Degree Requirements

THE DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE (JD) DEGREE

OVERVIEW OF JD REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASS OF 2021

For students entering in the fall of 2016 and thereafter, the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence are:

✓ Successful completion of all first-year required courses plus an additional 82 quarter units of elective coursework (a combined total of 111 quarter units);
  ▪ Up to 31 elective units may come from pre-approved non-law courses.
  ▪ Any units of externships, directed research, directed writing, practica, policy labs, senior thesis, research track, and moot court (Kirkwood competition) reduce the number of non-law units on a one-for-one basis.

✓ Nine quarters of residency;
✓ Satisfaction of the ethics requirement;
✓ Satisfaction of the writing requirement;
✓ Satisfaction of the experiential learning requirement.
✓ Timely filing of an application for graduation.

REQUIRED CURRICULUM: FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM

Each law student is required to complete the following courses during his or her first year at the Law School:

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<th>Autumn Quarter</th>
<th>Winter Quarter</th>
<th>Spring Quarter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Procedure</td>
<td>Constitutional Law I</td>
<td>Federal Litigation</td>
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<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Property I</td>
<td>Electives (7 – 12 units)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Law</td>
<td>Federal Litigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torts</td>
<td>Electives (0 – 5* units)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Research &amp; Writing</td>
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During the autumn quarter, a first-year student may take only those courses on the required list.

*During the winter quarter, students may take only courses that have been pre-approved for 1Ls. Students are limited to four units of elective courses (or five units if they choose to enroll in Evidence with Professor George Fisher (Law 290 – 5 units)).
RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

To graduate, a JD student must be “in residence” as a law student for at least nine quarters and no more than eleven quarters. More time may be granted only to accommodate a documented disability.

For purposes of the JD degree, the term “in residence” means that a student: (1) takes at least 9 quarter units of credit that can be counted toward the degree each quarter; (2) by the date all grades for the quarter are due, passes at least 8 units each quarter; (3) pays full tuition to the law school; and, (4) does not work more than 20 hours per week during the term. A student must be in residence during the quarter in which the final degree is conferred or during the quarter immediately preceding degree conferral.

ETHICS REQUIREMENT

JD students must complete at least one advanced course that contains one or more units of ethics instruction. Only a course approved by the Curriculum Committee and explicitly classified as an ethics course before the quarter begins satisfies this requirement.

WRITING REQUIREMENT

In addition to first-year Legal Research and Writing and Federal Litigation, all students must complete two courses of at least two units each in which a principal part of the assigned work is a paper or other written product. One course must be an R course and the other must be a PW course. Only courses approved by the Curriculum Committee and explicitly classified as an R or PW course before the term begins can satisfy this requirement.

- A course designated as an “R” course is defined as one in which the written product is substantial and is based on open-ended research by the student.
- A course designated as a “PW” course is defined as one in which the students engage in the sort of professional writing common to practicing lawyers, e.g., writing briefs, drafting contracts, etc.
- A Directed Research paper may count as the equivalent of an “R” course with the approval of the supervising faculty member.
- A Directed Writing project may count as the equivalent of a “PW” course with the approval of the supervising faculty member.
- Satisfactory completion of a Senior Thesis or Research Track counts as the equivalent of an “R” course.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT

Students Entering in Autumn 2016 or Thereafter Students must complete 8 units of coursework designated as fulfilling the Experiential Learning pursuant to ABA Standard 303.

Pathway A – Full-time Clinic:
Students who complete any of Stanford Law School’s full-time clinics will automatically satisfy the ABA Experiential Learning Requirement.
Pathway B – Self-Design:
Students who do not enroll in one of Stanford Law School’s full-time clinics must submit to the Registrar’s office a Self-Design Plan specifying which courses the student has taken or intends to take to satisfy the ABA Experiential Learning requirement. Courses that count towards the requirement are identified on the registrar’s website and in course listings. Students self-designing to fulfill this requirement must take into account that not all courses will be offered every year and that enrollment for some courses may be limited.

Deadlines:
Primary Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form (Rising 2Ls) All students must submit a Primary Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form by the deadline set by the Registrar’s office before the start of the student’s second year. This form will indicate whether the student intends to satisfy the graduation requirements through one of Stanford’s clinics (Pathway A) or through Self-Design (Pathway B).

Pathway A:
Students planning to satisfy the Experiential Learning requirement via clinic must indicate whether they have applied and been accepted to a clinic for the 2L year and/or intend to apply for the 3L year. Stanford has capacity for 100 percent of our students to take a full-time clinic, but admission to a particular clinic in a particular quarter is not guaranteed. Students electing Pathway A should ordinarily plan to apply to more than one clinic, and will be required to apply to multiple clinics if they need to gain admission into a clinic during the third year to satisfy the graduation requirement.

Pathway B:
If the student plans to elect Pathway B, the student must complete the portion of the form calling for the student’s Self-Design Plan. Self-design plans will be reviewed and approved by the Dean of Students. The plan should demonstrate how the student will complete at least 50% of their experiential credits (4 units) by the end of their second year of student.

Plans in which fewer than 4 units will be completed in the 2L year will be approved only upon a showing of good cause necessitating the completion of more than half of the credits in the third year. Students whose plans are rejected by the committee may resubmit the form to correct any identified deficiencies to the Registrar, or may elect to move to Pathway A.

An externship may satisfy the Experiential Learning Requirement. Ordinarily, an externship that otherwise meets the criteria will be approved for experiential learning credit when the field placement provides specialized experience complementary to a student’s intended career path and comparable benefits cannot be obtained through other experiential learning coursework at Stanford. Students who plan to satisfy the experiential learning requirement through an externship should consult with the law school’s Externship Administrator regarding the externship proposal as early in the process as possible and must secure approval for the externship no later than the deadline for rising 3Ls to file Pathway B curriculum plans.

Secondary Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form (Rising 3Ls)
Students who have not completed a clinic by the end of their second year must also submit a Secondary Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form by the deadline set by the Registrar’s office prior to the end of the student’s second year.
Pathway A:
Students who indicate on the Secondary Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form that they plan to satisfy the ABA experiential learning requirement via a clinic in their 3L year must apply to at least four clinics in the clinic application process that occurs in the spring of their 2L year or, if they apply to fewer clinics, have a clearly articulated back-up plan in Pathway B for completing the experiential learning requirement.

Pathway B:
If the student had previously elected Pathway A on the Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form as a rising 2L but has decided to switch to Pathway B, the student must demonstrate good cause for the switch.

For students who had previously elected Pathway B on the Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form, the Secondary Experiential Learning Curricular Planning Form must indicated whether the student did in fact complete at least 4 units towards the experiential learning requirement prior to the start of their 3L year or, if they failed to do so (and did not have an approved plan for doing so), why extraordinary circumstances excuse their failure to complete the units on schedule and how they realistically plan to complete the 8 units before graduation.

The Dean of Students will review the forms containing the Self-Design Plans to ensure that each student has a coherent and feasible plan for completing the graduation requirements that takes into account, among other things, the fact that some classes may not be offered every year or have limited enrollment. Students whose plans are rejected by the committee may resubmit to correct and identified deficiencies by the date set by the registrar, or may elect to move to Pathway.

Students who plan to satisfy the experiential learning requirement through an externship should consult with the law school’s Externship Administrator regarding the externship proposal as early in the process as possible and must secure approval for the externship from the law school’s Externship Administrator no later than the deadline for rising 3Ls to file Pathway B curriculum plans.