

Michigan State University College of Law

Student Handbook

Contents

I.	Curriculum: Juris Doctor (J.D.) Program	6
A.	First Year Curriculum.....	6
B.	Required Courses.....	6
C.	Upper Level Writing Requirement (ULWR).....	6
II.	Additional Policies & General Information.....	8
A.	Academic Records	8
B.	Attendance Policy	8
C.	Auditing of Courses	9
D.	Bar Admissions, Exam, and Preparation	9
1.	Certification for the Bar.....	10
2.	Character and Fitness Application	10
3.	Duty to Report and Amend/Update.....	10
4.	Amendment/Update Student File Requests.....	11
E.	Certificate Programs	11
1.	Indigenous Law	11
2.	The Geoffrey Fieger Trial Practice Institute (TPI)	12
3.	Child & Family Advocacy.....	12
F.	Class Rank and Honors	12
1.	Interim Class Rank	12
2.	Final Class Rank and Honors	12
3.	Decile Calculations	12
G.	Clinical Programs	13
H.	Commencement Information.....	13
I.	Communications	13
1.	E-mail	13
2.	Bulletin Boards.....	15
3.	Posting of Flyers	15
4.	Announcements.....	15
J.	Competition Teams	15

K.	Complaints	17
1.	Informal Student Complaint Process	17
2.	Procedures for Student Accreditation Standard Complaints	17
L.	Counseling.....	18
M.	Course Evaluations	18
N.	Course Selection.....	18
1.	First Year.....	18
2.	Second Year and Beyond	19
3.	Course Descriptions and Requirements	19
4.	Scheduling Electives.....	19
5.	Preparing for the Bar Exam	19
6.	Professional Responsibility and the MPRE	20
7.	Advising	20
O.	Coursework – Appropriate Number of Credit Hours, Credit Hour Maximum, Limitation on Study Outside Classroom and Online Course Enrollment	20
P.	Credit/No Credit Grading Option.....	24
1.	Credit Hour Limitation	24
2.	Requirements and Rules.....	24
Q.	Dean's List	25
R.	Directed Study	25
S.	Disability Services	26
T.	Dual Degree Programs.....	27
U.	Enrollment Status (Full-Time) Determination.....	28
V.	Examination Policies and Procedures	28
1.	Exam Conflicts	28
2.	Exemplify	29
3.	Exam and Paper Retention Policy	29
4.	Identification.....	30
5.	Make-Up Examinations and Grade of Incomplete	30
6.	Non-Laptop Exam Preference	31
7.	Paper, Directed Study, or Project Courses	32
8.	Religious Observance	32

9.	Examination Policies	32
10.	Testing Accommodations under the ADA.....	34
11.	Withdrawal.....	34
W.	Faculty Committees	35
X.	Grade Change Policy	35
Y.	Good Standing/Satisfactory Academic Progress.....	36
Z.	Grade Point Average Computation	37
1.	Honor Points	37
2.	Transfer Students	37
3.	Rounding of GPA.....	37
AA.	Grading - Anonymous	37
BB.	Grading System	38
CC.	Grade Curve Policy	38
DD.	Graduation Requirements and Degrees.....	39
1.	Juris Doctor (JD).....	39
2.	Master of Jurisprudence in Legal Doctrine and Analysis (MJ).....	41
3.	Master of Laws (LLM) and other Master of Jurisprudence (MJ) Degree Programs	41
EE.	Journals	41
FF.	Jurisprudence Achievement Award (JP Award)	41
1.	Issuance	42
2.	Course Eligibility Guidelines.....	42
GG.	Leave of Absence	42
1.	Readmission after Lapsed Leave of Absence	43
HH.	Pass/Fail Option	43
II.	Probation - Dismissal	43
1.	Scholastic Dismissal - Upper Level Students	44
2.	Scholastic Dismissal - First-year Students.....	44
3.	Appeal to the Dean	44
4.	Academic Probation	45
JJ.	Program Completion Timetable	45
KK.	Repeated Courses	45
1.	Policy and Procedure.....	45

LL.	Religious Observance Policy	46
MM.	Study Abroad Programs	46
NN.	Visiting Other Colleges, MSU Colleges & ABA Law Schools.....	46
1.	Other Colleges or at Michigan State University.....	46
2.	Other Law Schools	47
3.	Rules Governing Class Rank and Class Honors.....	48
4.	Additional Reminders about Visiting Out	49
OO.	Withdrawal.....	49
1.	Complete Withdrawal.....	49
2.	Course Withdrawal.....	49
3.	Grade.....	50
4.	Excessive Use and Consequences of Electing to Withdraw	50
PP.	Work Limitation	51
1.	Standard	51
III.	Code of Student Discipline and MSU Student Policies	51
A.	Code of Student Discipline	51
1.	<i>Standing to assert violations</i>	51
2.	<i>Relationship Between this Code and the Bar</i>	51
3.	<i>Relationship Between this Code and Law Student Rights and Responsibilities (LSRR)</i> . ..	51
4.	Jurisdiction.....	52
5.	<i>Investigation and Determination of Probable Cause</i>	53
6.	<i>Hearing</i>	54
7.	<i>Argument and Decision</i>	54
8.	Hearing Procedures for Sanctions	55
9.	<i>Recognition and Enforcement of MSU Student Discipline</i>	55
10.	<i>Effect of Withdrawal</i>	55
B.	Academic Hearing Procedures for Michigan State University College of Law.....	55
1.	JURISDICTION OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD:	55
2.	COMPOSITION OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD:	56
3.	REFERRAL TO THE COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD:	57
4.	PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES	58
5.	HEARING PROCEDURES:.....	60

6.	POST-HEARING PROCEDURES	61
7.	APPEAL OF COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD DECISION:.....	63
8.	RECONSIDERATION:	64
9.	AMENDMENT:	64
10.	FILE COPY:	64
C.	Spartan Life/MSU Student Handbook	64
IV.	Plagiarism Policy	64
A.	Plagiarism Policy	64

I. Curriculum: Juris Doctor (J.D.) Program

The academic policies of the Law College are established by the faculty.

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs are responsible for administering the rules. Any questions regarding the academic policies can be directed to these administrators.

A. First Year Curriculum

B. Required Courses

C. Upper Level Writing Requirement (ULWR)

Lawyers and other members of the legal profession are commonly called upon to communicate their expertise in writing. The faculty of the Michigan State University College of Law has instituted an upper-level writing requirement (the ULWR) in order to assure that every student who graduates from the College of Law has the experience of researching, analyzing, and writing about legal issues on a more sophisticated and in-depth level than is generally possible during the first year of law school.

American Bar Association (ABA) requires law school curriculum to offer at least one additional rigorous writing experience after the first year of study.

The benefits of the ULWR are twofold. Each student will acquire enhanced research, analytical and writing skills, but also will produce a paper that may be

used as a writing sample for job interviews and/or that may improve the student's credentials if the paper is published in a law review or bar journal.

The ULWR requirement must be satisfied before the J.D. degree can be conferred.

A student may only begin to fulfill the ULWR after completion of twenty-nine (29) credits are earned.

1. *Standards and Procedures for Fulfilling the ULWR*

a. ULWR Declaration Form

- i. Be sure to carefully read and complete the form.
- ii. The form must be signed by the student's ULWR instructor, agreeing to supervise the student's ULWR paper.
- iii. The form is due by the fourth (4th) week of the semester during which the ULWR will be completed.

b. This project must be supervised, reviewed, and approved by a full-time Law School faculty member or by another faculty member who has been approved in advance for this purpose by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Curriculum Committee.

c. The requirement can be satisfied through the following:

- i. Completion of a substantial research paper (at least 7,000 words excluding citations and endnotes). Students who opt for this option may satisfy the requirement through:
 - (a) Seminar course (listed on the course schedule with a "U" for ULWR);
 - (b) Directed Study course;
 - (c) Law Review program or other College of Law sponsored law journal.
- ii. Completion of a series of shorter papers or practice documents (equivalent in effort and skill development to a research paper of 7,000 words excluding citations and endnotes). This option is available only through enrollment in specifically designated courses (listed on the course schedule with a "U" for ULWR).

d. The following criteria will apply with respect to the evaluation of each of the ULWR models described above.

i. **Substantial research paper**

The paper must

- (a) Demonstrate an accurate analysis of the subject matter thereof;
- (b) Be organized around a clearly stated and original thesis;
- (c) Require the student to engage in substantial research to identify relevant authorities and to marshal those authorities in support of propositions advanced in the paper; and
- (d) Be supported by references reflecting the student's research for the paper.

ii. **Shorter papers or practice documents**

Work products must

- (a) Demonstrate thorough and accurate analysis of the relevant legal issues;
- (b) Be properly directed at the interests and need of the intended audience;
- (c) Rely on substantial independent research; and
- (d) Include original analysis and drafting (cannot be boilerplate).

- e. No student may satisfy the ULWR with a paper that was prepared in any significant degree either **prior** to the completion of twenty-nine (29) credit hours or in connection with a student's previous or present employment.
- f. No student may satisfy the ULWR with a paper that is the collaborative work of two or more students.
- g. There will be no separate award of academic credit for completion of the ULWR. Credit is often attached to the vehicle used to fulfill the ULWR, but not required.
- h. Students are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and complete their ULWR well before their last semester of law school.

2. *Additional Notices*

Students are strongly cautioned from completing their ULWR requirement the last semester before graduation. Often the demands of course work, bar application requirements, current job, and/or future job search prove to be too much. The student will not be conferred his/her J.D. degree on time if the ULWR requirement is not completed in a timely manner.

(Amended: 5-14-2014)

(Updated December 5, 2018)

II. Additional Policies & General Information

A. Academic Records

The Office of the Registrar maintains the academic records of students and alumni of the Law College. They can assist with class registration, course scheduling and maintenance of course information, the exam process, graduation requirements, bar exam certifications, and the issuance of diplomas.

B. Attendance Policy

Adequate class attendance is a prerequisite to receiving course credit. Students are responsible for: (1) verifying the attendance policy of each enrolled course; (2) communicating relevant attendance information to the faculty member, including advance notice of excused absences for religious observances; and (3) keeping track of their absences.

Every faculty member must: (1) monitor student attendance, such as by a sign-in sheet, roll call, seating chart, or other method; (2) keep accurate records of student attendance; (3) communicate the course attendance policy on the course syllabus with a clear indication of the number of absences that will result in withdrawal from the course or a reduction in grade; (4) require students to attend at least 85% of the class sessions in the semester; and (5) report two consecutive student absences in a row to the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs.

A faculty member may: (1) require a higher percentage of class attendance; and (2) provide opportunities to students to make up absences pursuant to a consistently applied course policy requiring adequate and substantive work comparable to missed class participation.

[Adopted: April 2026 (Supersedes policy from May 2015)]

C. Auditing of Courses

At the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and with the permission of the instructor, any person may audit a College of Law course or courses so long as:

1. The auditor would not displace a regularly matriculated student, and
2. The auditor is enrolled as a graduate or undergraduate student of Michigan State University or is a member of the Michigan Bar, a graduate of another approved law school, or has a degree from an accredited undergraduate institution.

D. Bar Admissions, Exam, and Preparation

The rules and regulations relating to admission to the practice of law vary from state to state. For specific requirements, refer to the statutes, rules of court, and the Board of Bar Examiners of the state in which the student intends to seek admission. In general, a written examination conducted by a state agency is a prerequisite to admission.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners is a great resource for Bar Exam information and testing resources beyond commercial providers. Their website is: <http://www.ncbex.org/>

1. Certification for the Bar

The character and fitness section of every State Bar will require any and all law schools attended by the student to certify that the candidate applying for the Bar: attended the law school in question; has been conferred the J.D. degree; or whether he/she incurred any disciplinary action (example: violation of Code of Student Discipline) by the law school in question. This certification form must be submitted to the Registrar's Office (309), and it is often included in the bar application for each state. The student must also execute a written release authorization form before the Registrar's Office can release any information to a State's Board of Bar Examiners.

2. Character and Fitness Application

Students should check with their respective State Bar for character and fitness filing deadlines, application information, and requirements. Most state boards will accept character and fitness applications during a student's final year of law school. However, a few states require students to submit their character and fitness applications during their first year. Some state bars even offer discounts on application fees for early applications and penalties for third-year or late applications.

Students must make a "diligent" and "good faith effort" to disclose all requested and relevant information for a State Bar application for character and fitness review.

3. Duty to Report and Amend/Update

Students have an ongoing duty to disclose and report any changes to information submitted in their law school application as soon as they are admitted to MSU Law and throughout their tenure here. Many students have faced delays or denial of their bar application by a State Character and Fitness section for failing to disclose any changes to MSU College of Law.

Students can avoid this by reporting any incident that involves a criminal charge, conviction, disciplinary action, or bankruptcy that occurred between admission and their first day of classes at the Law College via an amendment letter.

Students are also strongly encouraged to report to the Law College any criminal charge, conviction, disciplinary action, or bankruptcy that occurs after beginning law school. It is in a student's best interest to disclose anything that may appear as a discrepancy to the State Bar during the review of their character and fitness application.

4. Amendment/Update Student File Requests

Before beginning the bar application process, students should request a copy of their law school application and student file from the Registrar's Office. Transfer students: Remember to also request a copy of your law school application and student file from your former law school.

Students are solely responsible for ensuring that the information they submitted on their law school application matches the information submitted on the Bar exam application.

Students “amend” their law student application if there was an omission of information that should have been included at the time they applied to law school. Students “update” their file if an event occurred after submitting their law school application.

Amendments and updates to the student file must be addressed and submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (the amendment/update procedure is outlined [here](#)). The amendment/update should be in letter format, stating that the student wishes to amend their law school application and/or update their student file, and provide the circumstances surrounding the amendment/update. Approved amendments/updates will be placed in the student's official record, and their application/student file is updated accordingly.

(Updated: July, 2026)

E. Certificate Programs

You can build expertise in a specific area of the law with MSU Law's certificate programs. For current and specific information regarding certificate requirements and application procedures, students are advised to visit each program's website listed below.

1. Indigenous Law

2. The Geoffrey Fieger Trial Practice Institute (TPI)
3. Child & Family Advocacy

F. Class Rank and Honors

1. Interim Class Rank

Interim class ranks are calculated at the end of each regular (fall/spring) semester before graduation and shall not include transfer students or students in the Dual J.D. degree program who took their first-year classes at the University of Ottawa.

2. Final Class Rank and Honors

The calculation of final class rank upon graduation shall not include any students who have not received at least seventy (70) MSU Law graded credits from classes taken at MSU College of Law, excluding those taken on a Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit basis. In order to be eligible for class honors upon graduation, a student must have received at least fifty-three (53) MSU Law graded credits from classes taken at MSU College of Law, excluding those taken on a Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit basis.

Candidates for the degree of Juris Doctor whose cumulative grade point average is 3.45 or higher and subject to the Honors and Final Class Rank policy, will graduate with honors, as follows:

- 3.45 to 3.64 will graduate Cum Laude
- 3.65 to 3.84 will graduate Magna Cum Laude
- 3.85 and higher will graduate Summa Cum Laude

For the purpose of calculating honors and class rank, students retaking a course will have the two grades averaged together.

3. Decile Calculations

Students who are excluded from the calculation of Interim or Final Class Rank shall have their MSU College of Law grade point averages compared to those of their classmates (based on year of graduation) for the same time period. The Registrar shall generate reports of the grades of students included in class rank calculations for the requisite time periods, indicating decile cutoffs. In lieu of a

class rank, students excluded from class rank calculations shall be told into which decile their grade point average falls. The Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs has explanatory material available in their office if needed.

G. Clinical Programs

MSU Law provides superior academic and practical preparation through a number of experiences, including its clinical programs. The MSU Law Clinics operate as a single law firm under the requirements of Michigan's Rules of Professional Conduct. Students are allowed to practice under the license of the supervising attorneys in the firm, according to Michigan's student practice rule.

Regardless of which clinic students may be in, students will learn the highest ethical standards in real time as they provide services for clients. Our clinics serve diverse communities and individuals, and the school's clinical practice provides law students with unmatched practical experience. For current and specific information regarding legal clinic requirements and application procedures, students are advised to visit each program's website.

(Updated April 15, 2022)

H. Commencement Information

Commencement information will be e-mailed to graduates who filed a timely application for graduation by the College of Law Commencement Committee, several weeks before Commencement. Additional commencement information is available on the Graduation Information page.

(Updated June 2026)

I. Communications

1. E-mail

E-mail is the official means of communication between MSU College of Law and the student body. When an MSU Law administrator or department sends out a communication by e-mail, the student is deemed to have received notice of the communication.

a. Student Responsibility

Students are responsible for reading any and all electronic communications sent to your MSU e-mail account from MSU College of Law administration and departments. Certain communications may be time-sensitive. Failure to read official MSU College of Law communications sent to students' official MSU e-mail addresses does not absolve students of the obligation to know and comply with the content of those communications.

Each MSU Law student has an MSU e-mail account and is responsible for checking this account. This is the only e-mail address that the College of Law will centrally maintain for sending official communications to students.

Each student must manage their University e-mail account to ensure that the Inbox file has sufficient space to allow for e-mail delivery. Students act at their own risk and should take precautions if they choose to have their e-mail forwarded to an e-mail address other than their official MSU e-mail address.

b. Spam Filters

Commercial and other e-mail services sometimes block e-mail from external sources. "Spam" filters applied outside of the MSU Mail e-mail service may block e-mail that the student needs to receive. MSU is not responsible for any difficulties that may occur in the proper or timely transmission of or access to e-mail forwarded to any e-mail address other than the official MSU e-mail address, or which may be blocked by spam filters other than those applied by the Mail.msu e-mail system itself. As a result, the student might not receive official e-mails from MSU Law.

Any such difficulties will not absolve students of their responsibility to know and comply with the content of official communications sent to students' official MSU e-mail addresses.

Therefore, students are strongly encouraged not to forward their MSU e-mail address and instead to get into the habit of checking their MSU e-mail account daily.

c. Processing Student Requests via E-mail

MSU College of Law departments (e.g., the Registrar's Office) will NOT process any written requests sent from personal e-mail addresses. Make sure you use your MSU e-mail address when you make an inquiry or request via e-mail with College of Law departments.

2. Bulletin Boards

There are bulletin boards located outside of several Law College classrooms, and on the second floor with announcements from Advancement, Career Services, Financial Aid, Moot Court, Law Review, Registrar's Office, and Student Affairs.

3. Posting of Flyers

Students are prohibited from posting any flyers or printed materials on any painted, wood, or glass surface in the building. If flyers or printed materials are found in these areas, they will be removed. There are corkboard strips and bulletin boards available throughout the building.

4. Announcements

The College sends out an e-mail newsletter, the "Spartan Law Docket" with announcements of events and activities for the Law College during the upcoming week. Students are strongly encouraged to read the announcements for important MSU Law notices and events.

(Updated June 10, 2016)

J. Competition Teams

Competition Participation, Funding, and Recognition

1. Any student participating in an inter-school competition must be recognized as a member of an official MSU Law Competition Team. To be recognized as members, students shall:
 - a. Apply under a tryout or application process overseen by the Competition Committee;
 - b. Be selected by the faculty member assigned to advise and/or coach the team;
 - c. Meet any necessary course pre-requisites;
 - d. Enroll in a recognized clinic or competition course overseeing the competition team (each of which will be graded pass/fail and offered for either 1 or 2 credits) during the semester(s) the competition takes place; and
 - e. Satisfy any participation and service requirements set by the "Board of Advocates," the student organization promoting excellence in advocacy skills.

2. Students may not compete, or self-fund their participation or travel, in any inter-school competitions that have not been recognized, in the current academic year, as approved competitions for student participation. A student or faculty member who desires for the College of Law to participate in an inter-school skills competition that has not been officially recognized shall provide a written request to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs no later than March 15 of the academic year prior to the academic year in which the competition will take place. The Associate Dean, in consultation with the Competitions Committee, will approve or deny the request. If the request is approved, any students competing on the approved team must be selected under the process articulated in Section 1.

The written request for competition approval must include the following:

- a. The name of a full- or part-time faculty member willing to coach the team and teach the requisite competition course;
 - b. A description of the benefits of MSU Law's participation in the competition, to both the Law College and any prospective competitors;
 - c. A draft budget detailing all registration and travel costs;
 - d. The number of students necessary to field the competition team; and
 - e. Written confirmation and affirmation that a sufficient number of students have indicated interest in participating on the team.
3. Public Display of Competition Awards
 - a. Competition trophies and plaques reflecting outstanding performance that recipients wish to have publicly displayed should be delivered to the Center for Academics, Resources, and Engagement. Awards, such as plaques and certificates that merely recognize participation in a competition, are ineligible for display.
 - b. Awards will be displayed in the cases located outside of Dean's Suite on the third floor and across from the Moot Courtroom entrance on the fourth floor.
 - c. The most recent awards will be displayed in the case outside the Dean's Suite
 - d. When the display case outside the Dean's Suite is full the oldest award in the case will be moved to the display case located across from the Moot Courtroom entrance on the fourth floor.
 - e. When the fourth-floor display case is full the oldest award will be removed by the Center for Academics, Resources, and Engagement. CARE will then archive the award, or display it in another fashion, such as wall mounting, if appropriate.

(Revised January 6, 2017)

(Updated July 2026)

K. Complaints

1. Informal Student Complaint Process

A student with a complaint or concern about a Law College policy, student, or faculty member should seek informal resolution of the concern by meeting first with the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs who can provide guidance for most issues. Frequently the matter is one which the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs has dealt with before and for which there is an available answer. Alternatively, the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs may refer the student to another administrator or staff member whose areas of responsibility include the topic of concern.

In the event the student is dissatisfied with the proposed resolution, the student should meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. In a matter involving another student, a student who is still dissatisfied with the proposed resolution should proceed pursuant to the MSU Law Code of Student Discipline or Law Student Rights and Responsibilities. In all other matters, the dissatisfied student may appeal in writing to the Dean, or if appropriate, proceed pursuant to the Academic Hearing Procedures.

2. Procedures for Student Accreditation Standard Complaints

a. Definition

A “Student Accreditation Standard Complaint” is a written communication from a Law College student that seeks to bring to the attention of the Law College administration a significant problem that directly implicates the College’s program of legal education and its compliance with the ABA Standards under which the Law College is accredited.

b. Submission of Complaint to the Dean

Student Accreditation Standard Complaints shall be made to the Dean. The complaint shall be in writing and include the name and contact information of the complainant and the complainant’s status as a student in the Law College. The complaint shall specify with particularity the facts relied upon to support the allegation and shall identify the ABA accreditation standard as to which it is alleged the Law College is not in compliance.

c. Action Upon the Complaint

The Dean shall have thirty calendar days following receipt of the complaint to respond in writing to the complainant. Such response may be in the form of:

- i. Notice from the Dean to the complainant that an investigation of the allegations of the complaint has been initiated, together with a date by which it is expected a final substantive response will be made;
 - ii. A preliminary substantive response to the allegations of the complaint, together with a date by which it is expected a final substantive response will be made; or,
 - iii. A final substantive response to the allegations of the complaint.
- d. Appeal
Upon receiving a final substantive response to a Student Accreditation Standard Complaint, the complainant may appeal pursuant to the Academic Hearing Procedures.
(Adopted May 8, 2013)

L. Counseling

Michigan State University Counseling and Psychological Services maintains a staff of counselors for students wishing to discuss personal issues. Further information can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.

(Updated July 17, 2018)

M. Course Evaluations

Student evaluation of courses and instructors is an important part of the College of Law's academic program.

Students are strongly encouraged to complete course evaluations in a professional, constructive, and timely manner. Course evaluations are administered and processed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students are given the opportunity to complete course evaluations for each course by the last day of classes.

(Updated July, 2026)

N. Course Selection

1. First Year

First-year students are assigned sections and automatically registered for their first semester courses. In the second semester, with the exception of Advocacy, first-year students must register themselves for the first-year required full-time or part-time courses listed on the Schedule of Classes. Students requiring an

irregular schedule should contact the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs.

2. Second Year and Beyond

After the first year, students are encouraged to elect courses that will provide a strong foundation in the law. Courses should be in areas of law that are of interest, will provide intellectual value, and/or meet professional objectives for your legal career. Students should not focus on specializing in one area of law. Legal trends do change and law students are expected to be generalists in their legal education and training.

Therefore, students should consider their personal areas of interest within the law and professional objectives when making course selections beyond the required courses for graduation.

3. Course Descriptions and Requirements

Students should carefully review course descriptions to determine if pre-requisites are listed or if faculty approval is required. Course requirements will often dictate a student's course schedule. For example: If a student has a strong interest in business law many electives in this area require Business Enterprises. If a student has a strong interest in regulatory law then Administrative Law can provide the background for agency regulations and legislative procedures discussed in regulatory law courses.

4. Scheduling Electives

Students should also note the course options for electives changes every year as new or visiting faculty join the College of Law and current faculty expand their course offerings. Some of these courses become a regular part of the curriculum while other courses are infrequently offered. Therefore, students are encouraged to take a class when it is offered rather than risk missing the one-time only offering of the course.

5. Preparing for the Bar Exam

Students should also begin preparing for the Bar exam when they select courses (see ABA Academic Standard below). Students should review which subjects are tested on the Bar exam in the jurisdiction they will be applying to and check for these in the course schedule. For more information on State Bar requirements please visit www.ncbex.org and click on "Bar Admission Offices."

6. Professional Responsibility and the MPRE

Students should keep the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) in mind when registering for Professional Responsibility. Verify if the MPRE is required for the jurisdiction where you plan to take the Bar and when you are allowed to register for and take the MPRE. Example: Some jurisdictions have time restrictions as to when bar candidates can take the MPRE, such as within 1 year before or after he/she sits for the Bar exam. Visit the National Conference of Bar Examiners website at www.ncbex.org for more information on State Bar requirements.

7. Advising

Students are encouraged to discuss their academic planning with members of the faculty or the Assistant Dean or Assistant Director for Student Affairs for additional guidance on course selection.

(Updated: July 17, 2018)

O. Coursework – Appropriate Number of Credit Hours, Credit Hour Maximum, Limitation on Study Outside Classroom and Online Course Enrollment

1. Appropriate Number of Credit Hours for Coursework

Pursuant to American Bar Association Standard 310, Michigan State University College of Law maintains the following policy to determine the appropriate number of credit hours for coursework performed by students and to ensure faculty compliance.

a. Traditional Courses

Unless otherwise specified, students will complete at least 45 of coursework per credit hour awarded. For coursework with a classroom component, for each credit hour awarded, students will receive at least one hour of direct faculty instruction for fourteen weeks (or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time), thirty hours of out-of-class academic engagement, and time for a final assessment or additional instruction, as follows:

b. Number of Credit Hours for Coursework

Number of Credits	Minimum Number of Hours of Classroom Time or Direct Faculty Instruction	Aggregate Number of Hours of Out-of-Class Student Academic Engagement (over the course of the semester)	Minimum Time for Assessment (length of exam or amount of time spent completing final assessment) or Additional Instruction
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1	14 hours	30 hours	1 hour
2	28 hours	60 hours	2 hours
3	42 hours	90 hours	3 hours
4	56 hours	120 hours	4 hours

1. Per ABA Interpretation 310-1, “fifty minutes suffices for one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction” under Standard 310. See [Managing Director’s Guidance Memo, Standard 310](#) (May 2016).

Out-of-class academic engagement is considered in the aggregate over the semester. Some courses are offered under more compressed schedules during a semester. In such situations, the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs will ensure compliance.

The Fall and Spring semesters are comprised of (1) fourteen weeks of classroom instruction (plus makeup days for holidays); and (2) at least three calendar days for a reading period. The Summer semester is comprised of (1) seven weeks of instruction (plus makeup days for holidays); and (2) at least three calendar days for a reading period.

Classes will be scheduled to comply with the amount of classroom time noted above. Instruction times may be adjusted to account for out-of-class, supervised instruction. In such situations, faculty members will be required to justify the deviation from the default in their syllabi. The Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs will assign the amount of in-class time for each class in compliance with this policy.

- a. **Courses with In-Class or Take-Home Final Examinations:** For courses with final examinations, there is a separate minimum time for assessment based on the total number of credit hours for the course.
 - b. **Courses with Other Methods of Assessment:** Many courses focus on oral and written advocacy. As such, the assessment for some courses is not in the form of a traditional final examination, but a final written or oral assessment. In such courses, the form of assessment, whether a research paper, oral presentation, or a similar advocacy, research, or writing project, will require significant effort in excess of the equivalent number of in-class hours leading up to and during the week of final examinations or at an equivalent time earlier in the semester. At their choosing, faculty members may include additional instruction at the time that would have otherwise been dedicated to a final examination.
 - c. **Distance Learning Courses:** The standards set out in this policy apply equally to in- person and distance education courses.
2. **Directed Studies**
A student must complete at least 45 hours of work per semester for each academic credit awarded for an Directed Study. Credit will be awarded only if the student completes at least 45 hours of work per credit hour, as evaluated by the faculty

advisor to the Directed Study. Students must log all hours worked, even after the 45 hour per credit hour threshold is satisfied.

3. Clinics

A student must complete at least 45 hours of work per semester for each academic credit for working in a law school clinic. Student work will include: (1) all aspects of advising and representing clients; (2) meeting with faculty for regularly scheduled supervision sessions, as well as additional sessions as necessary; and (3) preparing for and attending weekly clinic seminars and case rounds. Through the clinic, students will plan for lawyering activities, perform substantive legal work, receive faculty feedback, and engage in self-reflection. Students must log all casework hours worked, even after the 45 hour per credit hour threshold is satisfied.

4. Field Placements

A student must complete at least 45 hours of work per semester for each academic credit for working in at a field placement (externship). Students must log all hours worked. Students in field placements must take a zero-credit seminar.

5. Journals and Law Reviews

The work completed for Law Reviews and Journals constitutes “other academic activities,” as designed by ABA Standard 310. Credit will be awarded only if the student completes at least 45 hours of work per credit hour, as evaluated by a faculty advisor to the publication. Students must log all hours worked, even after the 45 hour per credit hour threshold is satisfied.

6. Competition Teams

The work completed for competition teams such as moot courts, mock trials, and other similar activities must constitute at least 45 hours of work per credit hour completed. Preparation, legal research, practice, and attendance and participation in competitions will be counted toward the 45 hours per credit hour, as evaluated by the faculty advisor to the Competition. Travel time and administrative time may not be included in the calculation.

7. Variable Credit-Hour Classes

For classes in which a faculty member permits students to write longer papers in exchange for additional credits, any such additional credits will be in the form of a directed study, and must meet the requirements set forth in Section I.B.

8. Requirements for Faculty Compliance

Faculty members will be required to submit a form each semester with their syllabi certifying that their courses comply with this policy.

9. Credit Hour Maximum Per Semester

During Fall and Spring semesters: Full-time students at MSU Law are allowed to enroll in a maximum of seventeen (17) credit hours. NOTE: To be eligible for financial aid, during the regular semester (fall or spring) students must be enrolled for five (5) credits minimum, and a minimum of three (3) credits for the summer session.

During Summer session: Students are allowed to enroll in a maximum of seven (7)

credit hours without approval.

International Students: International students must register for a minimum of twelve (12) credits during the regular semester.

Any student with an irregular and/or overload schedule must obtain the permission of the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs prior to enrollment.

10. Limitation on Study Outside Classroom

Sixty-five (65) credits of the eighty-eight (88) credits required for the J.D. degree must be regularly scheduled classes at the law school. Transfer credits in "regularly scheduled courses" taken at another law school are counted.

ABA Standard 311 mandates that JD students have *at least* 64 credits of "courses that require attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction."

11. Non-regularly Scheduled Classes

For purposes of this requirement, credit hours completed in the following and/or other similar courses and/or programs are NOT regularly scheduled classes:

- a. Moot Court;
- b. Law Review;
- c. Non-law school courses in a dual-degree programs;
- d. Externships programs.

12. Online Course Enrollment (Limitation on Distance Education)

Distance education is an educational process characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student. It includes courses offered principally by means of technological transmission; audio or computer conferencing; videocassettes or discs; or correspondence. Distance education presents special opportunities and unique challenges for the maintenance of educational quality. As a complement to regularly scheduled class sessions at the College that form the core of instruction in the J.D. program, distance education courses have the potential to support the College's educational mission. The College is committed to developing and offering distance education opportunities for J.D. students that conform to the ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools, or approved variances from the Standards, as set forth in the policies set forth below:

- a. Credit toward the J.D. degree for study offered through distance education is awarded only where the academic content, the method of course delivery, and the method of evaluating student performance are approved as part of the school's regular curriculum approval process. Credit is awarded in a manner consistent with the ABA Standards.
- b. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs works closely with instructors to ensure that distance education courses provide:
 - i. ample interaction with the instructor and other students both inside and outside the formal structure of the course throughout its duration such that students in distance education courses have opportunities to interact with instructors that equal or exceed the opportunities for

- such interaction with instructors in a traditional classroom setting;
and
- ii. ample monitoring of student effort and accomplishment as courses progress.
- c. The Associate Dean for Library and Technical Services, together with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, ensures that the College has the training and technological capacity, staff, information resources, and facilities required to provide the support needed for instructors and students to participate effectively in the College's distance education courses.
- d. In any term, the College will not grant a student more than the permitted number of distance education credit hours as set forth in the ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools, or as set forth in approved variances from the Standards. Students may not enroll in more than four credit hours of distance education without approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. No more than a cumulative total of 12 credit hours will be granted toward the J.D. degree for distance education courses.
- e. No student may enroll in distance education courses qualifying for credit under this policy until that student has completed instruction equivalent to 28 credit hours toward the J.D. degree.
- f. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Registrar are responsible for maintaining an effective process to verify the identity of students taking distance education courses and to protect student privacy.
- g. No credit may be given toward the J.D. degree for non-law distance education graduate level courses or for law courses that are developed only for non-J.D. programs and not approved for J.D. credit.

(Updated: March 11, 2024)

P. Credit/No Credit Grading Option

1. Credit Hour Limitation

Students may elect to register for one (1) elective offering, with a maximum of four (4) total credit hours (or six (6) total credit hours for approved graduate level courses that are taken pursuant to the rule under "Visiting Other Colleges, MSU Colleges, and ABA Law Schools") to be graded on a Credit/No Credit rather than a letter grade basis.

2. Requirements and Rules

- a. The election must be made through the [Student Services portal](#). Students must complete the Credit/No Credit Grading Option Request within five (5) days of grades for that semester being released via this link in the [Student Services portal](#). The Registrar's office retrieves your submissions directly through the portal
- b. It is not available for:
 - i. Required courses
 - ii. Experiential learning courses
 - iii. Courses taken to satisfy the Upper Level Writing Requirement (ULWR)
 - iv. Courses taken to satisfy a concentration or certificate programs
 - v. Courses offered only on a Pass/Fail basis, such as Moot Court and externships, and make-up examination grades.
- c. Electing a course CR/NC from the menu of required Core Courses would result in that course not counting toward Core Courses graduation requirement.
- d. A student must receive a minimum passing grade of "C" or better in order to receive the grade of "CR" (credit). If a student receives a grade of "C –" or below then a grade of "NC" (no credit) will be granted for the course.

(Amended: 8/15/22)

Q. Dean's List

A student qualifies for the Dean's List every semester the student has a class rank at the 65th Percentile or above. This distinction is noted on the student's transcript.

Note: The Dean's List is calculated based on semester GPA, while overall class rank is based on cumulative GPA.

(Amended: 4/19/17)

(Updated: 7/19/18)

R. Directed Study

A student must be in good standing to take an initial one (1) or two (2) credit Directed Study. To take a three (3) or four (4) credit Direct Study or a second Directed Study: i) a student must maintain a class rank at or above the 25th Percentile, and ii) the student must obtain the professor's approval in writing confirming the directed study merits the number of credits desired before obtaining

approval from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. A student may not earn more than four (4) credit hours of Directed Study.

Students must submit to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs the Directed Study Approval Form, as well as a research proposal signed by the supervising professor. The research proposal should be not less than 500 words, and include a summary that reflects the student's initial research into the topic. Such research should include, but is not limited to, reviewing the scholarship for preclusion, identifying circuit splits in decided cases, and surveying existing scholarship on the subject. The proposal should also include a research plan outlining the timeline for completing the paper.

The following are accepted guidelines for directed studies:

1. The participating student shall produce a paper that is a minimum of 20 pages long, not counting endnotes, except in so far as the paper is done to fulfill the Upper Level Writing Requirement. In the latter instance, the policy regarding the Upper Level Writing Requirement governs the length of the paper.
2. During the course of the directed study, the supervising professor shall engage in regular meetings with the participating student and review the student's work at each step in the process; and
3. During the course of the directed study, the participating student shall submit at least three documents to the professor: an outline, a rough draft, and a final draft.
4. The supervising professor shall provide written comments concerning the student's outline, draft(s) and if appropriate the final draft.

The directed study form is available online or at the Registrar's Office (Room 309).

(Amended: April 17, 2019)

(Updated: July 2, 2019)

S. Disability Services

Students seeking disability-related accommodations should work with the University's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities and follow the procedures established for law-school courses and examinations.

Students are responsible for making timely requests and for coordinating approved accommodations with their professors or the appropriate Law College office.

T. Dual Degree Programs

One way students can distinguish themselves academically and professionally is by earning both a law degree and another graduate degree in an area of interest. MSU College of Law's affiliation with Michigan State University — and its relationship with Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids and the University of Ottawa in Canada — make it possible for law students to pursue both a J.D. and another advanced degree at the same time.

You can choose from a wide variety of dual degree programs that allow a predetermined number of credits from each program to count toward elective credits in the other program. It's possible to earn both your law degree and a master's degree or a U.S. and Canadian law degree in just four years.

If you are considering a dual degree program, you need to apply and be accepted into each program separately. Admission to the law program is required prior to accumulation of credits in either program.

1. Dual Professional Degrees with MSU Graduate Programs

JD-MBA

JD-MS in Fisheries & Wildlife

JD-MA in Labor Relations & Human Resources

2. Dual Degree Student Policies

a. **Dual Degree Student Permission Form**

After admission into a dual degree program a student must complete a "Dual Degree Student Permission Form" from the Registrar's Office to receive credit for courses taken towards the dual degree outside of the Law College. The form requires the signature of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

b. **Grading of Dual Degree Courses**

Upon completion of the requirements for the Dual Degree, MSU College of Law will award transfer credit for the courses taken from the partnering institution (example: Michigan State University), provided a grade of "C" or above is earned. However, only credits earned will be transferred.

c. **Dual Degree Tuition and MSU Law Scholarship**

Tuition for any courses taken outside of the Law College is not covered by any MSU Law scholarship. The student is fully responsible for tuition costs related to these courses.

d. **Degree Conferral**

To receive a dual degree, the student must complete the requirements of the Dual Degree program. Any student who fails to complete the Dual Degree requirements will be awarded a maximum of only six (6) credits. Upon receipt of an official transcript showing that requirements for the Dual Degree have been met, the Law College will award transfer credit for courses provided the grade at the partnering institution is 2.0 (C) or better.

Credits earned at other graduate schools as approved on the permission form will be counted towards fulfillment of the student's graduation requirement only after an official transcript is received by the Law College Registrar.

(Updated: December 5, 2018)

U. Enrollment Status (Full-Time) Determination

J.D. students who are enrolled in 12 or more credits are reported as full-time. LL.M. and M.J. students enrolled in six (6) or more credits are reported as full-time.

Students should be mindful of the College's Work Limitation Policy found in this Handbook.

J.D. students, please be advised that your enrollment status could affect your financial aid budget. Questions should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid at finaid@law.msu.edu.

V. Examination Policies and Procedures

Final written examinations are required in most courses at the close of each semester. In addition, other examinations may be required during a course. The student's final grade will be based principally upon his/her achievement as reflected in such examinations.

1. Exam Conflicts

(Adopted May 11, 1971. Rewritten June 18, 1996.)

An exam conflict is one in which a student has two exams **on the same day, at the same time**. When this occurs, the time of one of the exams will be rescheduled, but the day of the exams will remain the same. In addition, the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs may for compelling reasons reschedule an exam to occur within 24 hours of the originally scheduled time. Compelling reasons include, but are not limited to: 1. The exam schedule

changes after the student has registered, or 2. A student has three consecutive exams (for example, one evening exam and two exams immediately following on the next, or three exams in any one day). There must be compelling reasons to reschedule an exam that does not conflict with another exam and the request must be submitted to and approved by the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs.

Students enrolled in courses with simultaneous exam times are required to take up to two examinations on the same day and must be sequestered from their fellow students until the start of their second examination.

Please report any exam conflicts to the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of the examination period by submitting a "Statement of Exam Conflict."

Every effort is made to accommodate students in their choice of exam times. However, the Law College reserves the right to mandate an exam schedule when it is in the best interests of the student body.

Once an exam conflict form is received and approved, it is the student's responsibility to report to the Registrar's Office the day of the exam conflict immediately after their first exam has ended. The student will remain sequestered for the interim period of exams on the day in conflict. If the day in conflict runs through lunchtime, it will be the student's responsibility to bring a brown bag lunch, as you will remain sequestered during this time.

2. Exemplify

Exemplify is the software used by MSU Law and Guest students to take in-class finals that require laptops. There are specific instructions regarding the use of Exemplify for in-class versus take-home examinations. The College of Law Registrar's Office will provide instructions for downloading and using Exemplify each semester.

Students are strongly encouraged to take a practice final examination to become familiar with the program and the required steps.

3. Exam and Paper Retention Policy

(Adopted: April 18, 2018)

The College Complies with the ABA Council Statement that "[l]aw schools approved by the American Bar Association should practice the policy of retaining examination booklets for a period of one year. This policy applies only if the examination booklet has not been returned to the student." We interpret "examination booklets" to include other graded written assignments such as papers and journal notes.

4. Identification

All MSU Law and Guest students must present their MSU Law student I.D. card in order to sit for each final exam. Identification cards may be obtained at the MSU ID Office, Room 170 in the MSU International Center, prior to exams.

5. Make-Up Examinations and Grade of Incomplete

(Adopted: April 19, 1995. Amended: November 12, 1997; April 17, 2002; March 23, 2011.)

If a student is unable to take a mid-term or final exam, or turn in a final course paper, such that a grade of "W" will otherwise be the outcome, for reasons beyond his/her control, then the student may petition to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for an opportunity to take a "make up mid-term exam", make-up final exam or receive the grade of "I", or to extend the deadline for the final course paper. Such a petition must be promptly made after the events in question have occurred. The granting or denial of any petition under this policy is within the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, whose determination is final.

a. Make-Up Examinations

i. Mid-Term Exam

- (a) After the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs determines that there are reasons beyond the student's control that prevented the student from taking a mid-term exam, it is within the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course to permit a student to take a make-up mid-term exam, the conditions upon which the make-up exam is to be taken and graded, and the deadline to take the exam.
- (b) Given the time constraints associated with mid-term exams, if a faculty member does not permit a student to take a make-up mid-term exam, the student's grade in the course will be solely based on the grade earned on the final exam and other assignments for the course.

ii. Final Exam

- (a) After the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs has granted the student approval to take a make-up final exam, the faculty member teaching the course in which the examination was missed may administer the same exam as that administered to the student's class or a different exam. If the faculty member elects to utilize the same exam as that given to the class, the student electing to take the make-up exam must execute an affidavit affirming that he/she has not discussed the contents of the exam with anyone.
 - (b) Students electing to take a make-up final exam will be evaluated on a pass-fail basis. No letter grade will be awarded. The exercise of this pass/fail option will not count towards the maximum 5 credits of credit/no credit election otherwise available to students.
 - (c) Any make-up final exam must be taken within 30 days of the original exam.
 - (d) To allow for the implementation of the make-up exam process, ALL examinations MUST be turned in to the proctor at the time of their taking. Thereafter, neither the registrar nor a faculty member will make exams available to any student until after the make-up final exam has been taken.
 - b. Extension of Time to Complete Final Course Paper:
If the events in question precluded the submission of a final course paper in a timely manner, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may, in his/her discretion, extend the deadline for submission thereof by no more than 30 days.
 - c. Incomplete for Final Examinations
An incomplete shall be permitted for a missed final examination pursuant to the following:
 - i. A student electing to receive an incomplete must complete the course and earn credit by taking the next regularly scheduled examination in the same course, regardless of the faculty member teaching the course.
 - ii. A student who receives an incomplete is not required to attend classes, but is encouraged to do so.
 - iii. Once the examination has been taken, the grade of "I" is replaced with the letter grade earned.
 - iv. No additional tuition will be charged to a student who completes a course while holding the grade of "I".
 - v. A failure to complete the course by taking the exam at the appropriate time will result in the grade being changed to a "W". See *infra*, Withdrawal Policy.
6. Non-Laptop Exam Preference

Students who wish to take their final examination using a bluebook when laptops are permitted may do so. Non-laptop students are encouraged to bring earplugs if there is any concern regarding distractions. Earplugs also can be obtained from exam room proctors.

7. Paper, Directed Study, or Project Courses

(Adopted: April 19, 1995. Amended November 12, 1997; April 17, 2002.)

Some courses, particularly seminars, often require a paper or project in lieu of an examination, or in addition to the examination. In courses where a paper or project is required, the due date shall be the date specified by the faculty member teaching the course or, if no date is specified, the last day of the examination period.

For good cause, a due date later than the date set for faculty submission of grades may be permitted, but only with the concurrence of the faculty member and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The failure to turn in a written work on or before the due date constitutes a withdrawal from the course unless the student has been granted a grade of "I" (incomplete).

If the events beyond the student's control preclude the submission of a final course paper in a timely manner, the Associate Dean may extend the deadline for submission thereof by no more than thirty (30) days.

8. Religious Observance

If an examination falls on a religious holiday the student is required to observe, the student must notify the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs to arrange for a make-up date and time.

9. Examination Policies

(Amended: November 17, 2015.)

- d. Examination Security Policies are set in the College of Law Registrar's Office and will be communicated to students before each final exam period.
- e. Examination Conduct Policy
Anonymity, equality, and security are seen as imperatives in the examination process. Policies and procedures have been established to promote these goals and provide for the best possible conditions under which all students

can take examinations. All exams are administered by proctors under the supervision of the Registrar. Students are expected to respond appropriately to proctors' requests and to guard against even the perception or appearance of inappropriate exam behavior.

- i. Any examination irregularity, or any act of plagiarism in the submission of a written assignment is subject to discipline under the Code of Student Discipline. Such a finding may be based upon any probative evidence of, but not limited to, the following:
 - (a) Any conversation with another student during an examination, irrespective of the subject matter of that conversation
 - (b) During an examination, the possession in the exam testing area of any prohibited material, irrespective of its use
 - (c) During an examination, any perusal of another student's examination answer, irrespective of the use of such perusal
 - (d) Disseminating any examination materials or information to another person who has not yet taken the examination
 - (e) Use of another person's writings without proper attribution
- ii. Students must enter/exit the fourth floor examination rooms using the side doors of the classroom.
- iii. Students must sign in while presenting their school picture ID. Lost IDs must be replaced at the [MSU ID Office](#), Room 170 in the MSU International Center, prior to exams.
- iv. Students should be sure they have all examination materials they are allowed to bring (example: outlines, laptop) prior to entering the exam room.
- v. Late arrivals must report to the College of Law Registrar's Office so as to not disrupt the main examination room.
- vi. Students must be seated every other seat unless directed otherwise.
- vii. No materials other than pens and those provided by the proctors are permitted unless specified by the professor. All materials not permitted must be placed on the outer perimeter of the room. All materials on the desks are subject to inspection upon request. Purses are to be placed on the floor.
- viii. Once distribution of exams begins, no communication between students is permitted.
- ix. Students may not read any portion of the exam until told to do so, despite the fact that they are asked to place exam permit numbers on the exam and exam materials.
- x. Students should NOT place their student number (PID) or name on exam materials, only exam permit number.

- xi. Exams may not be unstapled, torn, or taken apart in any manner. No pages may be torn out of exams or blue books and no questions may be copied in any manner. If something is torn or comes apart, notify the proctor. No exams or portions thereof may be kept at any time.
- xii. Students should be quiet in the hallway when taking a restroom break during the exam.
- xiii. Students are prohibited from reviewing outlines/notes or sending/receiving electronic communications during the restroom break. Cell phone use by an examinee in the hallways or restrooms on the 3rd or 4th floors is prohibited while exams are taking place.
- xiv. When told to stop because the examination time has ended, students must stop writing immediately.
- xv. Exams and materials are turned in individually to the proctors. Materials must be checked and students may not leave until the proctors have checked them out. If there is a line for check out, no communication is permitted until all students have checked out.
- xvi. If a student completes the exam before others he or she may leave the examination room unless directed otherwise. Students are to be quiet when leaving the examination room and exam floor.
- xvii. Any questions or concerns with regard to exam policy and administration should be directed to the Registrar's Office.
- f. Emergency Evacuation Policy
In the event you must vacate the examination testing area while an exam is still in progress, for reasons such as a fire alarm, the Examination Security and Conduct Policies noted above continue to apply.

10. Testing Accommodations under the ADA

The Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) assists students, faculty, and staff by maximizing ability and opportunity for full participation at MSU. If you are a student or employee at MSU, and you have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, you can register with the RCPD and you may be eligible to receive accommodations. Please note this information is kept strictly confidential. Self-identification is voluntary. However, if you have a disability, not registering with the RCPD may delay or compromise the availability of accommodations. As many reasonable accommodations require significant pre-planning, registration with the RCPD prior to situations requiring accommodations is essential.

11. Withdrawal

*(Adopted: April 10, 1996-Supersedes Policy Adopted December 1, 1981.
Amended August 19, 1998; April 17, 2002.)*

"W" signifies that the student has withdrawn from the course. A student may withdraw, without permission, at any time prior to entering the examination room. Once the student enters the examination room, he/she is committed to receiving a grade.

Withdrawal from any course during a semester may affect eligibility for scholarships, Law Review and financial aid.

Excessive withdrawal from courses may result in the inability to complete the J.D. degree curriculum within the required number of years.

A student may not withdraw from *any first-year course* unless the student withdraws from all courses in that semester.

(Updated December 5, 2018)

W. Faculty Committees

There are two faculty committees which require a student representative. The student representative is entitled to one (1) vote, but cannot be present at the discussion nor vote on individual readmission decisions. Students are selected for these positions by the Student Bar Association (SBA) and must have maintain a class rank at or above the 25th Percentile to serve. Student representatives meet with their respective faculty committee, submit suggestions to the committee, and survey the student body for input as needed. The faculty committees with student representatives are:

1. Curriculum: The Curriculum Committee shall have the delegated authority for making recommendations to the Faculty Assembled for the maintenance and development of a sound curriculum.
2. Academic Standards: The Academic Standards Committee shall have the primary responsibility for the development of those rules and regulations that are necessary for the academic integrity of the College.

(Amended: 8/29/18)

(Updated: 8/30/18)

X. Grade Change Policy

Examination administration and grading are anonymous. After anonymous examination grades are submitted to the Registrar, minor individual adjustments may be made. The examination grade as adjusted becomes the final grade. Records of examination grades and adjusted grades are maintained by the Registrar.

Changing of a final grade after its submission to the Registrar is inconsistent with the grading system mandated by the faculty. When a change is sought, the faculty member may not have the benefit of, or the time to review, the papers of other students in the course and may be subject to pressures extraneous to the grading process. Therefore, a request for a change in a final grade will ordinarily not be approved. The judgment made by the faculty member when a grade is submitted to the Registrar must be viewed as conclusive.

There are, however, rare instances in which fairness might justify a final grade change. This might be the case, for example, when there is demonstrable evidence of a mathematical error in the calculation of a grade, or where there has been an egregious error in grading, such as the failure to read and take into account an entire bluebook or a significant portion of one. A mere change of mind will not justify a change of a final grade.

Requests by a faculty member for a change of a final grade will be decided by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, to whom these requests should be directed, or, in his/her absence, by the Dean. Requests to change grades issued in spring and summer classes must be made by the last day of classes of the following fall semester; requests to change grades issued in fall semester classes must be made by the last day of classes of the following spring semester.

(Adopted: February 24, 1988)

(Amended: April 18, 2018)

(Updated: December 5, 2018)

Y. Good Standing/Satisfactory Academic Progress

A student must be making satisfactory academic progress to be a student in "good standing."

To make satisfactory academic progress in MSU Law Programs, a student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least a "C" (2.00).

Consistent with ABA Standards, it is possible that a student may begin a new semester before learning of his or her previous semester's academic performance. Therefore, a student is deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress until

grades have been posted from the previous semester and the new cumulative grade point average has been calculated.

A student who fails to achieve a 2.00 cumulative grade point average should refer to the policies on *Scholastic Dismissal and Academic Probation* in effect at the time they were admitted to MSU College of Law.

Z. Grade Point Average Computation

A student's grade point average each semester and his/her cumulative grade point average are computed by multiplying the honor points awarded by the number of credits per course. The total number of honor points earned is then divided by the total number of credit hours attempted.

1. Honor Points

Honor points are awarded as follows:

A+ = 4.33 honor points

A = 4.0 honor points

A- = 3.67 honor points

B+ = 3.33 honor points

B = 3.0 honor points

B- = 2.67 honor points

C+ = 2.33 honor points

C = 2.0 honor points

C- = 1.67 honor points

D+ = 1.33 honor points

D = 1.0 honor points

D- = 0.67 honor points

F = 0.0 honor point

2. Transfer Students

Transfer students enter MSU College of Law with a 0.00 GPA.

3. Rounding of GPA

GPA calculation for the purposes of academic policies, awards, scholarships, and/or program eligibility is strictly limited to two (2) decimal points. Example: A 2.495 GPA will move up to a 2.50, but a 2.494 GPA will remain at 2.49.

AA. Grading - Anonymous

Examination administration and grading are anonymous. After anonymous examination grades are submitted to the Associate Dean by faculty, minor individual adjustments may be made at the discretion of the faculty member (example: for class participation and/or attendance). The examination grade as adjusted becomes the final grade. Records of examination grades and adjusted grades are maintained by the Dean's Suite.

BB. Grading System

Once a student is enrolled in a course, he/she will receive one of the following grades:

A signifies that the student's work in the course has been excellent.

B signifies that the student's work in the course has been good.

C signifies that the student's work in the course has been satisfactory.

D signifies that the student's work in the course has been inadequate, but passing.

F signifies that the student's work in the course has been failing. No credit hours are awarded for work undertaken and completed with this grade. Any student receiving a grade of "F" in any course required for graduation must repeat and successfully complete the course with a passing grade of "C" or above within two (2) semesters from that semester in which the failing grade was received. All grades are counted in the student's cumulative grade point average.

W signifies that the student has withdrawn from the course in accordance with the Withdrawal Policy.

I signifies a temporary grade granted to a student under the Grade of Incomplete (I) and Make-up Examinations Policy.

The grades of **A, B, C,** and **D** may be supplemented by the designation of a **PLUS** or a **MINUS**. Some elective courses are offered only on a Pass/Fail basis. This fact is noted in the general course descriptions.

CC. Grade Curve Policy

1. **First year classes** shall be curved around a target mean of 3.00.

- a. First year classes with **greater than 20 students** have a permitted variance of ± 0.07 (i.e., 2.93 to 3.07).
 - b. First year classes with **20 or fewer students** have a permitted variance of ± 0.17 (i.e., 2.83 to 3.17).
2. **Upper level courses** shall be curved around a target mean of 3.33.
 - a. Upper level classes with **greater than 20 students** have a permitted variance of ± 0.10 (i.e., 3.23 to 3.43).
 - b. Upper level classes with **20 or fewer students** have a permitted variance of ± 0.17 (i.e., 3.16 to 3.50).
 - c. Clinic courses are exempted from the curve with oversight by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
3. Deviations from the curve must be approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
4. No more than 70% of grades awarded in any class may be B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67).
5. Grades of "F" in any class shall not be included in the calculation of whether the curve for any class complies with the grade curve policy.
6. Final grades incorporating adjustments for factors such as midterm exams, attendance, additional graded assignments, and class participation shall comply with the target curves.
7. **Grade Curve in Micro-Classes**
 - a. **Definition:** A "Micro-Class" is a class in which (1) class size is six or fewer students, or (2) students are selected by the faculty member on the basis of demonstrated merit, such as Clinic II, King Scholars seminars, or directed studies.
 - b. **Applicable grade curve in micro-classes:** Grades in micro-classes shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs a good faith attempt to comply with the spirit of the curve applicable to upper level classes.

(Adopted: May 11, 2016, to become effective Fall 2016)

(Amended: August 5, 2025)

DD. Graduation Requirements and Degrees

1. Juris Doctor (JD)

c. Requirements

Students must have achieved each of the following standards:

- i. 88 semester hours of credit.

- ii. Earn at least 65 credit hours in attendance in regularly scheduled class sessions.
- iii. Cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or better.
- iv. Compliance with mandatory course requirements.
- v. Compliance with the upper-level writing requirement.
- vi. In the case of students transferring from another law school, a minimum of 45 credit hours must be completed at MSU Law.
- vii. In accordance with ABA policy, the maximum time for completion of requirements is 84 months (7 years) after a student has commenced law study at the law school or a law school from which the school has accepted transfer credit.

b. Application for Graduation

All JD degree candidates should apply for graduation in the Student Information System, prior to the end of the fourth week of their next-to-last semester at MSU Law. Only students who have submitted an application for graduation will receive timely notifications about commencement, class composites, or inclusion on the graduate roster.

c. Honors and Final Class Rank

In order to be eligible for class honors upon graduation, a student must have received at least 53 credits from classes taken at MSU College of Law, excluding those taken on a Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit basis, and credits taken at other schools. The calculation of final class rank upon graduation shall not include any students who have not received at least 70 credits from classes taken at MSU College of Law, excluding those taken on a Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit basis, and credits taken at other schools.

d. Honors for Graduation

Candidates for the degree of Juris Doctor whose cumulative grade point average is 3.45 or higher and subject to the **Honors and Final Class Rank** policy, will graduate with honors, as follows:

3.45 to 3.64 will graduate Cum Laude

3.65 to 3.84 will graduate Magna Cum Laude

3.85 and higher will graduate Summa Cum Laude

For the purpose of calculating honors and class rank, students retaking a course will have the two grades averaged together.

(Updated: July 02, 2019)
(Amended: May 08, 2019)

2. Master of Jurisprudence in Legal Doctrine and Analysis (MJ)

The MJ is an innovative degree that is primarily designed for students who choose not to complete their JD program. The MJ could provide these students with a credential that may enhance their marketability, particularly with employers who do not require a JD, but would prefer a candidate with some legal training.

Graduation requirements for the MJ degree program can be found in the [Academic Program Catalog](#)

Eligibility:

- a. A currently enrolled J.D. student who has completed the required first-year curriculum with a 2.0 minimum cum GPA and is no longer interested in pursuing a JD degree at MSU Law or any other law school.

3. Master of Laws (LLM) and other Master of Jurisprudence (MJ) Degree Programs

Graduation requirements for the LLM and other MJ degree programs are found [here](#).

(Updated: July 17, 2018)
(Amended: April 19, 2017)

EE. Journals

MSU College of Law has one official student-edited journal: Michigan State Law Review and one peer-reviewed journal: Journal of Animal Law. A student interested in becoming a member of a journal should contact the journal's editorial board directly.

FF. Jurisprudence Achievement Award (JP Award)

In recognition of student achievement in the study of law, Michigan State University College of Law will award the Jurisprudence Achievement Award (JP Award) to students who meet the following criteria. NOTE: Faculty are not required to grant a Jurisprudence Achievement Award for every course they instruct.

1. Issuance

- a. Awarded each semester (including summer semester) to the highest achieving student receiving an "A" in an eligible course and at the discretion of the faculty member.
- b. There can be only one award recipient in each course per semester. In the event of a tie, it is within the sole discretion of the professor to name the recipient.
- c. Notation of the Award will appear on the recipient's transcripts.
- d. Recipients will receive a certificate suitable for framing that contains the following information:
 - i. Recipient's name
 - ii. Course title
 - iii. Professor's name
 - iv. Semester award was earned
 - v. Signature of the Dean

2. Course Eligibility Guidelines

- a. Course must be graded and grading must be under the sole control of the professor.
- b. Automatic pass/fail courses are ineligible (e.g., Moot Court Class Competition), but courses that students can elect to take as Credit/No Credit are eligible.
- c. Students taking make-up exams are not eligible for the Award.

(Updated January 31, 2017)

GG. Leave of Absence

A student who is in good standing after their first semester may arrange a leave of absence by obtaining permission from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs, who will prescribe the conditions of the leave. Any other student who has earned credit in at least one law school course while attending MSU College of Law and has been absent from

the Law College without obtaining a leave of absence must apply for readmission to the Faculty Academic Standards Committee.

1. Readmission after Lapsed Leave of Absence

Readmission, and the terms and conditions thereof, including the number of credits to be allowed for previously completed courses, are matters for the discretion of the committee. If the absence has been for an extended period, the committee is usually hesitant to allow full credit for previous courses.

All applications for readmission should be submitted in the form of a letter addressed to the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee and filed with the committee at least 90 days prior to the first day of classes of the following semester.

Any person formerly admitted to the Law College who has not earned credit for any course while attending MSU Law must apply for admission through the Office of Admissions.

HH. Pass/Fail Option

J.D. Students: Effective Fall 2005, the Pass/Fail Option was replaced with the Credit/No Credit Option.

LL.M./M.J. Student Guidelines for Pass/Fail Grading option:

1. LL.M./M.J. students may elect no more than one (1) elective offering with a maximum of three (3) credits as Pass/Fail. Students who sign up for more than the maximum credits available under the Pass/Fail option will have the course that exceeds the maximum credits graded.
2. You must receive a grade of “D-” or better in order to receive the grade of “P” (Pass). If you earn a grade of “F” you will receive a grade of “F” (Fail) for the course.
3. LL.M./M.J. students may elect a grade of pass/fail within 5 business days after all grades are released to students.

(Amended: February 20, 2019)

(Updated: July 02, 2019)

II. Probation - Dismissal

Students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00. For students who fail to achieve a cumulative 2.00 grade point average, the following shall apply.

1. Scholastic Dismissal - Upper Level Students

A student who has completed more than two regular semesters (fall and spring) or admitted as a transfer student with advanced standing and fails to maintain a 2.00 cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of any regular semester will be dismissed from the Law College. However, the student may petition the Faculty Academic Standards Committee for permission to continue his/her studies. Upon a finding of compelling circumstances that rebuts a presumption against readmission, the Committee may grant the student's petition. If the student's petition is granted, the student shall be placed on academic probation (see below).

2. Scholastic Dismissal - First-year Students

- a. A first-year student who earns a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.00 but at least 1.80 at the conclusion of his/ her first two regular semesters will be dismissed from the Law College. However, the student may petition the Academic Standards Committee for permission to continue his/her studies. Upon a finding that the student's petition and any other information the Committee deems relevant to the readmission decision demonstrate that the student has a reasonable likelihood of succeeding in law school and on the Bar exam, the Committee may grant the student's petition. If the student's petition is granted, the student shall be placed on academic probation (see below).
- b. A first-year student who earns a cumulative grade point average of less than 1.80 at the conclusion of his/her first two regular semesters will be dismissed from the Law College with no right of appeal.
- c. The Academic Standards Committee may impose any conditions of probation on the student, such as achieving a specified GPA in the probationary semester, retaking courses, obtaining professional treatment, or any other conditions that would improve the student's likelihood of succeeding in law school.
- d. The student who is dismissed from the Law College may apply for admission as a new student two years after the original date of dismissal from the Law College with no guarantee of admission. The student is required to demonstrate, by the nature of interim work, activity or studies, a stronger potential for the study of law.

3. Appeal to the Dean

Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Academic Standards Committee may appeal to the Dean. Such an appeal must be in writing; no personal appearance shall be permitted. A decision of the Academic Standards Committee shall not be overturned except for clear error.

4. Academic Probation

A student who is placed on academic probation shall be on probation during the next regular semester. During the probationary period, the student shall take required or bar exam related courses only unless the student has satisfactorily completed or is currently enrolled in all required and bar exam related courses. The student's schedule must be approved by the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs prior to registering.

A student on academic probation is not eligible to attend summer school. If the student is enrolled in a summer school course or courses at the time he/she is placed on academic probation, the student automatically will be dis-enrolled by the Law College and will receive a full refund of his/her summer school tuition.

Upon the completion of the probationary semester and satisfaction of the conditions imposed by the Academic Standards Committee, the student shall be considered to be in good standing and may continue his/her studies without academic restrictions. Any student who fails to achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00 at the conclusion of the probationary semester will be dismissed from the Law College with no right of appeal.

(Adopted: November 14, 2007)

(Updated: July, 2025)

JJ. Program Completion Timetable

The **maximum time** for completion of J.D. degree requirements is seven (7) years. Students cannot complete the J.D. degree requirements **in less** than two (2) years after a student has commenced law study at the law school or a law school from which the school has accepted transfer credit.

KK. Repeated Courses

1. Policy and Procedure

A student earning a grade of "F" in any semester in **any course required for graduation** must repeat and successfully complete the required course with a passing grade of "C" or above within two (2) semesters. A repeated course may be counted only once toward credit for graduation. However, both grades will appear on the student's transcript and will be included in the calculation of the student's grade point average.

LL. Religious Observance Policy

It has always been the policy of the MSU College of Law to permit students and faculty/academic staff to observe those holidays set aside by their chosen religious faith.

The faculty and staff should be sensitive to the observance of these holidays so that students who absent themselves from classes on these days are not seriously disadvantaged. It is the responsibility of those students who wish to be absent to make arrangements **in advance** with their instructors.

Professors may expect a reasonable limit to the number of requests by any one student. Some professors attempt to cover all reasons for student absences from required academic events such as quizzes or exams with a blanket policy, e.g. allowing the student to drop one grade or two quizzes without penalties. If this is meant to extend to religious observances, the instructor should state this clearly at the beginning of the semester. If professors require make-up exams, they retain the right to determine the content of the exams and the conditions of administration, giving due consideration to equitable treatment.

MM. Study Abroad Programs

1. Intellectual Property Summer Institute Rijeka and Dubrovnik, Croatia
2. Japan Summer Program
3. Poland Summer Program

NN. Visiting Other Colleges, MSU Colleges & ABA Law Schools

1. Other Colleges or at Michigan State University

MSU College of Law students also have status as MSU Lifelong Education students and thereby have all the rights and privileges of Michigan State University students.

A student who has a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 and has successfully completed twenty-nine (29) credits at the law school may take

up to six (6) hours of elective credits in professionally-related graduate level courses at other colleges at Michigan State University or at any CIC or comparable institution.

Any student wishing to take graduate courses at other colleges at MSU must acquire the prior written approval (signature) of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs on the "Request to Enroll for Elective Credits at Other MSU Graduate Schools" form available from the Registrar's Office (309) or [online](#).

Grades from these courses of "C" or above will be accepted for transfer credits. Grades below "C" will not be transferred or recorded. These courses will count toward the maximum of five (5) total hours of Credit/No Credit grading option under the rules of the Law College.

Credits earned at other MSU graduate schools as approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs on the required form will be counted toward fulfillment of the student's graduation requirements **only after verification on the system can be obtained by the Law College Registrar's Office.**

2. Other Law Schools

With the permission of, and at the discretion of the Law College, a student may attend another ABA- and AALS-approved law school as a visitor **during a regular semester for compelling circumstances only**. Neither financial exigency nor the desire to live or practice in another jurisdiction is a compelling circumstance.

Permission to visit during the summer at an out-of-state law school or foreign summer program of an approved U.S. law school will be liberally granted.

Visitation at an in-state law school will be granted only for courses not offered regularly at Michigan State University College of Law.

Only elective credits may be taken at another law school.

Only grades of "C" or better will be given credit.

Students should check with the Admissions Office of the school they wish to visit or study abroad program to confirm deadlines and requirements. Students should request a visiting student application and not a transfer student application.

Application should be made to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and submitted in a timely manner. To apply for approval the following documents must be submitted:

- e. Copies of course and program descriptions; and
- f. For study abroad programs ONLY: Copy of written statement from website or brochure that the study abroad program is ABA- approved.
- g. Completed "Visiting Student Permission" form.

After approval, students must request a Law College transcript and certificate of good standing from the Registrar's Office by completing the "Academic Record Request" form.

After the study abroad or visiting semester is over, students must request a transcript from the visiting school be sent to the MSU College of Law Registrar's Office.

Since the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 does not permit MSU College of Law to request transcripts of students from other institutions, it is the responsibility of the student to assure that an official transcript from the visited institution is sent to the MSU College of Law Registrar's Office at the completion of the semester of visitation. Upon receipt of an official transcript, credits for any course taken at another law school will be recorded as "Pass" when transferred back to MSU College of Law, provided a grade of "C" or better has been earned.

3. Rules Governing Class Rank and Class Honors

To receive an **interim class rank** (i.e., a rank after a semester other than your last one), your first year must have been completed at MSU Law. Students who do not receive class ranks can nevertheless receive MSU Law grade comparisons with their MSU Law classmates for the same time period. The Registrar will generate semester reports of the GPAs of those students included in class-rank calculations, indicating decile cutoffs. In lieu of a class rank, those students excluded from class rank calculations can see what decile their GPA from their time at MSU Law falls into.

To receive a **final class rank** when you graduate, you must have earned at least 70 graded credits at MSU Law. This excludes credits awarded as pass/fail or credit/non-credit, and also excludes credits awarded at other schools.

To be eligible for **Class Honors** (cum laude, magna cum laude or summa cum laude) you must have received at least fifty-three (53) graded credits at MSU Law. As with class rank, this excludes credits awarded as pass/fail or credit/no credit, and also excludes transfer credits.

4. Additional Reminders about Visiting Out

Students should avoid visiting out the semester before graduation because of grade and transcript delays from the visiting school. Students must ensure they have met all of MSU Law's graduation requirements. If the student does not fulfill the credit or grade requirements listed above for courses taken elsewhere, he/she will not be eligible to graduate;

- h. Students should be mindful of the fifty-three (53) and seventy (70) MSU Law graded credit requirements imposed above;
- i. Tuition and fees will be paid not to MSU Law, but to the school you visit. Please note that MSU scholarship monies are not available to pay for study abroad or courses taken elsewhere; and
- j. Students must remember to arrange to have an official transcript sent from the visiting school to the MSU College of Law Registrar's Office. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all reporting requirements are met in a timely manner.

(Updated: December 5, 2018)

OO. **Withdrawal**

1. Complete Withdrawal

Except as otherwise specifically provided, a student may completely withdraw from the Law College at any time. If a student elects to completely withdraw from the Law College, first they must consult with the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs or Assistant Director for Student Engagement and second they must complete a "Complete Withdrawal" form. Third, we strongly recommend the student speak with the Accounting and Financial Aid offices when considering a complete withdrawal.

A student who completely withdraws from the College, and later wishes to return, must apply to be readmitted to the Faculty Academic Standards Committee.

2. Course Withdrawal

A student also may withdraw from a course so long as the withdrawal occurs by a specific time. **Note:** A student may not withdraw from *any first-year course* unless the student withdraws from all courses in that semester.

a. **Final Examination Course**

In courses in which a final examination is given, whether or not a paper also is required, a student who wishes to withdraw from the course must do so prior to commencement of the examination. Failure to appear for the examination constitutes a withdrawal. In the case of a take-home examination, the student may withdraw from the course anytime prior to acquiring a copy of the examination.

b. **Paper Course**

In courses in which a paper is required in lieu of a final examination, the failure to turn in a written work product on or before the due date constitutes a withdrawal. A grade of "W" is entered for each course from which the student withdraws or is administratively withdrawn.

c. **Research, Writing, and Analysis; and Advocacy**

A student may not withdraw from RWA or Advocacy unless the student withdraws from all courses that semester.

d. **Course with Multiple Writing Assignments**

In a course which has multiple written assignments throughout the semester but no final exam, a professor may withdraw a student from the course if at least one deadline for an assignment has not been met and the professor, after inquiry of the student, believes that the student is no longer an active participant in the class. A student may not withdraw from a course after submission of the final assignment for the semester.

e. **Attendance**

A student may be withdrawn from a course by a professor for failure to comply with a written and distributed attendance policy.

3. **Grade**

A "W" grade carries no credit and is not included in computing the student's grade point average. The grade of "W" is final. It cannot be changed or removed by taking a subsequent examination or turning in a paper or project after the due date.

4. **Excessive Use and Consequences of Electing to Withdraw**

Excessive use of the withdrawal policy by regularly withdrawing from one or more courses for which he/she registered, either officially or by not taking the examination therein, will negatively affect eligibility for scholarships and for honors awards, and qualification for financial aid.

PP. Work Limitation

1. Standard

First-Year students attending Michigan State University College of Law may not engage in employment in excess of twenty (20) hours per week.

(Amended: July 2025)

III. Code of Student Discipline and MSU Student Policies

A. Code of Student Discipline

1. *Standing to assert violations*

Any faculty, staff (including examination proctors), or student of the Law College has standing to assert a violation of this Code. Such assertion shall be made to the Dean of the Law College, who shall then proceed as set forth in Section V.

2. *Relationship Between this Code and the Bar*

Any violation found to have occurred pursuant to this Code shall be reported to the appropriate State Board of Law Examiners, Character and Fitness Section, whenever admission to a State Bar is sought by a student found to have violated this Code.

3. *Relationship Between this Code and Law Student Rights and Responsibilities (LSRR).*

As aspiring members of the legal profession generally, and of one or more state bar associations specifically, law students are subject to standards of conduct relating to their character and fitness to engage in the practice of law. The obligation to assess the

character and fitness of law students is imposed upon the faculty and administration of the College of Law, and is not appropriately delegated in any manner to non-lawyers.

This Code provides the process and standards under which the College of Law will assess, discipline, and report matters going to the character and fitness of a law student to engage in the practice of law.

The LSRR describes the rights and responsibilities of law students in all matters not falling under the jurisdiction of the Code of Student Discipline. All matters arising within the jurisdiction of the LSRR are subject to the procedures described in the Academic Hearing Procedures for Michigan State University College of Law.

In appropriate cases, matters arising under the LSRR may be reported to a character and fitness committee (or equivalent) for a state bar if it is determined that those matters implicate the obligation of the College of Law to report matters relating to a law student's character and fitness to engage in the practice of law to a state bar to which the law student seeks admission.

The Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall make an initial determination whether the matter raises issues going to character and fitness and must be decided under the procedures and standards of the Code of Student Discipline or whether the matter is not within the Code of Student Discipline and therefore must be decided under the procedures and standards of the LSRR and the Academic Hearing Procedures.

Any student whose matter is determined to be within the scope of the Code of Student Discipline may appeal that decision to the Dean. In the event the Dean determines that the matter is subject to the Code of Student Discipline, the student may appeal the Dean's determination that the matter is subject to the Code of Student Discipline to a faculty hearing board organized pursuant to Section VI of the Code of Student Discipline

4. Jurisdiction.

a. Violations potentially subject to discipline under this Code shall include:

- i. Any examination irregularity or any act of plagiarism in the submission of a written assignment. Such a finding may be based upon any probative evidence of, but not limited to, the following:
 - (a). Any conversation with another student during an examination, irrespective of the subject matter of that conversation.
 - (b). During an examination, the possession in the examination area of any prohibited material, irrespective of its use.

- (c). During the examination, any perusal of another student's examination answer, irrespective of the use of such perusal.
 - (d). Disseminating any examination materials or information with another person who has not yet taken the examination.
 - (e). Use of another person's writings without proper attribution.
- ii. Any act that is significantly disruptive of the functioning of the College or of any class.
- iii. Any act respecting the College, its Trustees, faculty, staff or students which would constitute a felony or misdemeanor under Federal, Michigan, or local law;
- iv. Any act of deceit, dishonesty, or misrepresentation of a degree that calls into question the perpetrator's character and fitness to engage in the practice of law;
- v. Any unauthorized intentional destruction or defacement of college property or property within the college;
- vi. Any violation of the MSU Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct or Anti-Discrimination Policies, as determined by the appropriate MSU office.
- vii. The assertion of a frivolous allegation of impropriety under this Code.
- b. The foregoing shall not be deemed to limit the authority of the faculty and the administration to maintain order and professional decorum in the classroom and throughout the college. Professional decorum shall include avoidance at the college of the public use of epithets and slurs. This rule does not apply to nor prohibit the expression of ideas; an exchange of ideas is encouraged, not discouraged.
- c. The provisions of this Code also extend to conduct that occurs while an MSU College of Law student is enrolled at another institution of higher learning, whether as a visitor at another law school, as a candidate for a joint degree or pursuant to permission to take elective credits in a graduate department at MSU.

5. *Investigation and Determination of Probable Cause*

The Dean, or the Dean's designee, shall have the responsibility for investigating allegations of impropriety. The Dean shall determine whether there is probable cause to believe that a violation has occurred and whether there is probable cause to believe the student against whom the allegation has been made is the violator.

If the Dean finds probable cause, he/she shall meet with the student and offer a proposed sanction, which, if accepted by the student, will result in no further

proceedings under this Code. If no resolution is reached at this stage, then the procedures under this Code shall continue.

6. *Hearing*

- a. The student shall be presented with timely written notice of the allegations of impropriety and timely notice of a proposed meeting date for selection of the Hearing Panel.
- b. The Dean shall appoint a representative who shall present the case on behalf of the College.
- c. The student may appoint a representative to present the case on behalf of the student.
- d. The Hearing Panel shall be selected as follows: the pool for the Hearing Panel shall consist of the full-time faculty excluding any faculty member who is a complainant or a witness in the matter. Six names shall be drawn from the pool by blind draw. The student may then strike any three names from the six selected. The three remaining shall be the Hearing Panel. The Panel shall choose from among themselves a Chair who shall be responsible for the conduct of the Hearing including determination of questions of procedure and introduction of evidence.
- e. The Hearing shall be scheduled within a reasonable time. Extensions of time may be granted for good cause.
- f. Each side shall provide to the other a list of all witnesses it intends to call and a copy of all written evidence it intends to introduce.
- g. The student is entitled to be present during the testimony of witnesses.
- h. Both parties shall be afforded the opportunity to examine witnesses.
- i. The Hearing shall be recorded by means of electronic audio or audiovisual recording. This recording shall be retained and kept with the student's Law College record. Either side may have the proceedings stenographically recorded at his/her own expense.
- j. The strict rules of evidence shall not apply. The Chair should permit the introduction of any relevant evidence that is not inherently untrustworthy.
- k. The student is not required to testify at the Hearing.
- l. The College shall have the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that a violation has occurred and that the student committed the violation.

7. *Argument and Decision*

After submission of all of the evidence, the Dean's representative shall make a final argument, which shall address itself both to the substantive issues and to the question of the appropriate sanction should the Hearing Panel find that a violation has occurred. The student or student's representative will be given a

like opportunity to argue to the Panel. The Dean's representative may make a second argument limited to matters of rebuttal. When the arguments are concluded, the Hearing panel shall deliberate in private and make written findings on the issues. If a finding is made that a violation by the student has been proven, the Panel shall impose an appropriate sanction. The findings and decision of the Hearing Panel shall be forwarded to the Dean and to the student. The decision of the Panel is final.

8. Hearing Procedures for Sanctions

Where the appropriate MSU office has determined that a student has violated MSU's Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy or its Anti-Discrimination Policy, the student may seek a hearing under section f only as to the propriety of the sanction to be imposed by the Law College. A student contesting the adjudication on the underlying merits of the allegation must use the appeal process afforded by the appropriate MSU office.

9. *Recognition and Enforcement of MSU Student Discipline*

Any disciplinary action taken by Michigan State University against an MSU College of Law student will be recognized and enforced by the Law College, to the extent that it is subject to this Code.

10. *Effect of Withdrawal*

If a student withdraws during an investigation, the proceedings are terminated.

(Code Amendments: March 1994, February 2015, April 17, 2019)

B. Academic Hearing Procedures for Michigan State University College of Law

The Student Rights and Responsibilities at Michigan State University (SRR) and the Law Student Rights and Responsibilities (LSRR) documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU law students and prescribe procedures for resolving allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the LSRR, the College of Law establishes the following College of Law Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating academic grievances and complaints.

1. JURISDICTION OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD:

- a. The College of Law Hearing Board serves as:

- (a) the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving students who allege violations of student academic rights and students seeking to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) in the following situations:
 - (i) the Dean of the College of Law administers the course or program where the alleged violation took place.
 - (ii) the Dean of The Graduate School selects the College of Law Hearing Board to hear a case of ambiguous jurisdiction.
 - (b) the initial Hearing Board for academic disciplinary hearings for students in the College of Law who are accused of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violating professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) and the Dean, or designee, of the College of Law seeks to impose sanctions in addition to, or other than, a penalty grade. The students, after meeting with the Dean of The Graduate School, may opt for a hearing before the College of Law Hearing Board or for an administrative hearing before the Dean of The Graduate School.
 - (c) the initial Hearing Board for complaints filed by a member of the law college community against a law student alleging academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, or falsification of admission or academic records.
- b. Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD:

- c. The College of Law shall constitute a Hearing Board pool no later than the end of the tenth week of the spring semester. The Hearing Board pool of seven faculty members shall be nominated by the Faculty Advisory Council as part of the committee assignment process during the spring semester, and approved by faculty vote at a faculty meeting. Only full-time regular faculty at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor may be members of the Hearing Board pool. The Hearing Board pool of seven law students shall be selected by the Assistant Director for Student Engagement with the names forwarded to the Faculty Advisory Council no later than the fourth week of the spring semester. The students should be second year law students who serve in some leadership capacity at the College of Law, maintain a class rank at the 50th Percentile or higher, and are available to serve on the Hearing Board during the next academic year.

- d. The Hearing Board shall be made up of three students and three faculty, drawn by lottery from the Hearing Board pools of students and faculty. In addition, the Hearing Board will include a Chair, named by the Faculty Advisory Council and approved by the faculty.
- e. All members of the Hearing Board shall have a vote, except the Chair, who shall vote only in the event of a tie.
- f. The College of Law will train Hearing Board members about these procedures and the applicable sections of the SRR and LSRR.

3. REFERRAL TO THE COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD:

Where possible, a grievant or complainant is encouraged to seek resolution and redress informally through the Office of Student Affairs or with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

- i. Grievance Hearing
 - (f). After consulting with the instructor, students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. The hearing will occur at the College of Law level if one of the conditions outlined in 1.A.1 above exists. At any time in the grievance process, students may consult with the University Ombudsperson.
 - (g). The deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is week seven of the fourteen-week semester following the one in which the alleged violation occurred (exclusive of the scheduled vacation periods, such as summer break (May – August) or winter break (December – January). If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the College of Law during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the College of Law no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may still proceed.
 - (h). A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the alleged violation(s) of academic rights in sufficient detail to justify a hearing, (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted.
- ii. Disciplinary Hearing

- (i). For complaints that involve allegations of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, or falsifying academic and admission records), the complainant (instructor) or the Dean of the College of Law, or designee, may request an academic disciplinary hearing to impose sanctions in addition to, or other than, a penalty grade. Students may request an administrative hearing before the Dean of The Graduate School or a hearing before the College of Law Hearing Board. However, if the Dean of the College of Law, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has ten class days to request an academic grievance hearing to contest the allegation. Disciplinary hearings are held in abeyance until the conclusion of the grievance hearing, including appeals.
- (j). If a disciplinary hearing by either the Dean of The Graduate School or the College of Law Hearing Board is pending the outcome of a grievance hearing by a student to contest an allegation of academic misconduct, and the initial Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the disciplinary hearing would proceed promptly, pending an appeal, if any, within five class days by the student to the University Graduate Judiciary (UGJ). If the initial Hearing Board finds for the student, the academic disciplinary hearing would be dismissed, pending an appeal, if any, by the instructor to the UGJ.

4. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

- i. Students requesting an academic grievance hearing involving a filed grievance or complaint outlined in the Law Student Rights and Responsibilities document will send their request for a hearing in writing to the Chair of the Hearing Board.
- ii. Within five class days of receipt of the request, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:
 - (k). forward the request for a hearing to the respondent;
 - (l). send the names of the pool of Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within three class days of this notification;
 - (m). rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board through a lottery drawing from remaining members of the faculty and student Hearing Board pools, and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College; and

- (n). send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and send all parties a copy of these procedures.
- iii. When serving as the initial Hearing Board and within five class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request and all submitted information, and decide to:
 - (o). accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.
 - (p). reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties; e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)
 - (q). invite the parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. (Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing.)
- iv. If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary after the initial hearing, and request a reply to the grievance from the respondent.
- v. At least ten class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board of the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and, if necessary, request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing.
- vi. At least five class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall provide each party with a written notice of the hearing including:
 - (r). the names of the parties;
 - (s). the nature of the issues to be heard with sufficient detail to enable each party to prepare its respective case;
 - (t). the date, time, and place of the hearing;
 - (u). the names of witnesses (if any) and advisor (if any); and
 - (v). the names of the Hearing Board members.
- vii. The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least three class days before the hearing, in lieu of a personal appearance.
- viii. Each party is expected to appear at the hearing and present the party's case to the Hearing Board.
- ix. In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board and to the opposing party at least three class days before the scheduled hearing.

- x. Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request.
- xi. At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing. (See Section IV.F. above.)
- xii. Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close a hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order.
- xiii. Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process.

5. HEARING PROCEDURES:

- i. The Hearing will proceed as follows:
 - (w). Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time limitations for presentations by each party and the witnesses and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:
 - (i). In academic grievance hearings in which a student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.
 - (ii). In hearings involving students seeking to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.
 - (iii). In academic disciplinary hearings, the Hearing Board is asked only to determine if sanctions in addition to, or other than, a penalty grade are warranted.
 - (iv). All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on a "preponderance of the evidence."
 - (x). If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause.
 - (y). If the respondent fails to appear, in person or via an electronic channel, at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing, hear the case in the respondent's absence, or dismiss the case.
 - (z). If the respondent is absent from the College of Law during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the

College of Law before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed or the Hearing Board may dismiss the matter.

- (aa). To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board.
- (bb). Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements directly relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.
- (cc). Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.
- (dd). Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant and the complainant's advisor, if any.
- (ee). Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant and the complainant's advisor, if any.
- (ff). Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
- (gg). Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
- (hh). Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

6. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES

- i. Deliberation:

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting.

ii. Decision:

(ii). In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving students in which the College of Law Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body and, based on a "preponderance of the evidence," a majority of the Hearing Board finds that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall direct the Dean, or designee, to implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Dean, or designee.

(jj). In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving students in which the College of Law Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on a "preponderance of the evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Dean, or designee, that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the complainant (instructor), the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file.

(kk). In disciplinary hearings involving academic misconduct by students in which the College of Law Hearing Board based on a "preponderance of the evidence," finds that disciplinary action in addition to, or other than, a penalty grade is warranted, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Dean, or designee, an appropriate sanction. The Dean, in consultation with the Hearing Board, would then implement an appropriate sanction. If the Hearing Board recommends that no sanctions in addition to, or other than, are warranted, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall so inform the Dean, or designee.

(ll). In a hearing based upon a complaint against a student in which the College of Law Hearing Board based upon "a preponderance of the evidence," finds that disciplinary action is warranted, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Dean, or designee, an appropriate

sanction. The Dean, in consultation with the Hearing Board, would then implement an appropriate sanction.

iii. Written Report:

(mm). The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within three class days of the hearing. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy.

(nn). The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within five class days following notice of the decision.

(oo). The Chair of the Hearing Board shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School.

(pp). All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision.

(qq). At any time during this process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson.

7. APPEAL OF COLLEGE OF LAW HEARING BOARD DECISION:

- i. Either party may appeal a decision by the College of Law Hearing Board, to the University Graduate Judiciary for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records).
- ii. All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the University Graduate Judiciary within five class days following notification of the College of Law Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the College of Law Hearing Board will be held in abeyance.
- iii. A request for an appeal of a College of Law Hearing Board decision to the University Graduate Judiciary must cite the specific applicable procedure(s) the initial Hearing Board allegedly failed to follow or allege that findings of the College of Law Hearing Board were not supported by the "preponderance of the evidence." The request must state the alleged defects in sufficient detail to justify a hearing and also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate.

8. RECONSIDERATION:

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the Hearing Board to reconsider the case within 30 days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing.

9. AMENDMENT:

(rr). Any member of the law college community may initiate a proposal to amend or revise this document. All such proposals shall be referred to the Academic Standards Committee.

(ss). This document may be amended from time to time by majority vote of the faculty assembled (as defined in the September 2012 law college bylaws approved by the faculty of the law college) as a matter relating to academic standards.

10. FILE COPY:

The Dean of the College of Law shall file a copy of these procedures with the Office of the Ombudsperson and with the Dean of The Graduate School.

C. Spartan Life/MSU Student Handbook

MSU College of Law students are also expected to adhere to the MSU policies and procedures listed in the MSU Student Handbook and Resource Guide ([Spartan Life](#)).

IV. Plagiarism Policy

A. Plagiarism Policy

The Michigan State University College of Law Code of Student Discipline forbids "any act of plagiarism in the submission of a written assignment." It also forbids "[a]ny act of deceit, dishonesty, or misrepresentation." Plagiarism is a form of misrepresentation. It is the appropriation of the words, ideas or thoughts of another and representation of them as one's own original work.

Example: A student can unintentionally plagiarize. A student submitted a journal paper and it was selected for publication. After cite checks were conducted the student was charged with failure to properly cite the source of the information. Footnotes were not sufficient to avoid plagiarism. Therefore, students should not

use words verbatim without listing them as quotes, providing quotation marks, and proper citation. Incidents of plagiarism tend to arise most with ULWR papers, due to time constraints. Students are encouraged to manage their time accordingly.

It is the policy of the Michigan State University College of Law that any student found guilty of plagiarism, whether in connection with an examination or any paper, assignment or project, including but not limited to course assignments, research assignments by individual professors, directed studies, and Moot Court and Law Review written work, shall be subject to the procedures and penalties set forth in the Code of Student Discipline.

Plagiarism is avoided if proper attribution is made for the words and ideas of others since this makes it clear to the reader that the author is not claiming the words or ideas as original. What is proper attribution? If the exact words (or the exact words with omissions) of another are used, the student must so indicate by the use of quotation marks or appropriate indentation, and at that place in the work, either by footnote, endnote or textual reference, must specify the exact location of the source. If a thought or idea of another person is used, the student must, at that place in the work, specify the source. Restatement of another's ideas by means of paraphrase is to be avoided and in any event does not relieve the obligation of giving credit to the source. Proper attribution requires noting the source of the words and ideas used at the point where they appear in the work and not simply as part of a general bibliography. Also, any acknowledgment of another's work must refer to all material not the original work of the writer: to acknowledge part of another's work while using other parts without acknowledgment is still plagiarism.

Some special issues warrant mention.

Students may be asked to draft forms, such as a will, a complaint, a contract, etc., as part of their work. Unless the instructor indicates otherwise, students are not expected to invent new forms. They may use another source, such as a form book or law office document bank, and make only the modifications called for by the problem presented. Citation to the source is not required unless so stated by the instructor. However, students may not use the work product of another student which was prepared concurrently or previously and submitted for credit in the same or in a different course at the law school unless expressly authorized by the instructor.

Students engaged in preparing written work may be permitted or required to submit a rough draft of their work in progress. Since drafts are, by definition, not completed works, no question of plagiarism can arise over the submission of a draft. By the same token, approval of a draft that lacks proper attribution is never a defense to a

charge that the final product is plagiarized. In those instances where a draft is submitted for credit, e.g., the draft appellate brief in Advocacy, proper attribution is required the same as if the draft were a final product.

Students may be permitted or required by their instructor to work collaboratively with other students on a project. Where a writing is a product of such collaborative effort, no acknowledgment need be made of the words and ideas of the various student contributors, but proper attribution must be made with respect to all other sources.

The question of the academic sufficiency of a paper is different from the question of plagiarism. Plagiarism involves misrepresentation. An author may be honest as to the source of the ideas discussed and still receive a poor or failing grade if the project does not reflect enough of the writer's own work. The question of how much a writing is expected to reflect the author's original thought is up to the person to whom the writing is submitted.

In case of doubt about what is expected, ask your professor, as you are responsible for the outcome. Confirmed violations of the plagiarism policy are reported to the character and fitness section of the state bar.