

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL OF LAW - DARTMOUTH

STUDENT HANDBOOK

August 15, 2024

This is the Student Handbook of the University of Massachusetts School of Law - Dartmouth. Students are responsible for being thoroughly familiar with its contents. By registering for courses at the law school, students are bound by the provisions contained in this handbook.

The law school reserves the right to alter or amend these provisions at any time. Corrections of errors may also be made. Changes in the provisions made during the academic year will be posted on the school's website. All changes are effective immediately unless otherwise announced.

Such charges as tuition and fees, the policies associated with such charges, and academic or general university policies are subject to change without notice. There will be no refund of tuition, fees, charges, or any other payments made to the university in the event that the operation of the university is suspended at any time as a result of any act of God, strike, riot, or disruption; or for any other reasons beyond the control of the university.

The information in this publication is provided solely for the convenience of the reader, and the university expressly disclaims any liability that may otherwise be incurred. This publication is neither a contract nor an offer to make a contract.

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## 1. DEFINITIONS & CROSS-REFERENCES

This handbook shall be known and may be cited as the “UMass Law Student Handbook.” It is binding on all students enrolled in the law school.

UMass Law students are also bound by the rules and policies of UMass Dartmouth and UMass. The university’s statement of the rights and responsibilities of its students, including the students’ rights under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) may be found at: <https://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/departments/community-standards/>.

The terms “UMass Law,” the “law school,” the “school,” or similar expressions mean the University of Massachusetts School of Law - Dartmouth.

The terms “UMass Dartmouth” or the “university” mean the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The “University of Massachusetts” or “UMass” means the University of Massachusetts system.

“LEC” means the Law Enrollment Center.

“GPA” means a student’s grade point average, calculated as set forth in §21.

The law school’s website is located at: <http://www.umassd.edu/law/>.

The UMass Dartmouth *Code of Student Conduct* appears at: <https://www.umassd.edu/policies/active-policy-list/students/student-conduct-policies-and-procedures/>

The UMass Dartmouth *Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students* appears at: <https://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/academic-regulations-and-procedures/>.

## 2. REGISTRATION

### a. Process of Registration

Registration is the process by which students enroll in courses each semester. Continuing students should register during the established registration periods, which occur during the previous semester. New students are automatically enrolled in their initial courses.

Registration must be completed by the end of the Add-Drop period as shown on the law school's [academic calendar](#) for the semester. The law school's academic calendar differs from the university academic calendar. Law students should follow the law school calendar.

Only after the student meets all financial obligations to UMass Dartmouth will the registration be considered final and official.

#### **b. Restrictions on Registration**

In certain situations, there are special rules or restrictions on registration. In the following cases, a student's registration is not final and official until the appropriate approval has been obtained, even if the student has registered for the course on COIN.

Students are expected to enroll in the required courses that are scheduled in their program plan. E.g., day students should enroll in the required courses scheduled in the day program. Students who wish to enroll in a required course scheduled in the other program should submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) a petition seeking approval by the associate dean. Required Bar Preparation courses may be scheduled in the day or evening/weekend, and students in one division may be required to enroll in the course scheduled in the other division.

Enrollment in certain courses requires the approval of the instructor. To register in these courses, a student must submit the relevant approval form, which may be obtained from the LEC.

Enrollment in practice courses (clinics, field placement, and simulation courses) is subject to the application processes publicized during each registration period. If clinics or field placements are oversubscribed, decisions will be made as described in the clinic/field placement application materials. For simulation courses, timely applicants will be prioritized in the following order: (1) students graduating in the current term who need a simulation course to graduate; (2) (for fall or spring terms only) students enrolled in the same program (day or evening) in which the course is offered; (3) students who have not yet taken a simulation course; and (4) students with the earliest graduation term. If these criteria do not resolve simulation course registration priority, any remaining applicants will be prioritized by lottery.

Students who are on probation must have their schedules approved by the associate dean. The registration of such students is not final and official until it has been so approved.

Students may not earn more than 10 credits in distance education courses during their first 30 credits of J.D. study. Students may earn no more than 30 credits in distance education courses during their entire J.D. program. "Distance education" is defined in ABA Standard 306. If the law school accepts transfer credits earned through distance education courses, those credits count toward the distance education totals described in this paragraph. **Please note that some jurisdictions may impose more stringent limits on distance education credits for admission**

**to the bar. Be sure to review the rules in any jurisdiction where you wish to practice before taking distance education courses.**

### **3. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

A student is expected to meet his or her financial obligations to the university. Any student who has an outstanding financial obligation to the university will not be considered officially registered for courses and will have official transcripts and diploma held. The obligations include tuition, fees, housing charges, Campus Store balance, library fines, loan balances, parking fines, health forms, etc. Financial clearance must be obtained from the Bursar's Office.

### **4. CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance and adequate preparation for each class are essential parts of legal education. The analytical and communication skills that are vital to good lawyering are honed in the classroom setting. Students who do not attend class regularly or who fail to prepare adequately for class receive a substandard education. Accordingly, the Law School has promulgated the following rules regarding class attendance. Individual faculty members may establish attendance policies that are more stringent than the rules in this section provided that those policies appear in the course syllabus.

#### **a. Documenting Attendance**

Professors will record attendance at every class meeting. Professors have discretion to determine how they record attendance, and students are responsible for ensuring that they participate in whatever attendance tool professors use, such as signing an attendance sheet, signing into an online attendance application, or responding to roll call. Signing, clicking, or otherwise indicating attendance on behalf of another student constitutes academic misconduct. The attendance rules apply both to in-person and online class meetings. Students are responsible for tracking the number of absences they have incurred and for sending the statement described in section (d) below by the deadline therein.

#### **b. Maximum Permissible Absences**

For fall and spring courses that meet for the full semester, "maximum permissible absences" means:

- In a once-a-week course, two class meetings.
- In a twice-a-week course, four class meetings.

For summer courses that meet for the full semester, “maximum permissible absences” means:

- In a once-a-week course, one class meeting.
- In a twice-a-week course, three class meetings.

For all other courses, “maximum permissible absences” means missing class meetings that represent no more than fifteen percent of the scheduled class meeting time.

If a student misses a class meeting due to a major day of religious observance after giving the professor the notice required under Student Handbook Section 5, that class meeting shall not count as an absence for purposes of Section 4.

### **c. Excessive Absences**

For fall and spring courses that meet over the full semester, an “excessive absence” means:

- For once-a-week courses, missing the first class meeting beyond the maximum permissible absences.
- For twice-a-week courses, missing the first or second class meeting beyond the maximum permissible absences.

For summer courses that meet over the full semester, an “excessive absence” means:

- For once-a-week courses, missing the first class meeting beyond the maximum permissible absences.
- For twice-a-week courses, missing the first or second class meeting beyond the maximum permissible absences.

For all other courses, an “excessive absence” means missing any class meeting that brings the total number of absences to more than fifteen percent but less than twenty-five percent of the scheduled class meeting time.

### **d. Demonstrating Significant Hardship for Excessive Absences**

When a student is excessively absent, as defined above, the student must submit to the professor, by email with supporting documentation wherever reasonably available, a statement that a significant hardship prevented the student from attending that class meeting. This statement must be received by the professor no more than two business days after the class meeting that constituted an excessive absence, unless the student later demonstrates that it was impossible for the student to submit the significant hardship statement within two business days and that the student submitted the significant hardship statement as soon as was reasonably possible.

If the professor determines that the student has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that a significant hardship prevented the student from attending that class meeting, the professor shall so notify the student. The professor may then direct the student to complete such work as the professor deems appropriate to make up the content missed during the absence at issue. If the professor determines that the student did not complete such work, the professor may take that failure into account in determining the course grade, up to and including issuing a failing grade.

If the professor does not receive a significant hardship statement within the two business day period described above, or if in the professor's judgment the student has not proven by a preponderance of the evidence that significant hardship prevented the student from attending the class meeting, the professor shall email to the associate dean a request to withdraw the student. The request shall include the student's total number of absences from the course during the semester, including any excessive absences that the professor or associate dean determined were justified by significant hardship.

**e. Request for Withdrawal**

Upon receipt of a request for withdrawal, the Associate Dean shall email the student the following notice: "Dear [Student], Professor \_\_\_\_\_ has requested your withdrawal from Law \_\_\_\_\_ due to excessive absence. Please respond within five calendar days with your explanation of why a significant hardship prevented you from attending the class meeting in question along with supporting documentation."

If the student does not respond within five calendar days, or if the associate dean determines that the student's response has not proven by a preponderance of the evidence that a significant hardship prevented the student from attending the class meeting in question, the associate dean shall so notify the student and the professor and shall direct the Law Enrollment Center to withdraw the student from the course.

If the associate dean determines that the student's response demonstrated that a significant hardship prevented the student from attending the class meeting in question, the Associate Dean shall so notify the student and the professor. The professor may then direct the student to complete such work as the professor deems appropriate to make up the content missed during the absence at issue. If the professor determines that the student did not complete such work, the professor may take that failure into account in determining the course grade.

**f. Absences Beyond the Excessive Absence Thresholds**

When a student misses a class meeting that renders the student absent from twenty-five percent or more of the class meetings for that course, the professor shall submit to the associate dean a notice of presumptive withdrawal. The notice of presumptive withdrawal shall state the student's total number of absences from the course during the semester, including any excessive

absences that the professor or associate dean had determined were justified by significant hardship.

Upon receipt of the notice of presumptive withdrawal, the associate dean shall send the student the following notice: “Dear [Student], Professor \_\_\_\_\_ has submitted a notice of presumptive withdrawal from Law \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of \_\_\_\_ absences. Please respond within five calendar days with your explanation, with supporting documentation, of why extreme hardship caused your absences from class meetings that brought your total absences to twenty-five percent or more of the class meetings for the course.”

If the student does not respond within five calendar days, the associate dean shall so notify the student and the professor and shall direct the Law Enrollment Center to withdraw the student from the course.

If the student responds within five calendar days, the associate dean shall submit the student’s response to the Academic Standards Committee. If the Academic Standards Committee determines that the student’s response has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that extreme hardship caused the student’s absences from class meetings that brought the student’s total absences to twenty-five percent or more of the class meetings for the course, the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee shall so notify the student and the professor, with a copy to the Law Enrollment Center and the associate dean. The professor may then direct the student to complete such work as the professor deems appropriate to make up the content missed during the absence at issue. If the professor determines that the student did not complete such work, the professor may take that failure into account in determining the course grade.

If the Academic Standards Committee determines that the student’s response has not proven by a preponderance of the evidence that extreme hardship caused the student’s absences from class meetings that brought the student’s total absences to twenty-five percent or more of the class meetings for the course, the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee shall so notify the student and the professor and shall direct the Law Enrollment Center to withdraw the student from the course. The Academic Standards Committee’s determination is not subject to appeal.

**g. Absences from More Than One-Third of the Class Meetings**

If the associate dean receives a notice of presumptive withdrawal describing a student’s absences from more than one-third of the class meetings for the course, the associate dean shall send the student the following notice: “Dear [Student], Professor \_\_\_\_\_ has submitted a notice of presumptive withdrawal from Law \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of \_\_\_\_ absences. You have missed more than one-third of the class meetings. Please respond within five calendar days with your explanation, with supporting documentation, of why extreme hardship caused your absences from class meetings that brought your total absences to one-third or more of the class meetings for the course.” If the student does not respond within five calendar days, the associate dean shall so notify the student and the professor and shall direct the Law Enrollment Center to withdraw

the student from the course.

If the student responds within five calendar days, the associate dean shall submit the student's response to the dean. If the dean determines that the student's response has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that extreme hardship caused the student's absences from class meetings that brought the student's total absences to more than one-third of the class meetings for the course, the dean shall so notify the student and the professor, with a copy to the Law Enrollment Center and the associate dean. The professor may then direct the student to complete such additional work as the professor deems appropriate to make up the content missed during the absence at issue. If the professor determines that the student did not complete such work, the professor may take that failure into account in determining the course grade.

If the dean determines that the student's response has not proven by a preponderance of the evidence that extreme hardship caused the student's absences from class meetings that brought the student's total absences to one-third or more of the class meetings for the course, the dean shall so notify the student and the professor and shall direct the Law Enrollment Center to withdraw the student from the course. The dean's decision is not subject to appeal.

#### **h. Watching Livestreams and Recordings Does Not Constitute Attendance**

Watching a livestream or recording of a class meeting does not constitute attendance at that class meeting unless the professor delivered that class meeting solely through a livestream or recording.

#### **i. Failing Grade for Late-Semester Absence-Based Withdrawals**

If any withdrawal above is triggered by an absence that takes place after completion of the ninth calendar week of the semester (for courses meeting on the standard Fall and Spring schedule) or seventy percent of the scheduled calendar weeks (for all other courses), a grade of F shall be entered rather than a grade of W unless the professor notifies the associate dean by email that a grade of W is appropriate.

### **5. MAJOR DAYS OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

University policy and Massachusetts state law require faculty to offer makeup assignments or examinations to students who are absent for religious observance. As an aid to curriculum planning, the list of major religious observances is made available by the Office of the Provost. Faculty, staff, and students are advised that the list is not exhaustive of observances of any religion. Jewish, Baha'i, and some Islamic religious observances begin at sundown of the previous day. Students planning to be absent from classes due to religious observance must notify their instructors at least one week in advance and otherwise follow law school policy regarding attendance.

## **6. EMPLOYMENT WHILE IN LAW SCHOOL**

UMass Law strongly recommends that a student not be employed more than 20 hours in any week in which the student is enrolled in twelve or more credit hours and that a part-time student not be employed more than 35 hours in any week in which the student is enrolled in eleven or more credit hours. Students, whether full-time or part-time, are expected to take the study of law seriously and to adjust their work schedules to meet its demands. Make-up examinations will not be granted because of conflicts with work schedules.

## **7. ADD/DROP PERIOD**

Subject to the third paragraph of this section, students may change their course schedules up to the end of the first week of the semester, during an add/drop period, without record on the transcript and without financial obligation. In the case of courses that meet only once a week, the add/drop period shall be two weeks.

To add a course, the student must submit a completed add/drop form no later than the close of business on the last day of the add/drop period.

No student may withdraw from a required course without the prior written approval of the associate dean. Even if the student withdraws from a required course on COIN, the withdrawal is not effective unless and until it has been approved.

Students may withdraw from elective courses during the add/drop period by submitting a completed add/drop form no later than the close of business on the last day of the add/drop period. After the add/drop period, a student may withdraw from a course only with the prior written approval of the associate dean.

Students who withdraw from a course after the add/drop period shall receive a W grade. A W grade confers no academic credit and does not affect a student's GPA. After the completion of the ninth calendar week of the semester (for courses meeting on the standard Fall and Spring fourteen-week schedule) or seventy percent of the scheduled calendar weeks (for all other courses), students may withdraw from courses only in extraordinary situations with the written consent of the associate dean. Concern that the student will receive an unsatisfactory grade is not an extraordinary situation.

## **8. COURSE LOAD**

Students are required to carry the normal load of courses for the program in which they are enrolled, to follow the prescribed sequence of courses, and to make satisfactory academic progress towards completing the degree requirements. "Satisfactory academic progress" is defined in the [Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#).

A student taking 12 or more credit hours a semester is considered full-time. The normal course load for a full-time student is 13 to 16 credit hours. In no event may a student take more than 18 credits in a semester.

A student taking fewer than 12 credit hours is considered part-time. The normal course load for part-time students (day or evening/weekend program) is eight to 10 credit hours.

No student may take fewer than eight credit hours in a semester without the prior written approval of the associate dean. Approval to take fewer than eight credit hours will be granted only for extraordinary reasons. A student's work schedule is not considered an extraordinary reason.

No part-time student may take more than 10 credit hours in a semester without the prior written approval of the associate dean. The associate dean will not approve more than 10 credit hours for a part-time student who has not completed two years of part-time study. The associate dean will not approve 12 credit hours for a part-time student unless at least two of the twelve credit hours for which they seek to register are for Law Review Note Writing, Law Review I or II, Moot Court, or Mock Trial. Part-time students may seek the associate dean's approval to exceed 10 credit hours by submitting a petition to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)).

A student seeking to vary the normal course load must, by at least one week before the first day of classes that semester, submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) a [Course Load Petition](#) seeking approval by the associate dean. The student shall state with particularity the reasons for the request.

No student may take more than six credit hours during the summer session without the prior written approval of the associate dean, who may not approve more than nine credit hours during the summer session. The associate dean may not approve more than six summer credit hours for a part-time student who has not completed two years of part-time study.

Students who have not completed a year of full-time study or its equivalent (24 credits) may enroll only in those summer classes that are designated as being open to them.

For students enrolled in joint degree programs, each of the above stated regulations applies to the total number of credits from all degree programs combined.

Students are required to follow the prescribed sequence of courses. A student who must retake a required course must register for that course when the course is next offered in the program in which the student is enrolled. A student who seeks to vary the prescribed sequence of courses shall submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)), before the end of the registration period for the semester in question, a [Student Petition](#) seeking approval by the associate dean and stating with particularity the reasons for the variance.

Students must complete at least 65 credit hours in regularly scheduled class sessions at the law school and may not earn more than 25 credits in either co-curricular activities, such as law review or moot court, or independent legal research projects, field placements, or clinics taught by part-time faculty. Coursework completed in another university department (e.g., in connection with a joint degree program) does not count toward the 65 credit hour requirement.

## **9. CREDIT LONGEVITY & PROGRAM COMPLETION**

The normal course of study lasts five years for the part-time program and three years for the full-time program.

Students may accelerate the course of study by taking summer courses, but in no event may a student complete the course of study in less than 24 months.

Students must complete the course of study within 84 months of matriculation at the law school or at a law school from which transfer credit has been accepted, whichever is earlier. Periods during which students are on leave of absence or withdrawn from the school are included in the computation of this period.

Students applying for re-admission who have not been in residence at the law school for two or more years will receive no credit for courses they took four or more years ago.

## **10. CONTINUATION OR INTERRUPTION OF REGISTRATION**

To maintain status as degree candidates, students must remain enrolled continuously (exclusive of summers) or receive an approved leave of absence. Those who must interrupt progress toward their degrees should seek formal leave of absence. If a student does not request a leave of absence, it is presumed that the student has abandoned pursuit of the degree; such a student must apply again for admission to resume work for the degree.

## **11. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

A student may, for good cause, request a leave of absence for a period no longer than one academic year.

“Good cause” includes extraordinary financial hardship; military activation; or any other situation (e.g., a serious illness suffered by the student or member of his immediate family; unexpected employment obligations imposed on a part-time student) that would substantially interfere with the student’s ability to do law school work at a satisfactory level.

Students seeking a leave of absence must fully document the relevant circumstances and attach the documentation to the request for a leave of absence.

Leaves of absence for longer terms may be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Students requesting a leave of absence must submit a [Law Student Leave of Absence Form](#) for review by the Assistant Dean of Students. If the student is in good academic standing, the Assistant Dean of Students shall approve the leave of absence. If the student is not in good academic standing, the leave of absence must be approved by both the associate dean and the Academic Standards Committee. The associate dean and the committee may impose additional conditions both during leave and upon return from leave which must be satisfied. The student returns after a leave of absence with the same academic status he or she had before the leave.

A leave of absence will state the duration of the leave. Students (1) who are on leaves of absence and exceed their stipulated time on leave or (2) who discontinue studies without an approved leave of absence, as described in the preceding section, will be considered to have withdrawn from the school.

## **12. WITHDRAWAL**

A student who wishes to withdraw from the university during any semester or term must meet with the Assistant Dean of Students and file a Withdrawal Notice Form with the LEC.

A student in good standing may voluntarily withdraw from the school. Voluntary withdrawal is allowed only once and is subject to the rule regarding the maximum period allowed between admission and graduation. A student who voluntarily withdraws from the school may apply for re-admission, but is subject to the re-admission procedures.

A student (1) who is not in good standing or (2) who is in good standing and seeks to withdraw from the school more than once may withdraw without prejudice only with the prior written approval of the associate dean. Such students may apply for re-admission, but are subject to the re-admission procedures. Furthermore, if a withdrawal without prejudice is approved, the associate dean shall set forth terms of the student's re-admission. If the student fails to conform to the terms of re-admission, the withdrawal automatically converts into a dismissal from the school with prejudice.

If a student attempts to withdraw after the exam period has begun but before taking any exam, the withdrawal takes effect immediately and no grades will appear on the transcript for the current semester. If a student attempts to withdraw after taking at least one exam, the withdrawal will not take effect until after all grades are posted for the current semester, and if the posted grades trigger an academic dismissal under Section 22, then the student is ineligible to withdraw from the law school, and the academic dismissal takes effect.

**13. (RE)ADMISSION PROCEDURE**

Former students who (1) withdrew without an approved leave of absence or (2) were on leaves of absence and exceeded their stipulated time on leave must apply again for admission. Students requesting re-admission will thus compete for entrance along with new applicants to the school. They may re-use materials from the former application that are still current, but must submit any new or updated information and will be required to submit another application form and pay again the appropriate application fee. Students whose LSAT scores are no longer reported by the Law School Admission Council must retake the LSAT.

The Admissions Office may require additional information in certain cases.

Students applying for re-admission who have not been in residence at the school for two or more years will receive no credit for courses they took four or more years ago.

Full-time students who have been academically dismissed from UMass Law at the end of their first semester, and part-time students who have been academically dismissed from UMass Law at the end of their first or second semester, may apply for readmission to take effect no earlier than the following fall semester. All other students who have been academically dismissed from UMass Law may apply for readmission to take effect no earlier than the second fall semester following the semester in which they triggered dismissal. No student may submit an application for readmission sooner than April 1 of the year in which the proposed readmission would take effect. A student whose application for readmission is denied may not submit another application for readmission for two years after the date of their prior application.

For example, a student who started as a first-year student in Fall 2022 and was academically dismissed based on Fall 2022 grades may apply no sooner than April 1, 2023, for readmission to take effect in the Fall 2023 semester. A student who was academically dismissed based on Spring 2023 grades may apply no sooner than April 1, 2024, for readmission to take effect in the Fall 2024 semester.

Students who have been academically dismissed from UMass Law who apply for re-admission must comply with the procedures set out in the first two paragraphs of this section. In addition, they must include in their application a statement satisfying the criteria for petitions for reconsideration set out in Section 22(i).

No academically dismissed student shall be re-admitted without the written concurrence of the Academic Standards Committee. The Academic Standards Committee may impose conditions on the student's re-admission, including, without limitation, placing the student on probation or under supervision, requiring the student to carry a reduced course load, or requiring the student to repeat some or all of the courses that the student had taken while enrolled in UMass Law. The provisions of Section 22(g) shall apply to any courses that the student is required to repeat.

When making any determination pursuant to this section, the Admissions Committee and Academic Standards Committee may consult with the associate dean and with faculty and staff members familiar with the dismissed student's work.

#### **14. TRANSFER CREDIT**

##### **a. Prior J.D. Work**

A student who has completed one or more semesters at a law school accredited by the American Bar Association or at a state-approved law school may apply for transfer admission with advanced standing. Transfer applicants shall submit an official transcript and a letter of good standing from their previous law school in addition to the normal application materials. A transfer applicant who has attended another law school shall also submit at least one letter of recommendation from a faculty member who had the student in class.

Transfer credit is not a matter of right. Transfer credit may be granted on a case-by-case basis, but in no event will more than 30 credit hours of transfer credit be given. No transfer credit for courses taken more than four years before the request for transfer credit is made will be granted.

##### **b. Contemporaneous J.D. Work**

A student in academic good standing who has successfully completed a year of full-time study or its equivalent may register for courses at a law school accredited by the American Bar Association, provided that the student obtains the prior written approval of the associate dean. The associate dean shall not approve courses required or regularly offered at UMass Law.

To obtain approval, a student shall submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) a [Student Petition](#) seeking approval by the associate dean and stating the name of the course, a course description, the school offering the course, and the reason(s) why the student wishes to take the course. If the course is to be taken contemporaneously with courses taken at the school, the student shall submit the petition at least two weeks prior to the first day of classes. Otherwise, the student must submit the petition at least two weeks prior to the start of the course.

The student shall pay any tuition costs for courses taken at another school. Taking an additional course at another school does not reduce the tuition owed to the university. Students may ordinarily take a maximum of six credit hours at other law schools during their course of study at UMass Law. In extenuating circumstances, the associate dean may allow students to take more than six credit hours, provided, however, that, in no circumstances, will the student be allowed to take more than 30 credit hours.

**c. Contemporaneous Non-J.D. Graduate Work**

A student in academic good standing who has successfully completed a year of full-time study or its equivalent may register for courses in another department, school, or college of the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth, or at another institution of higher learning accredited by one of the regional accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Secretary of Education, provided that the course is (1) taken as part of a graduate degree program, and (2) will enhance the student’s expected area of post-J.D. practice or employment.

To request approval, the student must submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) a [Student Petition](#) seeking approval by the associate dean and including (1) the course name and description; (2) the school and degree program in which the course will be offered; (3) a course syllabus for the semester in which the student will take the course (or, if such a syllabus is unavailable, a draft syllabus for the upcoming semester or a syllabus from a prior semester); (4) the reasons why the course will enhance the student’s expected area of post-J.D. practice or employment; and (5) the reasons why the credits to be awarded will comply with UMass Law’s [Credit Hours Policy](#). If the associate dean finds the foregoing criteria to be satisfied, the associate dean will submit the petition and recommendation to the faculty for a vote on whether the course satisfies the provisions of this section 14(c).

If the course is to be taken contemporaneously with courses taken at UMass Law, the student must submit the petition at least eight weeks prior to the first day of classes. Otherwise, the student must submit the petition at least two weeks prior to the start of the course.

The student shall pay any tuition costs for courses taken at another school. Taking an additional course at another school does not reduce the tuition owed to the university.

Students may take no more than six credit hours of non-J.D. coursework pursuant to this section during their course of study at UMass Law.

Nothing in this subsection shall affect the transfer of credits pursuant to any joint degree program approved by the faculty.

Credits transferred pursuant to this subparagraph (c) do not count toward the 65 credits in regularly scheduled class sessions required under Section 8.

**d. Criteria for Transfer Credit**

To qualify for transfer credit, a student shall provide evidence that:

- i. The student earned a grade considered “satisfactory” by the school where the course was taken. In no event may transfer credit be granted for courses in which the student received a grade lower than C or its equivalent (2.0 on a 4.0 scale). In light of the nationwide effects of the COVID-19 public health crisis, the Associate Dean has the discretion to approve credits earned during spring 2020 at an ABA or state-approved law school under any form of pass/fail or credit/no credit system, provided that (1) the transferor law school changed to such a system during the spring 2020 semester, and (2) the student received a grade of Pass, Credit, or any other grade deemed satisfactory by the transferor law school.
- ii. The course was worth at least two semester or three quarter credits. Credit for multi-term courses may be granted only if the student has completed the entire course and received a satisfactory grade in every term.
- iii. The course satisfies UMass Law’s Credit Hours Policy. (Evidence required under this subparagraph iii includes a copy of the course syllabus, tables of contents of the casebook or assigned readings, descriptions of all course projects and writing assignments, and any other materials requested by the associate dean.)

**e. Treatment of Transfer Credit**

Transfer credit may be granted only after the school has received an official transcript from the school where the credit hours were earned. Transfer course work for which credit is given will be recorded on the student’s permanent transcript without a grade designation. It will not be calculated in the student’s grade point average.

A student’s total transfer credits, including credits under subsections (a) through (c) above and credits transferred pursuant to a joint degree program approved by the faculty, may not exceed 30 credits.

**15. VISITING STUDENTS**

UMass Law welcomes visiting students. Students who have completed their second full-time year at a law school accredited by the ABA or a state-approved law school and who wish to receive their degree from that school, but spend either one or both semesters of their final year at UMass Law, may be considered for admission as visiting students. The deadline for

completing the visiting application is June 30 for the fall semester and November 15 for the spring semester.

Visiting students receive financial aid from their own law school, not UMass Law, and may not enroll in courses which are over-subscribed by University of Massachusetts School of Law students.

Visiting applicants must provide the School of Law Admissions Office with the following:

- Application form and \$50 application fee;
- An official transcript of the applicant's law study from each law school attended, including a statement of class rank if available;
- A letter from the dean or dean's designee of the other law school, stating that credit earned at UMass Law will be acceptable toward meeting degree requirements and that the applicant is in good standing;
- A statement by the applicant indicating why he or she wishes to spend an academic year (or semester) at UMass Law; and
- At least one letter of recommendation, preferably from a professor at the applicant's law school.

UMass Law also welcomes visiting students in good standing from other ABA or state-approved law schools to enroll in the summer session.

Summer visitors must submit the following documents:

- Visiting Student Application Form with non-refundable \$50.00 fee;
- Visiting Student Registration Request with full payment; and
- A letter from the dean or dean's designee of the other law school, stating that credit earned at UMass Law will be acceptable toward meeting degree requirements and that the applicant is in good standing.

These forms are available online on the [Visiting Students](#) page or from the LEC.

## **16. EXAMINATIONS**

### **a. Grading Requirements**

Instructors shall set forth the grading requirements for their courses at the beginning of the semester. In many courses, the written examination given at the end of the semester is the principal basis for determining the final grade in the course. Instructors may also give one or

more written examinations during the semester and use written assignments, classroom presentations, and class participation in determining the final grade.

**b. Records**

The school retains all work submitted to meet course requirements for one calendar year after the course has been completed. After that, the papers, examination books, and other materials may be destroyed.

**c. Anonymous Grading**

In accordance with traditional law school practice, written midterm and final examinations are graded anonymously. This policy does not apply to other assessments. Identification numbers, rather than names, are used on examinations. An identification number will be issued to each student at the beginning of the semester. Students are responsible for remembering their identification number and maintaining its confidentiality.

A student who provides any form of personal identification (e.g., the student's name) or any other personal information (e.g., "graduating senior") on an anonymously graded assignment is subject to disciplinary proceedings under the [\*Code of Student Conduct\*](#).

**d. Absence from Examinations and Extensions for Take-Home Examinations**

Except as otherwise provided in these rules students shall take course examinations as set forth on the examination schedule. An NR will be recorded if a student is absent from a scheduled final examination.

**i. Excused Absence**

Students who assert that they are unable to take an examination as scheduled must submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)), as early as possible before the administration of the examination, a [Student Petition](#) seeking approval by the associate dean and explaining the reasons for the requested absence. The student shall provide supporting documentation with the petition. If the absence is for medical reasons, the documentation must include a letter from the student's attending physician.

Conflicts with work, vacation, or home schedules are not bases for an excused absence.

A student who is unexpectedly absent from an examination shall notify the school on the day of the examination or as soon as possible thereafter by telephone or e-mail to the Law Enrollment Center. To be eligible to take a make-up examination, the student must submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) an [Excused Absence Makeup Examination Petition](#) seeking the associate dean's approval (1) setting forth the extraordinary circumstances (such as

severe and sudden illness) that justify the absence and (2) showing that the circumstances arose unexpectedly, thereby precluding the student from requesting an absence prior to the examination. The petition must be supported by appropriate documentation and must be submitted as soon as possible after the absence. Unless there are compelling circumstances, the documentation may not be submitted more than seven days after the scheduled examination.

If the associate dean, in either of the above situations, deems the petition satisfactory, the student's absence from the examination will be excused. The student will be allowed to take a make-up examination, and the NR on the transcript will be replaced by an official grade.

## **ii. Unexcused Absence**

If a student is absent from an examination and the absence is not excused under the provisions of the preceding section, the student is not eligible for a make-up examination, and the NR on the transcript will be replaced by an F(I).

## **iii. Schedule Conflicts**

An "examination conflict" exists when a student has two or more midterm examinations scheduled on the same day or two or more final examinations scheduled to start fewer than sixteen hours apart.

A student with an examination conflict shall submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umasd.edu](mailto:lec@umasd.edu)) a [Makeup Examination Conflict Form](#) within two weeks after the close of the published add and drop period. In the Makeup Examination Conflict Form, the student shall explain the examination conflict and request a make-up examination. A student who does not file a timely Makeup Examination Conflict Form will be deemed to have waived the right to object to the examination conflict. The associate dean, after consulting with the instructors involved, shall determine which of the conflicting examinations will be rescheduled.

## **iv. Make-up Examinations**

Students whose absence from an examination is excused or who have an examination conflict are eligible to take a make-up examination.

Make-up examinations are subject to the following rules:

- (1) The associate dean, in consultation with the instructor involved, shall determine the date and time of administration. A make-up examination may be taken only after the originally scheduled examination.

- (2) Make-up examinations are scheduled only during the school's regular business hours. It is the responsibility of the student to be available during these hours. The school is open in the evenings and on Saturdays only when classes are in session and during the regularly scheduled examination period.
- (3) Except for extraordinary circumstances, such as severe illness, all make-up examinations must be taken within one week of the original examination date. In the case of any extraordinary circumstances, all make-up examinations must be taken before the start of the next semester.
- (4) A make-up examination may be different from the examination administered to the rest of a class.
- (5) No make-up examination may be administered until the instructor involved has been contacted and concurs in the process chosen.
- (6) Students requesting a make-up examination shall execute and submit an affidavit under the penalties of perjury that they are in compliance with the [\*Code of Student Conduct\*](#) and the [\*Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students\*](#) before they may take a make-up examination.
- (7) Students who discuss the examination in any manner with a student who has already taken the examination are in violation of the [\*Code of Student Conduct\*](#) and the [\*Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students\*](#).

**v. Tardiness for Examinations**

A student who is late for an examination may sit for the examination, but will receive no additional time or special consideration in grading.

**vi. Applicability of Rules**

The rules governing absences and tardiness apply to all examinations, including midterm and make-up examinations.

**vii. Extensions for Take-Home Examinations**

Students who assert that they are unable to submit a take-home examination by the due date must submit to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)), as early as possible before the due date, a [Student Petition](#) seeking an extension. The petition must (1) set forth extraordinary circumstances (such as severe and sudden illness) that justify the extension and (2) show that the circumstances arose unexpectedly, thereby precluding the student from submitting the take-home examination by the due date. The petition must be supported by appropriate documentation and must be submitted as far in advance of the due date as possible. The petition and documentation may not be submitted more than seven days after the due date absent compelling circumstances justifying the delay. If the extraordinary circumstances justifying the extension involve medical reasons, the documentation must include a letter from the student's attending physician.

Conflicts with work, vacation, or home schedules are not bases for an extension.

If the associate dean deems the petition satisfactory, the student will be granted an extension. Extensions are subject to the following rules:

- (1) The associate dean, in consultation with the instructor involved, shall determine the extended due date.
- (2) Except for extraordinary circumstances, such as severe illness, the extension shall be for no longer than one week after the original due date. In the case of any extraordinary circumstances, all take-home examinations must be submitted before the next semester.
- (3) The instructor may decide to administer a take-home examination that is different from the take-home examination that the rest of the class completed.
- (4) After submitting a take-home examination pursuant to an extension, the student must execute and submit to the Law Enrollment Center an affidavit under the penalties of perjury stating that they complied with the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#).
- (5) Students who discuss the take-home examination with anyone other than the instructor are in violation of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#).

**e. Cheating on Examinations**

If it can be reasonably inferred from a student's conduct that the student has cheated during an examination, the proctor shall allow the student to finish the examination, but shall immediately submit a written report of the incident to the associate dean. Continuing to work on an examination paper after notification by the proctor of the end of the examination shall be deemed cheating.

Violation of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#) may be grounds for dismissal from the school. Every student shall be familiar with the provisions of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#). Ignorance of their provisions is not a defense.

**17. GRADES AND GRADING SYSTEM**

Grades are determined and assigned by instructors according to the definitions indicated below. Each student's academic achievement and the eventual fulfillment of degree requirements are reflected in the transcripts, which are updated at the end of each semester.

**a. Grading System**

The school's grading system includes plus and minus grades which are used in computing grade point averages.

The grading system includes the following letter grades and quality points:

Excellent	Quality Points
A+	4.000
A	4.000

Good	Quality Points
A-	3.700
B+	3.300

Satisfactory	Quality Points
B	3.000
B-	2.700
C+	2.300

Unsatisfactory	Quality Points
C	2.000
C-	1.700
D+	1.300

Credit is awarded toward degree, but the grade is considered unsatisfactory.

D 1.000

Failure Quality Points

F 0.000

No credit; grade reflected in GPA.

F(I) 0.000

An F assigned for failure to complete a course after the assignment of an “I” or “NR” notation.

W Official withdrawal by the student from a course after the Add/Drop period. No credit awarded. W grades do not affect a student’s GPA.

I Work Incomplete. An incomplete may be given only if a student fails to submit a final assignment in a course. Proctored and take-home final examinations are not “final assignments” for purposes of this subsection. Makeups and extensions for proctored and take-home final examinations are governed by Section 16(d). An “I” is temporary and has no value in computing the student’s grade point average.

An instructor may grant an extension of time to complete the final assignment of no more than 30 days after the end of that semester’s examination period excluding makeup days. The instructor must submit a grade of “I” and notify the LEC of the extension. A student who is granted such an extension shall complete the assignment within the time period determined by the instructor. Extensions of more than 30 days are permitted only in extraordinary circumstances and require the concurrence of the associate dean. A student who requests such an additional extension must first obtain the consent of the instructor. If the instructor agrees to an extraordinary extension, the student shall submit a [Student Petition](#) to the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) seeking the associate dean’s approval, stating with specificity the extraordinary circumstances that justify additional time, and providing appropriate supporting documentation.

If the work is not completed within the allowed extension period, the grade will become an F(I). “I” grades cannot be changed to W.

P+/  
P/F High Pass/Pass/Fail. Grades applied in a course that does not assign letter grades of A-F and that is so identified in the course description. F means that the student did not meet the minimum expectations of instruction in the course. P means that the student met or exceeded the expectations of instruction in the course. P+ means that the student earned a P and furthermore demonstrated effort, knowledge, and ability that substantially exceeded the expectations of instruction in the course.

- IP** In Progress. Notation used in certain courses to indicate that academic progress covers more than one term; e.g., that a grade will be assigned on the completion of the task involved. This grade is used when students continue their work on a graduate thesis, project, or dissertation beyond one semester. The “IP” notation is replaced upon receipt of the official grade. Until or unless replaced by an official grade, the notation “IP” will remain on the transcript.
- NR** Grade not reported by instructor at time of grade processing. An NR is a temporary mark only. An NR will be recorded if a student is absent from a scheduled final examination. If the student is allowed to take a make-up examination, the NR will be replaced by the official grade. If the student is not allowed to take a make-up examination, the NR will become an F(I).
- AU** Audit. Registration and permission of Instructor are needed for auditing, submitted to the Registrar’s Office no later than the end of the add-drop period. This notation is used when no examinations, evaluation, or credit are involved.

#### **b. Grading Policy**

In all required courses and in courses with an enrollment of 21 or more students, the presumptive average grade should fall between 2.85 and 3.15. In all other courses, except clinics, the presumptive average grade should fall between 3.15 and 3.45.

### **18. CHANGE OF GRADE**

Grade change/correction requests must occur within one year from the date the grade was placed on the student’s record. In extreme and exceptional cases, on request of the student, the instructor and the associate dean may authorize changes in grades which are over one year old.

A student who believes there is an error on his or her grade report or transcript may request the LEC to check the student’s records. If the LEC determines there was an error in computer data entry, it shall make the change and issue a corrected grade report and/or transcript.

Grades submitted by an instructor are final and non-reviewable except as set forth in this section. An instructor may change a final grade only for mechanical reasons, such as a mathematical error in computing the grade. To change a grade, an instructor must submit a grade change request to the associate dean for approval.

Students are encouraged to review graded work with instructors to improve their knowledge of the subject and review their test-taking skills.

## 19. GRADE APPEAL

Grade appeals are pursued through a formal process described below. Students and faculty should make every effort to resolve questions about grades without seeking a formal grade appeal. A formal grade appeal is a last resort.

The Academic Standards Committee need not defer action on academic standards determinations based on a pending grade appeal, although the committee retains discretion to stay the effect of its decision when appropriate.

### a. What Can Be Appealed

Only final course grades may be appealed.

### b. Bases of Appeal

Grades may be appealed that are alleged to have been caused by:

- i. Discriminatory application of grading standards as defined under Massachusetts or federal law, or University discrimination policy.
- ii. Post hoc alteration of grading criteria.
- iii. Computation dispute about calculation of a final grade or its transmission to the Registrar.
- iv. Failure to document a finding of plagiarism that results in a punitive final grade. Definitions of appropriate kinds of documentation are provided by the UMass Dartmouth [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#).

### c. Role of the Grade Appeal Officer

The Grade Appeal Officer serves students and faculty as an ombudsperson for issues involving final grades. The Grade Appeal Officer provides students and faculty with someone to “go to” with questions relating to final grade fairness and process; assists students and faculty attempting to find an informal resolution when issues related to final grades arise; and adjudicates Formal Appeals when they occur.

### d. Selection of the Grade Appeal Officer

The Grade Appeal Officer will be appointed for a one-academic-year term by the associate dean, subject to ratification by the Law Academic Council, from a list of three tenured or emeriti/ae faculty members proposed by majority vote of the Executive Board of the Student Bar Association. Faculty members with administrative appointments (such as the dean, associate dean, and director of the Law Library) are ineligible to serve as Grade Appeal Officer. The

Grade Appeal Officer's name shall be available from the Law Enrollment Center and published on the Law Enrollment Center's web page, <https://www.umassd.edu/law/students/law-enrollment-center/>.

If the faculty member whose grade is being appealed is the Grade Appeal Officer, the associate dean shall select a faculty member from the list of those originally proposed by the Student Bar Association to serve as the Grade Appeal Officer in that appeal. If none of the faculty members originally proposed by the Student Bar Association is available, the associate dean shall appoint a member of the tenured or emeriti/ae faculty to serve as the Grade Appeal Officer in that appeal.

If, during any portion of the academic year, none of the faculty members originally proposed by the Student Bar Association are available to serve as the Grade Appeal Officer, the associate dean shall appoint a tenured or emeritus faculty member to serve as the Grade Appeal Officer for such portion of the academic year.

**e. Rights Concerning Grading Practices**

At the beginning of a course, students have a right to be told what and how much work will be required and the detailed basis of grading in the course. Any modifications must be communicated clearly and in a timely manner.

Both during a course and at its end, students have a right to know how their work was evaluated and the bases for the calculating of scores and grades. If an instructor is no longer available, the associate dean is responsible to facilitate this communication. In matters of grading, the associate dean can act for a faculty member who is no longer working at UMass Dartmouth.

Faculty members have a right to judge their students' academic work. Others' judgments will not be substituted.

**f. Grade Appeal Process**

**i. Informal Resolution**

A student with a question concerning a final grade should first discuss the issue with the faculty member involved. The student must also notify the Grade Appeal Officer at the same time, who may attempt to help the student and faculty member reach an accommodation. If the student and faculty member do not reach accommodation within ten business days after the LEC made the grade available to the student or such additional time as allowed by the Grade Appeal Officer, the student may pursue the Formal Appeal process below.

**ii. Formal Appeal**

(a) Within ten business days after the LEC made the grade available to the student or such additional time as allowed by the Grade Appeal Officer, the student must submit a Formal Appeal by e-mail to the Grade Appeal Officer, with copies by e-mail to the faculty member and the associate dean. The Formal Appeal must explain the basis for and provide evidence supporting the Formal Appeal. Failure to submit a timely Formal Appeal ends the Grade Appeal process.

(b) Within five business days of receiving a Formal Appeal, the Grade Appeal Officer will determine, based solely on the Formal Appeal, whether the basis for the appeal is valid and whether the student has evidence to support the appeal. If the Grade Appeal Officer finds that the Formal Appeal lacks a valid basis or does not contain supporting evidence, the Grade Appeal Officer will submit that determination by e-mail to the student, with a copy by e-mail to the faculty member and the associate dean. A finding that the Formal Appeal lacks a valid basis or does not contain supporting evidence ends the Grade Appeal process and is unappealable.

(c) If the Grade Appeal Officer finds both a valid basis and supporting evidence, the Grade Appeal Officer shall transmit his or her finding by e-mail to the student and to the faculty member. The faculty member shall then have ten business days from receipt of the finding to submit to the Grade Appeal Officer by e-mail a response with any supporting documentation, copied by e-mail to the student. The student shall then have five business days after receipt of the faculty member's response to submit a rebuttal by e-mail to the Grade Appeal Officer with any supporting documentation, with a copy by e-mail to the faculty member. The Grade Appeal Officer may (but need not) request that the student and faculty member attend a hearing at which each may state their positions. The Grade Appeal Officer will transmit his or her decision on the Formal Appeal by e-mail to the student and the faculty member, with a copy to the associate dean, who will implement the decision.

(d) Within five business days of receiving the Grade Appeal Officer's decision, either the student or the faculty member may appeal the decision by e-mail to the dean. The dean may not reverse the Grade Appeal Officer's decision unless the decision was arbitrary and capricious or the result of applying standards other than those listed in Section 19(b). Within ten business days of receiving the appeal, the dean shall notify the student, faculty member, and Grade Appeal Officer of his or her decision and will direct the LEC to make any necessary change. The dean's decision is not reviewable.

(e) The Grade Appeal Officer, for good cause, may extend or waive any of the deadlines in this subsection (f).

## 20. REPEATING OF COURSES

Unless (1) a student receives a grade of D or lower in a required course, (2) the Academic Standards Committee requires the student to retake a course, or (3) the associate dean determines that there is an extraordinary reason to allow a student to take a second independent legal research project, the student may not repeat a course. If the associate dean allows a student to take a second independent legal research project, it shall involve a different topic and advisor than the first one.

A student who receives a grade of D or lower in a required course, if permitted to continue at the school, must retake the course at the school when it is next offered. For purposes of this Section 20, “required courses” do not include code, foundation, or practice distribution courses.

A student who receives a grade of D or lower in the first semester of a two-semester required course may not take the second semester until he or she receives at least a D+ in the first semester of the course. Similarly, a student who receives a D or lower in Legal Skills I may not take Legal Skills II until he or she receives at least a D+ in Legal Skills I, and a student who receives a D or lower in Legal Skills II may not take Legal Skills III until he or she receives at least a D+ in Legal Skills II.

A student who fails an elective course may retake the elective or take a different elective.

If a student repeats a course in which the student received a passing but unsatisfactory grade, the original grade and the credits earned are not used in computing the student’s cumulative grade point average, total credit hours, or unsatisfactory credits for purposes of Section 22(d)(i)(2) or 22(d)(ii)(2). The original grade, however, will remain on the student’s transcript and may be taken into consideration by the committee whenever it has occasion to review the student’s academic performance.

If a student repeats a course in which the student received an F, the LEC shall enter the grade received in the retaken course on the student’s transcript, but that grade will not replace the original failing grade.

## 21. SCHOLASTIC STANDING

A grade point average (GPA) is determined for each student at the end of each term’s program of courses. A GPA is computed by multiplying the credits of each UMass Law course by the quality points of the grade received in that course; the sum is then divided by the total course credits. Grades such as P, CR, I, W, WP, WF, IP, AU are not included.

## **22. ACADEMIC STANDING**

At the end of each semester, the Academic Standards Committee will review students (i) who are already on academic probation or under supervision or (ii) whose academic performance violates one or more of the criteria set forth in this section. The Law Enrollment Center will notify students of the Academic Standards Committee's determination after the fall and spring semester reviews; after summer semester reviews, the Law Enrollment Center will notify students only if there is a change in their academic status. The Law Enrollment Center will also notify students who are dismissed under this section. Students, however, must be familiar with this handbook and are deemed to know their status once grades are made available to them.

A student's academic standing also affects federal financial aid eligibility. Students receiving federal financial aid should consult the Law School Financial Aid Office for more information.

The Academic Standards Committee need not defer action on academic standards determinations based on a pending grade appeal, although the committee retains discretion to stay the effect of its decision when appropriate.

### **a. Academic Good Standing**

Students are in academic good standing unless their cumulative average, based on final grades in courses representing at least 15 credit hours, is below 2.3 or they have been placed on academic probation under the provisions of this section.

### **b. Referrals to the Law Learning Center**

A student who receives an unsatisfactory grade (C or lower) will be automatically referred to the Law Learning Center. Referral to the Law Learning Center is not a punitive measure. It is intended, rather, to help students identify and remedy any academic problems they may be having.

### **c. First-Year Academic Requirements**

- i. For purposes of subsection 22(c), a "full-time student" means a student who completed courses representing at least 12 credits in the first semester or completed courses representing at least 24 credits in the first two semesters. A "part-time student" is any student who is not a "full-time student." A student who withdraws from a course has not "completed" that course.

## ii. Academic Requirements for Full-Time Students

- (1) A full-time student whose cumulative GPA after the first semester is:
  - (a) from 2.300 to 2.500, or who receives two or more unsatisfactory final grades, is on academic supervision;
  - (b) from 2.000 to 2.299, or who fails a required course, is on academic probation; or
  - (c) below 2.000, or who fails two or more required courses, is academically dismissed, and has no right to petition for reconsideration under Section 22(i).
  
- (2) A full-time student whose cumulative GPA after the second semester is:
  - (a) from 2.300 to 2.500, or who receives two or more unsatisfactory final grades, is on academic supervision;
  - (b) from 2.200 to 2.299, or who fails a required course, or who receives unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 12 or more credit hours, is on probation; or
  - (c) below 2.200, or who receives unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 18 or more credit hours, is academically dismissed.

## iii. Academic Requirements for Part-Time Students

- (1) A part-time student whose cumulative GPA after the first or second semester is:
  - (a) from 2.300 to 2.500, or who receives two or more unsatisfactory final grades, is on academic supervision;
  - (b) from 2.000 to 2.299, or who fails a required course, is on academic probation; or
  - (c) below 2.000, or who fails two or more required courses, is academically dismissed, and has no right to petition for reconsideration under Section 22(i).
  
- (2) A part-time student whose cumulative GPA after the third semester is:
  - (a) from 2.300 to 2.500, or who receives two or more unsatisfactory final grades, is on academic supervision;
  - (b) from 2.200 to 2.299, or who fails a required course, or who receives unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 12 or more credit hours, is on probation; or
  - (c) below 2.200, or who receives unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 18 or more credit hours, is academically dismissed.
  
- (3) If a part-time student is placed on academic supervision or probation after the first semester under subsection (iii)(1), and that student's cumulative

GPA after the second semester would not require placing that student on academic supervision or probation pursuant to subsection(iii)(1), then the student shall be removed from academic supervision or probation unless the student has failed to comply with a condition of academic supervision or probation.

- iv. For purposes of section 22(c), the following do not count towards the number of semesters the student has completed: (1) a summer session; (2) a semester during which the student was on a leave of absence; and (3) a semester that the Academic Standards Committee has required a student to repeat in its entirety. A student's grades in summer courses do count for purposes of determining the GPA and number of unsatisfactory final grades.

**d. Upper-Level Academic Requirements**

i. Supervision

- (1) Any student not subject to Section 22(c) who was placed on academic supervision under the provisions of Section 22(c)(ii) or (iii) and not removed from academic supervision by the Academic Standards Committee under Section 22(c)(iii) or otherwise is on academic supervision.
- (2) Any student not subject to Section 22(c) whose semester GPA is below 2.300, who fails a course or receives two or more unsatisfactory grades in a semester, or who has received unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 12 to 14 credits is on academic supervision.

ii. Probation

- (1) Any student not subject to Section 22(c) whose cumulative GPA is below 2.300 is on probation.
- (2) Any student who has received unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 15 or more credits is on probation.

iii. Dismissal

- (1) Any student not subject to Section 22(c) whose cumulative GPA is below 2.300 at the end of the semester after the student was placed on probation is academically dismissed, except as otherwise provided in the next to final paragraph of Section 22(i).
- (2) Any student who has received unsatisfactory final grades in courses representing 18 or more credits is academically dismissed.

**e. Conditions of Supervision**

Students under supervision are subject to the following standard conditions:

- i. They must earn a semester GPA of 2.300 or above.
- ii. They must not receive an unsatisfactory semester or final grade.
- iii. They must review the examination in any course in which they received an unsatisfactory grade with the professor.
- iv. They must meet at least once with their faculty advisor.
- v. They must meet with the appropriate academic support personnel every month or as directed.

**f. Conditions of Academic Probation**

Students on probation are subject to the following standard conditions:

- i. They must earn a semester GPA of 2.300 or above.
- ii. They must not receive a final unsatisfactory grade.
- iii. They must not serve as an officer of any student organization.
- iv. They must not serve on any University committee.
- v. They must not represent the University in intercollegiate athletics.
- vi. They must review the examination in any course in which they received an unsatisfactory grade with the professor.
- vii. They must meet at least once with their faculty advisor.
- viii. They must meet with the appropriate academic support personnel every month or as directed.
- ix. Their registration must be approved by the associate dean.

**g. Additional Conditions of Probation or Supervision**

In addition to the standard conditions listed above, the academic standards committee may impose further conditions, if warranted in individual cases. Examples of such conditions include, without limitation, repeating a course, repeating an entire year, carrying a reduced course load, not registering for summer courses, or receiving no grade lower than that specified by the committee. A student who registers for summer courses and is subsequently restricted by the Academic Standards Committee from taking summer courses will be withdrawn from those courses.

If the committee requires a student, as a condition of supervision or probation, to repeat a course in which the student received a passing but unsatisfactory grade, the original grade and the credits earned will not be used in computing the student's cumulative GPA or total credits awarded toward the degree. The original grade, however, will remain on the student's transcript and may be taken into consideration by the committee whenever it has occasion to review the student's academic performance.

**h. Violation of Conditions; Termination of Supervision or Probation**

- i. Each semester, the committee will review students who are on supervision or on probation.
- ii. Supervision reviews
  - (1) A student who satisfies all conditions of supervision shall be taken off supervision, unless in the judgment of the committee it would be in the student's interest to remain on supervision.
  - (2) If a student violates one or more conditions of supervision, the committee may in its discretion place the student on academic probation, unless the violation triggers probation pursuant to subsections 22(c) or 22(d), in which case probation is automatic.
- iii. Probation reviews
  - (1) A student who satisfies all conditions of probation shall either be placed on supervision or released from all committee oversight, at the committee's discretion, unless in the judgment of the committee it would be in the student's interest to remain on probation.
  - (2) If a student violates one or more conditions of probation, the committee may in its discretion dismiss the student, unless the violation triggers dismissal pursuant to subsections 22(c) or 22(d), in which case dismissal is automatic.

**i. Petition for Reconsideration of Dismissal**

A student who is dismissed under the provisions of subsection (c)(ii)(2), (c)(iii)(2), or (d) may petition the Academic Standards Committee for reconsideration of dismissal.

Students petitioning for reconsideration of dismissal must email a written statement with any supporting documentation to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu), with the subject line: "Petition for Reconsideration of Dismissal."

The petition and statement must be received within seven business days of the date when the notice of dismissal was sent.

The written statement must contain a complete statement of all of the facts and reasons that the student asserts adversely affected his or her academic performance. The statement should identify with specificity (i) the reasons why, in the student's opinion, the grades received are not truly reflective of his or her ability to perform at the level required by the school (e.g., a serious illness, a family or work problem) and (ii) the steps that the student has taken to address the problem. The committee does not grant personal interviews.

The committee will not reconsider dismissal unless the student has demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence that (1) the student's petition identified exceptional circumstances that were a substantial factor in the student's academic performance, (2) the exceptional circumstances will no longer affect the student's academic performance, and (3) the student is likely to successfully complete the program of legal education and pass the bar examination. The committee will review each student individually in light of the student's academic record and any mitigating factors identified in the statement. In particular, the committee will consider matters such as whether the reasons identified by the student in his or her statement adversely affected the student's performance; how the student has addressed those problems; whether the overall trend of the student's performance is upward or downward; and whether the student's academic weakness is pervasive or limited to certain courses or areas of law, particularly core courses or subjects likely to be tested on the bar examination.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Student Handbook, any student who petitions successfully for reconsideration of dismissal may, in the discretion of the Academic Standards Committee, have up to two semesters (exclusive of summer sessions) to raise his or her cumulative GPA to 2.300 or above.

**j. Effective Date of Dismissal**

A dismissal under these rules shall take effect at the expiration of the period to file a petition for reconsideration of dismissal or the denial of the petition for reconsideration, whichever occurs last. In the case of a dismissal that is not subject to a petition for reconsideration of dismissal, the dismissal shall take effect immediately upon posting of the student's grades.

**23. ACADEMIC RECOGNITION AND ACADEMIC HONORS**

The following honors designations will be applicable, based on a student's final grade point average:

Summa cum laude:	3.800-4.000
Magna cum laude:	3.600-3.799
Cum laude:	3.400-3.599

**24. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Juris Doctor degree is awarded to students who have satisfied the following graduation requirements: completion of 90 credit hours, at least 65 of which were earned in regularly scheduled class sessions (as described in Section 8 above), with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.3; passing grades in all required courses; satisfaction of the Code, Foundation, Practice, and Upper-Level Writing requirements identified in the applicable UMass Law Curriculum ([available at https://www.umassd.edu/law/students/law-enrollment-center/](https://www.umassd.edu/law/students/law-enrollment-center/));

satisfaction of all applicable probationary or supervisory conditions; satisfaction of all financial obligations to the university; completion of the MPRE requirement (see <https://www.umassd.edu/law/academics/programs/mpre-graduation-requirement/>); completion of the pro bono requirement (see <https://www.umassd.edu/law/clinics/pro-bono/>); completion of the career counseling requirements (see <https://www.umassd.edu/law/careers/students/>); resolution of any complaints filed or conditions imposed by the Office of Community Standards; and completion of financial aid exit counseling, if applicable, as directed by UMass Law financial aid staff. If a student's cumulative grade point average after 90 credit hours is below 2.3, the student may be continued in courses for an additional semester on such conditions as are determined by the faculty.

## 25. WRITING PROJECTS

### a. Independent Legal Research

Independent Legal Research (“ILR”) provides a student an opportunity to explore a legal topic in greater depth than is usually possible in a regular course. In an ILR, a student undertakes substantial and comprehensive research on a chosen topic under the close supervision of a faculty member. This research serves as the basis for a detailed examination of a legal topic in a research paper.

To be eligible for ILR, a student must have completed at least one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study. Except as provided in Section 20, a student may register for only one ILR.

It is the responsibility of the student to find a faculty member to supervise the project. An ILR may be supervised by any full-time member of the faculty or, with the prior written consent of the associate dean, an adjunct faculty member.

To register for ILR, a student shall obtain the prior written approval of both the supervising faculty member and the associate dean. The [Independent Legal Research Approval Form](#) is available in the LEC or on the school's website. No student is considered registered for ILR until he or she has received all approvals and submitted the approved forms.

An ILR is generally worth two or three credits.

An ILR is a substantial commitment. The student must meet with the supervising faculty member at the beginning of the semester and prepare a detailed research plan and paper outline. The student and supervising faculty member must agree on a timetable for achieving research objectives and completing drafts of the paper.

If a student does not abide by the terms and conditions of this section, and those agreed upon at the beginning of the semester with the supervising faculty member, the student is subject to academic sanctions up to and including a failing grade for the ILR.

The final paper is due on the last day of the examination period of the semester in which the student has registered for the ILR. For a three-credit ILR, the final paper must be at least 30 pages long; for a two-credit ILR, the final paper must be at least 20 pages long. Failure to submit a final paper on time will result in the recording of a grade of I. If the paper is not turned in within the extension period, the I will become an F(I).

### **b. Upper Level Writing Requirement**

Students must satisfy the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) to graduate. Students are strongly encouraged to complete this requirement before their last semester of law study. No project may count for ULWR credit if the student prepares the project as part of a class which the student has designated as satisfying the foundation, code, or practice distribution requirement. The student is responsible for securing and submitting all forms and signatures required under this section.

To meet the ULWR, each student must produce a sole-authored paper, brief, note, comment, memorandum of law, or other substantial written project, that:

- Reflects substantial legal research and critical analysis;
- Is well-written and carefully edited;
- Contains no fewer than 5,000 words, excluding footnotes or endnotes, i.e. approximately 20 pages of double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman type (although this page limit may be reduced when the supervising professor determines that exceptional circumstances warrant a reduction);
- Reflects revisions that incorporate the supervising professor's critique of and suggestions on at least one previous draft; and
- Earns a grade of B or better from the supervising professor for the paper (for students who satisfy the ULWR with a law review note, the note must be determined to be of at least B quality, but a letter grade need not be awarded).

Prior to beginning work on a ULWR project, every student must complete and submit to the LEC a [ULWR Supervision Agreement Form](#) signed by the supervising professor. All full-time faculty members may serve as supervising professors for a ULWR project. Adjunct faculty members may serve as supervising professors only after written approval by the associate dean. By agreeing to serve as a supervising professor, the professor agrees to provide, at minimum, the following supervision and feedback:

- Meet with the student early in the project to give feedback and guidance on the student's selection of the topic and research plan;
- Meet with the student to give feedback on an outline of the project;
- Review and give written feedback on at least one full draft of the project;
- Meet with the student to discuss the draft and potential revisions; and
- Assess the final draft after submission, including assessment of writing style, grammar, and professionalism, in addition to substantive content; and
- Submit an ULWR Certificate of Completion at the conclusion of the project.

Examples of projects that may satisfy the ULWR include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Papers prepared for seminars or other courses requiring a substantial research and writing project;
- Independent Legal Research Projects;
- Analyses or drafts of proposed legislation;
- Comments on an agency rule;
- Empirical research into a legal problem with analysis of the results; and
- Legal writing in the context of real or simulated litigation courses (such as upper-level writing or legal drafting courses or clinical programs, so long as the student is the sole author).

Moot court competition briefs may not be used to satisfy the Upper Level Writing Requirement. Law journal comments may be used to satisfy the Upper Level Writing Requirement, provided that the student and supervising professor satisfy all of the requirements described in this section.

Once a supervising professor has agreed to supervise a project, the student may not submit any version of that project for credit in any other course or independent study.

## **26. LIBRARY**

Students may consult with one of the professional librarians for an orientation and introduction to the library and its services. Library hours are posted on the school's website and at the circulation desk. Library hours vary with holidays and summer vacations and are subject to change. Reference librarians are available to help with legal research and with questions about the collection. Reference hours are posted and by appointment. Students must have a current UMass Pass to use the computer facilities and to borrow materials.

All obligations to the library must be honored. Outstanding library loans of books or other materials create student obligations to the school that may prevent graduation, registration, and delivery of grade reports until those materials are returned or replaced.

## 27. ELECTRONIC LEGAL RESOURCES

Westlaw and Lexis are the two major electronic legal research services available to all registered law school students. Both services are accessible on the internet from the library webpage and are password-protected.

Westlaw and Lexis usage is contractually limited to educational activities and may not be used for personal or professional purposes. Any student using these services for other than school-related work will be subject to disciplinary action and will be subject to action by the proprietors of Westlaw or Lexis.

Additionally, in the school's computer labs, students have access to the Internet and school e-mail accounts. Other legal databases available include HeinOnline, Legal Trac, and Index Master. For assistance with these research products, please see one of the reference librarians.

## 28. ACCOMMODATIONS

The school is committed to providing equal access to a quality legal education for all students. Any students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should set up a meeting with Wendi Chaka, Director of UMass Dartmouth's Office of Student Accessibility Services, 508-999-8711 or [wchaka@umassd.edu](mailto:wchaka@umassd.edu). At that meeting, the student will provide recent documentation from a qualified health care provider that describes the functional limitation to learning that the disability creates. If the documentation is not available at the time of the initial meeting, the student will be expected to provide the documentation before any accommodations will be provided. A determination will be made about what accommodations will help the student's learning environment. No accommodations will be provided unless the student has met with Director Chaka and the requested accommodations have been deemed appropriate and reasonable.

Students requesting examination accommodations for the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) or state bar examinations should know that the interpretations of the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements used by the various bar examining authorities may differ from those used in undergraduate or graduate education programs.

Students are advised to ascertain the testing accommodation standards for each jurisdiction in which they plan to take the bar examination.

Information about testing accommodations for the MPRE and individual state bar examinations may be obtained here:

<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/disabilityrights/resources/biad/>

## 29. STUDENT PETITIONS FOR ACADEMIC MATTERS

A student making a request concerning an academic matter must file a [Student Petition](#) with the LEC (in person or to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu)) seeking the associate dean's approval. Student petitions are available in the LEC or on the school's [website](#).

To be considered, the petition must (1) be typewritten or printed legibly, (2) be signed by the student, and (3) contain all relevant information, including supporting documentation. The associate dean shall return an illegible, unsigned, or incomplete student petition to the student for proper completion.

## 30. STUDENT COMPLAINTS

This section describes the procedures for filing a formal complaint with the law school. In addition to this formal complaint process, students are free to raise matters of concern informally, rather than filing a formal complaint, by emailing the Assistant Dean of Students. Please note that Grade Appeals are governed by Section 19 of this Student Handbook. For purposes of this section, a "student" means a prospective, current, or former student.

### a. Filing Procedures

Formal complaints must be filed by email to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu) and must include "Section 30 Student Complaint" in the email header.

The body of the email or an attachment must state the following: (1) the complaining student's name and ID number; (2) the behavior, action, or inaction complained of, including the person or persons responsible for the behavior, action, or inaction; (3) any rules or standards (including but not limited to the ABA Standards, available at [www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education/resources/standards](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards)) alleged to have been violated; (4) the dates and locations of the behavior, action, or inaction, if known; and (5) the relief requested. Supporting evidence, if any, must also be attached to the filing email.

The Assistant Dean of Students or the Dean's designee will, by email, acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five business days.

### b. ABA Standards Determination

Within ten business days after filing, the Assistant Dean of Students, in consultation with the Dean or the Dean's designee, will determine whether the alleged facts implicate the law school's compliance with ABA Standards.

**c. Procedures for Complaints Implicating ABA Standards**

Complaints determined to implicate ABA Standards will proceed as follows:

Initial Investigation: The Assistant Dean of Students will initially investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint. If resolution is not possible, the Assistant Dean of Students will refer the matter to the appropriate administrator, administrative body, or an administrative official designated by the Dean (the “Referral Investigator”), within three weeks of receipt of the complaint. The Assistant Dean of Students will communicate resolution of the complaint, or its referral, to the complainant upon such resolution or referral.

Referral Investigation: If referral of the complaint is made as referenced above, the Referral Investigator shall attempt to resolve the complaint as soon as possible, generally no later than three weeks after referral of the complaint. Upon completion of the referral investigation, the law school will communicate its findings and, if appropriate, any intended actions to the complainant.

Appeals: If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or resolution of a complaint, the complainant may appeal the decision to the Dean of the law school. Such appeal must be filed by email to [lec@umassd.edu](mailto:lec@umassd.edu) within two weeks of communication to the complainant of the resolution of the complaint and must contain “Appeal of Student Complaint” in the email header. The Dean’s decision shall be communicated by email to the complainant within three weeks after filing of the appeal. There shall be no further appeal.

Maintenance of Records: The law school shall maintain a written record of each complaint filed and its resolution in the Office of the Assistant Dean of Students for a period of eleven years from the date of the final resolution of the complaint.

**d. Procedures for Complaints Not Implicating ABA Standards**

Complaints determined not to implicate ABA Standards will proceed as follows:

Initial Investigation: The Assistant Dean of Students will initially investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint. If resolution is not possible, the matter will be designated for investigation by the Assistant Dean of Students or by the Dean’s designee within three weeks of receipt of the complaint. The Assistant Dean of Students will communicate resolution of the complaint, or its referral, to the complainant upon such resolution or referral.

Designated Investigation: If the complaint is designated for investigation, the investigator shall attempt to resolve the complaint as soon as possible, generally no later than three weeks after referral of the complaint. Upon completion of the referral investigation, the law school will communicate its findings and, if appropriate, any intended actions to the complainant. The outcome or resolution is not subject to appeal.

Maintenance of Records: The law school shall maintain a written record of each complaint filed and its resolution in the Office of the Assistant Dean of Students for a period of eleven years from the date of the final resolution of the complaint.

**e. Other University Complaint Procedures**

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's Division of Student Affairs, Office of Community Standards, maintains a [forms page](#) where students file complaints about: violations of the [Code of Student Conduct](#); violations of the [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#); and concerning, worrisome, or threatening behaviors (CARE Network).

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's [Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#) handles complaints about allegations of discrimination, sexual misconduct, and Title IX violations.

**31. COMMUNICATIONS**

All students are expected to activate and routinely check their university e-mail accounts. All official communications will be sent to students' university e-mail addresses only.

**32. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT**

UMass Law students are bound by, and expected to know and adhere to, the university's [Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#).

**33. CHARACTER AND FITNESS: ONGOING OBLIGATION TO REPORT**

Applicants to the law school were required to respond to a number of character and fitness questions on their application to the law school. It is imperative that you accurately completed your application and that full disclosure was made for every question. For these reasons, students will be required to sign a form certifying the contents of their Law School application early in their first semester. If a student determines the information provided on the application was incorrect or incomplete, the student has an obligation to request permission to amend their application. A student may request permission by scheduling a meeting with the Assistant Dean of Students.

It is also the obligation of each student to update his or her file with the Assistant Dean of Students if the responses originally submitted on the student's Character and Fitness form change during law school. In particular, each student has a continuing responsibility promptly to report to the Assistant Dean of Students any police, judicial, or administrative court activity, civil or criminal, with which a student becomes involved between admission to the law school and

graduation, other than parking tickets and minor traffic infractions not involving drug or alcohol use.

The law school may treat any student failure to report under this section as a disciplinary infraction.

State bar authorities generally require bar applicants to respond to character and fitness questions beyond those included on law school applications. Further, the Dean of the law school must provide to state bar authorities a certification with respect to the moral character of graduates applying for state bar membership.

Every student has a duty to inform himself or herself about the character and fitness requirements for admission to the bar in the state or states in which he or she intends to practice. Such bar admission requirements sometimes require students to disclose to the bar authorities juvenile and adult arrest and court disposition records, even if a court order has sealed or expunged such records.

#### **34. OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS VERIFYING PRIOR ACADEMIC CREDITS AND DEGREES**

By October 15 of the year in which they are admitted, every admitted student must provide the law school with an official transcript verifying all prior academic credits undertaken and degree(s) conferred. "Official transcript" means (1) a paper or electronic transcript certified by the issuing institution and delivered directly to the law school; or (2) a paper or electronic transcript verified by a third-party credential assembly service and delivered directly to the law school. Students who do not provide official transcript by October 15 will have a registration hold placed on their COIN account, which will prevent them from registering for courses in any subsequent semesters. The registration hold will be released once the student provides all outstanding official transcripts.

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Amended: August 9, 2012

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Amended: January 10, 2013

Amended: February 5, 2013

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Amended: March 21, 2013

Amended: May 2, 2013

Amended: July 10, 2013

Amended: August 6, 2013

Amended: December 5, 2013

Amended: January 22, 2014

Amended: April 10, 2014  
Amended: June 16, 2014  
Amended: August 1, 2014  
Amended: October 7, 2014  
Amended: January 8, 2015  
Amended: February 13, 2015  
Amended: March 10, 2015  
Amended: July 24, 2015  
Amended: October 26, 2015  
Amended: December 16, 2015  
Amended: February 1, 2016  
Amended: August 15, 2016  
Amended: May 15, 2017  
Amended: August 1, 2017  
Amended: November 7, 2017  
Amended: April 11, 2018  
Amended: May 15, 2018  
Amended: October 18, 2018  
Amended: March 11, 2019  
Amended: April 4, 2019  
Amended: May 15, 2018  
Amended: August 1, 2019  
Amended: September 6, 2019  
Amended: December 16, 2019  
Amended: April 17, 2020  
Amended: August 18, 2020  
Amended: September 21, 2020  
Amended: November 17, 2020  
Amended: April 5, 2021  
Amended: August 16, 2021  
Amended: January 13, 2022  
Amended: March 21, 2022  
Amended: August 1, 2022  
Amended: August 15, 2023  
Amended: August 15, 2024

**APPENDIX A: RULES FOR LAW SCHOOL PROCTORED EXAMS**

For law school students, exams represent much more than an assessment tool linked to a substantive course. Law school exams are also markers along the path to becoming a professional. In fact, your law school studies do not truly end until you have taken and passed a Bar Exam.

Aside from the content of law school exams and the Bar Exam, these exercises share one critical component: they test not only your doctrinal, analytical knowledge, but also your ability to perform under time constraints with honesty and integrity. Because of the high standards of conduct required of lawyers, in the majority of jurisdictions the Bar Exam is regulated by extremely strict rules of conduct. These rules tell exam takers what they may and may not take into the exam room with them; what implements they may or may not use in taking the exam; what food and drink, if any, they may have with them and how it must be packaged; when and how often they may leave the exam room; etc. And they often describe quite serious sanctions facing an exam-taker who wittingly or unwittingly violates a rule.

Here at UMass Law, we are committed to your learning the law as well as appropriate and acceptable rules of conduct as future lawyers. To that end, we are codifying a series of rules and regulations for all exam takers at the law school. Please be sure to refer as well to Section 16 in the Student Handbook: Examinations.

Please note that your professors are at liberty to impose further rules of conduct for their exams, in addition to the rules listed below.

1. Each student taking an exam is required to sign her or his name on the attendance roster on entering the exam room at the start of the examination and on leaving the exam room at the end of the examination. This roster will include the following language: **By signing my name on this attendance roster, I confirm my presence at this examination and I acknowledge, under penalty of perjury, that I have read and will abide by the rules governing final examinations.**
2. Overall, we remind you that you must never write your name on your exam booklet or on the electronic exam document you will be uploading. In fact, as stated in the Student Handbook, a student who provides any form of personal identification (e.g., the student's name) or any other personal information (e.g., "graduating student") on an anonymously graded examination is subject to disciplinary proceedings under the Student Conduct Policies and Procedures.
3. You must not communicate anything specific about exam issues with the professor involved if such information or questions might tend to violate the anonymity of your exam.

4. Once the exam has started, students are prohibited from speaking or communicating with each other in any manner, both inside and outside the exam room. Likewise, students are prohibited from speaking or otherwise communicating with anyone other than the proctor, the Dean, the Assistant Dean of Students, or – within the limits set by number 3 above – the professor during the administration of the examination.
5. All electronic devices must be turned off and placed in your backpack, bag, tote bag, purse, or the like. Electronic devices include but are not limited to: cell phones; iPhones; iPods; iPads; watches; MP3 players; cameras; digital or tape recorders or other recording devices; personal stereos; earphones, ear buds, or headsets; beepers or pagers. It will be deemed a violation of this rule to retain any electronic device on your person, even if the device is turned off.
6. All backpacks, book bags, briefcases, laptop cases, outerwear (except one garment such as a sweatshirt or sweater), hats or hoods worn on the head (except for religious or medical need), etc. must be placed in the front of the room. You may not access these or their contents at any time during the exam. You may not remove anything from them during the exam. In open-book or open-note examinations, you must have all permitted materials on the desk or table where you are sitting at the start of the examination.
7. You may not bring to the examination table or desk any books, notes, outlines, written materials, flash cards, or other study aids that have not been explicitly permitted by the professor. In general, then, a closed-book examination is one in which you are forbidden from consulting any materials whatsoever during the course of the exam. An open-book or open-note examination is one in which the professor has provided you with a list of materials which you are permitted to consult during the examination.
8. You may leave the exam room during the examination only to use the restroom. The proctor will have a sign-out, sign-in sheet and if you leave to use the restroom, you must sign out indicating the time you are leaving and sign back in, again indicating the time you return.
9. Only one student at a time may leave the room to use the restroom. The proctor will provide a student leaving for the restroom with a red card, which the student must give back to the proctor upon returning from the restroom.
10. When you complete the exam, you may leave the room after turning in the exam or uploading it. At the time of leaving the exam room, you must sign out on the attendance roster on the proctor's desk.
11. Students who may need to be contacted by a family member during the administration of the exam must meet with the Assistant Dean of Students ahead of time in order to make

appropriate arrangements. Students may not expect to receive calls or messages or texts on their cell phones during the administration of the examination.

12. Students with specific, documented medical or other conditions that would make adherence to any of the above rules difficult or impossible must meet with Wendi Chaka, Director of UMass Dartmouth's Office of Student Accessibility Services, 508-999-8711 or [wchaka@umassd.edu](mailto:wchaka@umassd.edu), to make appropriate testing arrangements. All other petitions for exam rules dispensation must go through the Julie Cahill, Assistant Dean of Students, 508-985-1105 or [jcahill2@umassd.edu](mailto:jcahill2@umassd.edu).

**APPENDIX B: MODIFICATIONS DURING SPRING 2020 COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

As a result of the spring 2020 COVID-19 public health crisis and the modifications to our grading system, methods of instruction, and final exam format during that semester, the following modifications will apply to grades earned in spring 2020.

**1. Student Handbook Section 17(a): Unexcused Absence from the Final Exam**

During spring 2020, if a student is absent from a final examination and is not allowed to take a makeup examination, the student will receive a grade of NC.

**2. Student Handbook Section 17(a): The NC Grade**

NC A grade of No Credit will be used in spring 2020 to indicate that no credit was earned for the course. The No Credit grade will not affect the student's cumulative GPA.

**3. Student Handbook Section 20: Repeating Required Courses**

A student who receives a grade of NC in a required course must retake the course at the school when it is next offered. For purposes of this Section 20, "required courses" do not include code, foundation, or practice distribution courses, but a grade of NC in a distribution course does not count toward satisfying that distribution requirement. A student who receives a grade of NC in Legal Skills II may not enroll in Legal Skills III until the student subsequently achieves a grade higher than D in Legal Skills II.

**4. Student Handbook Section 21: GPA Calculation**

Grades of P and NC are not included in the student's GPA calculation.

**5. Student Handbook Section 22: Academic Standing Reviews:**

Section 22 provides: "At the end of each semester, the Academic Standards Committee will review students (i) who are already on academic probation or under supervision or (ii) whose academic performance violates one or more of the criteria set forth in this section. The Law Enrollment Center will notify students of the Academic Standards Committee's determination after the fall and spring semester reviews; after summer semester reviews, the Law Enrollment Center will notify students only if there is a change in their academic status. The Law Enrollment Center will only notify students who are dismissed under this section. Students, however, must be familiar with this handbook and are deemed to know their status once grades are made available to them."

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, the faculty has conferred upon the Academic Standards Committee jurisdiction (1) to review the performance of all students enrolled at the

end of spring 2020, whether or not the student is in good standing; (2) to refer students to the academic support program; (3) to require students to repeat courses; and (4) to require students to take or drop particular courses, as part of the committee's efforts to promote academic and bar success.

#### **6. Student Handbook Section 22(b): Referrals to Law Learning Center**

Section 22(b) provides that students who receive a grade of C or lower will be referred to the Law Learning Center. For grades submitted during spring 2020, students who receive a grade of NC will be referred to the Law Learning Center.

#### **7. Student Handbook Sections 22(c) and 22(d): First-Year and Upper-Level Academic Requirements**

No students will be dismissed or newly placed on probation or supervision based on their performance in the spring 2020 semester without the prior approval of the Academic Standards Committee.

Any student who triggers dismissal under Sections 22(c) or (d) will automatically be deemed to have submitted a petition for reconsideration pursuant to Section 22(i). The Academic Standards Committee will then review all available information about the student's academic performance and consult faculty members and members of the academic success team as needed. The Academic Standards Committee will not deny reconsideration without first providing the student with five business days to provide additional information to the committee.

Any student who triggers probation or supervision under Sections 22(c) or (d) will automatically be reviewed by the Academic Standards Committee. The Academic Standards Committee will then review all available information about the student's academic performance and consult faculty members and members of the academic success team as the committee deems necessary. The Academic Standards Committee will not approve probation or supervision without first providing the student with five business days to provide additional information to the committee.

The Academic Standards Committee will review the status of all students who were on probation or supervision at the start of the spring 2020 semester and decide whether to maintain them in their current status or to advance them to a higher status based on their performance in the spring 2020 semester.

#### **8. Student Handbook Section 22(e) & (f): Conditions of Supervision and Probation**

The condition that students on supervision or probation earn a semester GPA of 2.300 or above [Section 22(e)(i), (f)(i)] is suspended for the spring 2020 semester. In all other respects, the conditions stated in sections 22(e)(f) remain in effect.

**9. Student Handbook Section 25(b): Upper-Level Writing Requirement**

During spring 2020, the professor must determine that the ULWR paper was of at least B quality, even though the course grading system will be P/NC.