/Fail courses. Because it is the purpose of the School of Law to reflect adequately the level of competence achieved by students, a student will achieve a grade of High Pass (“HP”) if that student’s work would have received a grade of at least A- and a grade of Pass (“P”) if that student’s work would have received a grade of less than A- and at least C. Students will be given the grade of credit (“CR”) if the student’s work would have received a grade below C but above F. Students shall be assigned the grade of Fail (“F”) if the student’s work would have been F. High Pass/Pass/Credit/Fail grades will appear on the transcript but will not be computed in the grade point average.

7.50 Modification of Grades: Grades recorded on the student’s permanent record may not be modified except due to an arithmetic error or a specific, demonstrable grading error. In connection with a specific,

demonstrable grading error, it is the school's policy that a professor may not increase a grade based upon an overall reappraisal of the quality of the examination once the course grade has been assigned. No grade change will be made until a memorandum from the professor detailing the change, and the specific basis for the change, has been approved by the Academic Dean (or designee). Such changes will be approved only in rare circumstances.

7.60 Procedure for Challenging Grades: The procedure for challenging a grade in a particular course is as follows:

- A. Professor to Evaluate Student's Examination: It is the school's policy that the person best able to evaluate the student's examination is the professor who taught the course. This policy is based upon the belief that evaluation is affected by participation in the course, by the course objectives, and by reference to the level of response of the class as a whole.
- B. Student Challenge of Examination Grade: If a student believes that the grade given on an examination is a grossly unfair assessment of the student's performance on the examination, the student shall first consult with the professor who assigned the grade unless the professor is unavailable.
- C. Review of Challenged Grade by Academic Standards Committee: If, after discussion with such professor, the student still believes the grade given on an examination is a grossly unfair assessment of the student's performance on the examination, the student may submit a timely petition to the Academic Dean (or designee) challenging that particular grade and stating fully the bases upon which relief is sought. Grade petitions must be made prior to the end of the following session.

Such petitions will, unless impracticable, be referred to the Academic Standards Committee for evaluation and recommendation. If the professor in question is a member of the committee, the remaining members of the committee shall decide the issue. In those instances where referral to the Academic Standards Committee is impractical, the Chairman of the Committee or the Academic Dean may act upon the petition.

- D. Professor Submits Documentation to Committee: The reviewing party shall next contact the professor whose grade is being called

into question and shall ask the professor to submit to the committee the examination in question along with an explanation of the grade given and any other information which may be pertinent to the committee's review.

- E. Recommendation of Remedy to Academic Dean: The committee shall consider the student's petition, the examination, and all relevant information supplied by the professor and shall determine whether there was a gross abuse of grading discretion. The committee shall report its findings to the Academic Dean. Only upon a finding of gross abuse of grading discretion will the committee recommend to the Academic Dean that the grade be changed.

7.70 Release and Review of Examination Grades: Because grades are considered to be tentative until approved by the Academic Dean, final course grades will not be released by the professor. The professor will submit course grades to the Registrar as soon as reasonably possible, but in no event later than two (2) weeks from the date of the final examination. Course grades will be released to students by the Student Information and Services Offices soon thereafter.

7.80 Student Work Product Rule: The standards of the University and the School of Law demand that each student be graded and credited only upon the basis of such student's own work product.

- A. Presumption Against Collaboration: It will be presumed that students are not allowed to collaborate on the preparation of work product (examinations, research papers, assigned problems, etc.) unless the professor specifically authorizes such collaboration.
- B. Violations of this Section: Any attempt by a student to obtain credit for any activity, examination answer, or other work product not actually performed by such student, or to a degree not reflective of the actual activity or performance of such student, whether or not such attempt is successful, will be subject to administrative discipline. Such discipline may include, *inter alia*, the forfeiture of all or part of any credit obtained by such cheating, and such forfeiture may be cumulative with any other penalty imposed.
- C. Prohibition on Submitting Papers for Credit Multiple Times: Students may not submit their own work product for credit in more

than one course. Credit will not be awarded for a student's own work product that has already been submitted to obtain academic credit in another course, either at Pepperdine University School of Law or elsewhere.

7.90 Disability: Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Office of Student Accessibility as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

8.00 Transfer and Advanced Standing

8.10 Limitation of Advanced Standing Credit: The Academic Dean will determine the amount of advanced standing credit to be allowed. Typically, 10 such credits will be accepted. Typically no credit will be allowed for courses unless the student earned at least a B- in such course.

8.20 Transfers Between Online Masters Programs: Students may petition to transfer from one Pepperdine Law online masters program to another Pepperdine Law online masters program by submitting the Online Program Transfer Request Form. All Online Program Transfers must be approved by the Academic Dean (or designee), and students should work with their Student Success Advisor (SSA) to submit any such request.

8.30 Transfers Between On-campus and Online Program Modalities: Students may petition to transfer from an online Pepperdine Law masters program to an on-campus Pepperdine Law masters program up to 8 units into any program. Absent approval of the Academic Dean (or designee) based on demonstrated compelling circumstances, students who have completed more than 8 units may not switch program modalities. The Academic Dean (or designee) must approve all modality transfer requests. Students wishing to switch modalities should speak with their Student Support Advisor as early as possible.

8.40 No Transfers from the MLS Program to the JD Program: MLS students cannot apply units from the MLS program to the Pepperdine JD Program.

8.50 Transfers from JD to MLS Program: JD students who have been admitted to the MLS program may be eligible, with approval, to transfer units from the JD program to the MLS program.

- 8.60 Bar to Repeating Courses: No student may repeat any course in which such student has already received credit, except when approved by the Academic Dean (or designee).

Students may be granted permission by the Academic Dean (or designee) to repeat a course completed as a JD student at any law school only when there is a significant difference in the description and substance of the course. In such instances, the student shall supply course descriptions, syllabi, and any other documentation requested by the Academic Dean (or designee) necessary to determine whether the course may be repeated.

9.00 Program Policy and Procedure

9.10 Waiver of Policies:

- A. Dean's Authority to Consider Waiver: In some cases, regulations and policies may work undue hardship. For good cause, certain regulations may be waived by the Academic Dean, provided that the quality of the student's academic program is not impaired and that the waiver is consistent with the goals and objectives set forth in Section 1.00.
- B. Requirements of Written Petition for Such Exception: To preserve an accurate record of the basis upon which such exceptions are granted, a petition must be submitted to the Academic Dean requesting the waiver and outlining the reasons therefore.
- C. Requirement That Exception to Policy Be in Writing: No exception to the policies stated in the Catalog of this statement shall be allowed unless approved in writing by the Academic Dean and placed in the student's file.

- 9.20 Prospective Application of Changes to Academic Programs or Policies: Any changes made to any academic program or policy will only be prospectively applied unless otherwise stated.