

University of Massachusetts School of Law

New York State Skills Competency Requirement for Admission to the Bar

Pathway One Certification Plan

In December of 2015, the New York Court of Appeals enacted a Skills Competency Requirement for admission to the bar, codified in [Rule 520.18](#) of the Rules of the Court of Appeals for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law. The requirement applies to all students who began their J.D. studies in August 2016 or later, and establishes five pathways by which law students can qualify for admission to the New York Bar. This plan addresses certification for admission through Pathway 1 under [Rule 520.18\(a\)\(1\)](#), which requires law schools to identify and incorporate into their curriculum the “skills and professional values that, in the school’s judgment, are required for its graduates’ basic competence and ethical participation in the legal profession.” These skills and professional values appear in the [Learning Outcomes](#) that UMass Law has established for all of its graduates.

This document constitutes the Plan required under [Rule 520.18\(a\)\(1\)\(i\)\(a\)](#). The table below identifies the skills and values required under Pathway 1, and describes where those skills and values have been incorporated into our required curriculum.¹ Students who satisfy our graduation requirements have demonstrated the competence required by [Rule 520.18\(a\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#).

Skill or Value	Required Course
Legal Analysis and Reasoning (Learning Outcome 1.3)	All required doctrinal courses ² ; Legal Skills I; Legal Skills II; Academic Skills Lab
Written and Oral Legal Communications (Learning Outcome 2.1)	Legal Skills I; Legal Skills II; Legal Skills III
Problem Solving (Learning Outcome 2.2)	All required doctrinal courses; Legal Skills I; Legal Skills II; Legal Skills III
Legal Research (Learning Outcome 2.3)	Legal Skills I; Legal Skills II; Upper Level Writing Requirement
Collaboration and Self-Evaluation (Learning Outcome 2.4)	Legal Skills III; Academic Skills Lab
Professional and Ethical Responsibilities (Learning Outcome 3.1)	Professional Responsibility
Obligation of the Profession to Promote Justice (Learning Outcome 3.2)	Clinic or Field Placement

¹ The determination of which required courses teach each skill and value is based on UMass Law’s Learning Outcomes Curriculum Map, originally drafted in March 2016 and updated in April 2019.

² The required doctrinal courses are Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, Property, and Torts. In addition, UMass Law requires six credits of simulation courses; six credits of foundation courses; three credits of code courses; and an Upper Level Writing Requirement. These additional requirements reinforce the essential skills and values identified above, but they are not necessary for Pathway 1 certification.