



Experiential Learning Planning Guide

Effective August 2025

Experiential Learning Requirement

JD students must complete 15 units of experiential learning courses or their equivalent in order to graduate. These courses must fall into the following categories:

- 4 units of Legal Research & Writing I, II (LAW 181, 182)
- 6 units of upper-level courses designated as AEXP*, and
- 5 units of additional experiential courses that may be either AEXP or EXPR** or a waiver of this requirement¹

*AEXP: upper-level courses designated as experiential under the ABA definition of experiential courses, as determined by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and noted in the course schedule

**EXPR: classes designated as experiential by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, also noted in the course schedule. The notations above apply to the rest of this document to indicate whether a particular course is AEXP or EXPR.

General Unit Limits

Maximum 16 units per semester (Academic Policy 3.11)

Maximum 22 units total for non-letter graded units (i.e. graded at High Pass/Pass/Credit/Fail or Pass/Fail). (Academic Policy 3.40)

Maximum 22 units total for non-classroom courses (i.e. courses involving student participation in studies or activities in a format that does not involve attendance at regularly scheduled class sessions, including field placement programs (e.g. externship or practicum), moot court, law review, and directed research. (Academic Policy 3.12)

Maximum 10 units of externship per semester

¹ Students may seek a waiver for up to 5 units of the experiential education requirement by certifying that they have completed 50 hours of legal work under the supervision of a lawyer, without receiving school credit, paid or unpaid, per unit waived. Note that this is a waiver of units applicable to the 15 unit experiential learning requirement, not a waiver of total general units required to graduate. Email the Clinical Education Program at clinicallaw@pepperdine.edu for a waiver.



Plan Experiential Courses - 15 Unit Minimum Requirement

Term	Course	Units
1L Fall	Legal Research & Writing 1	2
1L Spring	Legal Research & Writing 1	2
2L Summer		
2L Fall		
2L Spring		
3L Summer		
3L Fall		
3L Spring		

Clinical Education Program

Clinical Education Programs are considered AEXP courses and satisfy any of the 11 units of upper-level and additional experiential course requirements.

I. Externships (1-10 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)*

Externships are field placements offered during Fall, Spring, and Summer where students earn academic credit for qualifying legal work under supervision of experienced lawyers.

Students may earn credit for legal work in courts, government agencies, public interest practices, and corporate counsel/in-house counsel offices, regardless of whether the student is paid or unpaid. Students may also earn credit for work at private law firms if they are either (1) nonprofit public interest entities (cf. section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code), regardless of whether the student is paid or unpaid, or (2) for-profit law firms where the student is paid.



II. Clinics (2-3 units per semester - classroom, non-letter graded units)*

Clinics are upper-level elective courses offered during the Fall and Spring semesters where students practice law under the supervision of law professors with real clients in high stakes environments.

Clinics (3 units - classroom units)

- Disaster Relief Clinic
- Faith and Family Mediation Clinic
- Low Income Taxpayer Clinic at Union Rescue Mission
- Mediation Clinic - 2 units
- Ninth Circuit Appellate Advocacy Clinic (must apply)
- Pepperdine Legal Aid Clinic at Union Rescue Mission
- Religious Liberty Clinic (must apply)
- Restoration and Justice Clinic
- Startup Law Clinic (must apply)

Practicums (2-4 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)*

Practicum courses are specialized field placements under the supervision of experienced practitioners and with enhanced rigor and focus from expert faculty. Students must apply for positions in practicums by submitting a cover letter and resume to the Clinical Education Program at clinicallaw@pepperdine.edu.

- Therapeutic Justice Practicum
- Public Interest Practicum

III. Advocacy Programs

Advocacy Programs are considered AEXP courses and satisfy any of the 11 units of upper-level and additional experiential course requirements.

Interschool Trial Competitions

Pepperdine competes at a very high level against other law schools on the national and international stage.

- ***Trial Competition Teams:*** To be eligible to try out for the trial team, 2L and 3L students must be in good academic standing, must have taken or be currently enrolled in Trial Practice (3 units - classroom, non-letter graded)*, and must compete in open tryouts during the Fall semester. Students selected for the Interschool Teams enroll in Honors Trial Practice (2 units - non-classroom, non-letter graded)*.
- ***Appellate Advocacy Team:*** This Appellate Advocacy Team competes in national and international moot court competitions, submitting written briefs and then presenting oral arguments. Team members are selected each spring semester. All students must enroll in Appellate Advocacy (2 units - writing intensive) in the fall and Honors Appellate Advocacy (2 units - classroom, non-letter graded)* in the spring.



IV. Journals

Journals are considered EXPR courses and satisfy any of the 5 units of additional experiential course requirements.

Pepperdine Law Review (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)**

The Pepperdine Law Review is a scholarly legal journal edited and published by students selected on the basis of scholarship and the ability to do creative research and writing. Students write comments and notes on legal developments and significant cases, as well as edit the lead articles and book reviews written by professors, lawyers, judges, legislators, and other scholars.

Courses: Law 2/3 Law Review

Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)**

The law school published the inaugural issues of the Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal in 2001. Focusing on the area of dispute resolution, the journal features scholastic contributions similar to those found in traditional law reviews, as well as material written from the dispute resolution practitioner's perspective.

Courses: Law 42/43 Dispute Resolution Law Journal

Pepperdine Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship, and the Law (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)**

The Pepperdine Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship, and the Law (JBEL) is sponsored by the Geoffrey H. Palmer Center for Entrepreneurship and the Law and is produced by Palmer Center Fellows. The journal contributes to the body of legal knowledge by publishing high quality academic articles in the fields of business, entrepreneurship, and the law.

Courses: Law 62/63 Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship and the Law

Journal of the National Association of Administrative Law Judiciary (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom units)**

Published in collaboration with the National Association of Administrative Law Judiciary, this journal is recognized as the finest and most scholarly publication exclusively focused on developments affecting the administrative judiciary. A student staff works with a faculty editor in publishing the journal.

Courses: Law 52/53 National Association of Administrative Law Judges Journal



V. Dispute Resolution

*Indicates that the course is designated as AEXP, **Indicates that the course is designated as EXPR

Certificate in Dispute Resolution (12 units total)

Allows JD students to gain a fundamental understanding of the various dispute resolution processes through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, required courses, and electives. There is no additional cost for JD students.

Required Courses:

Mediation Theory and Practice (2)*

Negotiation Theory and Practice (2)*

Experiential Arbitration Course (excludes eligible non-experiential courses):

Arbitration Practice and Advocacy (2)*

International Commercial Arbitration (2)*

International Commercial Arbitration Procedure and Practice (2)*

Experiential Elective Courses:

Advanced Mediation Seminar*

Arbitration Practice and Advocacy*

Cross-Cultural Conflict and Dispute Resolution* Dispute Resolution and Religion*

Dispute Resolution Law Journal **

Divorce and Family Mediation*

Environmental and Public Policy Dispute Resolution*

Faith-Based Diplomacy and International Peacemaking*

Honors Appellate Advocacy *

Honors Trial Practice *

International Commercial Arbitration Procedure and Practice*

Mediation Clinic*

Restorative Justice*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Apology, Forgiveness and Reconciliation*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Employment Disputes*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: International Identity Based Conflict and Dispute Resolution*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Mediation Advocacy*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Products Liability and ADR**

Trial Practice*

Trial Preparation and Settlement*



Master of Dispute Resolution (MDR) (32 units total)

The Master of Dispute Resolution (MDR) goes beyond the fundamentals and requires students to take broader courses like Psychology of Conflict Communication and Cross-Cultural Conflict and Dispute Resolution. Pepperdine JD students will double count 14 units of dispute resolution coursework towards their JD and MDR, leaving 18 units to be completed separate from the JD program.

Required Courses:

Psychology of Conflict Communication (non-experiential)

Cross Cultural Conflict and Dispute Resolution (2)*

Mediation Theory and Practice (2)*

Negotiation Theory and Practice (2)*

Experiential Arbitration Course (excludes eligible non-experiential courses):

Arbitration Practice and Advocacy (2)*

International Commercial Arbitration (2)*

International Commercial Arbitration Procedure and Practice (2)*

Experiential Elective Courses:

Advanced Mediation Seminar*

Arbitration Practice and Advocacy *

Dispute Resolution and Religion

Dispute Resolution Law Journal**

Divorce and Family Mediation*

Environmental and Public Policy Dispute Resolution*

Fair Employment and Housing Mediation Clinic*

Faith-Based Diplomacy and International Peacemaking*

Honors Appellate Advocacy*

International Commercial Arbitration Procedure and Practice *

International Commercial Arbitration*

Mediation Clinic*

Restorative Justice*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Apology, Forgiveness and Reconciliation*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: Employment Disputes*

Selected Issues in Dispute Resolution: International Identity Based Conflict and Dispute Resolution* Trial Practice*

Trial Preparation and Settlement*