

First-Year Curriculum

The first-year curriculum is designed to give students a broad understanding of the American legal system and the role of law in society. First-year courses provide a solid foundation upon which upper-level courses will build, while offering a structure designed to build and strengthen students' skills in legal analysis, reasoning, research, problem solving, and oral communication.

Unless waived by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, as determined in his or her sole discretion, full-time students must take all required courses during the academic terms and in the sequence recommended. It is recommended that flex-time students take all required courses during the academic terms and in the sequence recommended.

Notwithstanding this requirement, students may apply to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to complete the J.D. program on an accelerated basis. The application may be made after the spring semester of the student's first year of study. If the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs grants the application for accelerated study, then a full-time student may complete the J.D. program on an accelerated basis. This will allow the student to take the MBE Skills course in spring of the second year (for full-time students) or third year (for flex-time students). Full-time students must complete the accelerated program in three fall, two spring, and two summer semesters, and flex-time students must complete the accelerated program in four fall, three spring, and two summer semesters. As a result, the student engaging in accelerated study would graduate in December prior to the May graduation of his or her original cohort. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may grant or deny the application for accelerated study in his or her discretion, except that both full-time and flex-time students are eligible to apply only if they have a cumulative GPA of 3.000 or better after the spring semester of their first year.

In the fall of the first year, full-time students shall take Legal Communication I (2 hours); Legal Research I (1 hour); Legal Foundations (no credit); Civil Procedure I (3 hours); Torts I (3 hours); Contracts and Sales I (3 Credits); and Property I (3 Credits). In the spring, each course will continue with Legal Communication II (2 hours); Legal Research II (1 hour), Civil Procedure II (3 hours); Torts II (3 hours); Contracts and Sales II (3 hours); and Property II (3 hours). Students with a cumulative GPA of 2.320 or below shall take Advanced Legal Reasoning (no credit) in the spring, a course that is elective for all other first-year students.

In the fall of the first year, it is recommended that flex-time students take Legal Communication I (2 hours); Legal Research I (1 hour); Legal Foundations (no credit); Civil Procedure I (3 hours); and Torts I (3 hours). In the spring, each course will continue with Legal Communication II (2 hours); Legal Research II (1 hour); Civil Procedure II (3 hours); and Torts II (3 hours). Students with a cumulative GPA of 2.320 or below shall take Advanced Legal Reasoning (no credit) in the spring, a course that is elective for all other first-year students. At a minimum, flex-time students must take the following required courses in the fall semester of the first year of study: Legal Communication I (2 hours); Legal Research I (1 hour); Legal Foundations (no credit); and Civil Procedure I (3 hours). Flex-time students shall take, at a minimum, the following required courses in the spring semester of the first year of study: Legal Communication II (2 hours); Legal Research II (1 hour), Civil Procedure II (3 hours). Students with a cumulative GPA of 2.320 or below shall take Advanced Legal Reasoning (no credit) in the spring, a course that is elective for all other first-year students.