Juris Doctoris (JD) Program

The Juris Doctoris (JD) program is a three-year, full-time program. During their first year, JD students take required courses. In their second and third years, students have the flexibility to choose their courses to fit individual interests and career goals. The JD degree requirements allow for a broad legal education, as well as opportunities to specialize.

Students can design their education through:

• 9 clinics
• 9 externship programs
• 7 joint-degree programs
• 6 trial and moot court teams
• 5 LLM programs
• 4 centers and institutes
• Academic programs in Bankruptcy, Commercial and Consumer Law, Corporate and Business Law, Employment and Labor Law, Intellectual Property and Technology Law, International Law, Negotiation and Dispute Resolution, Taxation, and Trial and Advocacy

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Degree Requirements

Juris Doctoris (JD)

Reminder: In addition to diploma requirements, there are character, fitness and other qualifications for admission to the bar. Applicants are encouraged, prior to matriculation, to determine what those requirements are in the state(s) where they intend to practice.

Graduation Requirements

Students must successfully complete the following:

• First-year courses
• One Ethics course
• Upper-level Research and Writing requirement
• 6 units of Experiential Credits in designated courses
• Six semesters of full-time residency
• Earn at least 86 credit hours (67 in LCUs)*
• Earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00**

* The ABA requires that 67 credits be earned in "regularly scheduled class sessions at the law school" or LCUs (Law Classroom Units), per ABA Standard 304(b); LCU courses can also be identified via an online course listings search on LCU attribute (https://acadinfo.wustl.edu/Courselistings/Semester/Search.aspx).

** Based on all courses taken, whether or not credit is earned.

Courses that count toward the required 67 LCUs:

• Course work at the law school for which the student receives credit toward the JD degree by the law school and is not listed below in the list of "Courses that do not count toward the 67 LCUs" requirement. (The way that a course is graded is not the determinant of whether a course counts or not.)
• Course work for which a student receives credit toward the JD degree that is approved work done at another accredited U.S. law school, and work done in a foreign study program (approved by Dean Peter Cramer).
• Seminars or upper-level course work that require a substantial paper or project that is not Supervised Research.
• Clinics (includes all courses with the word "Clinic" in the official course title).

Courses that do not count toward the required 67 LCUs:

• Course work completed in another department, school or college of Washington University (including the 9 units transferred from joint-degree programs).
• Student activities such as law reviews/publications, moot court, trial competition, teaching assistantship, competition board, mediation/negotiation teams.
• Externships, field placements, and supervised practicum (includes all courses with the words "Externship," "Field Placement" and "Supervised Practicum" in the official course title).
• Supervised Research.

Note: If a student graduates with a total of exactly 86 units, the maximum number of units that can be taken from the non-LCU credits is 19.

First-Year Courses

First-year students take three doctrinal courses a semester, plus Legal Practice and Legal Research Methodologies. Each semester, first-year students will have one doctrinal course in a small section of approximately 45 students. Legal Practice and Legal Research Methodologies are also taught in small groups and in workshop-style classes by teachers who provide individualized feedback on each student's research and writing projects. The Negotiation class runs over Intersession (the week before the spring semester starts).

• Civil Procedure (4 credits)
• Constitutional Law I (4 credits)
• Contracts (4 credits)
• Criminal Law (4 credits)
• Property (4 credits)
• Torts (4 credits)
• Legal Practice I: Objective Analysis and Reasoning (2 credits)*
• Legal Practice II: Advocacy (2 credits)*
• Legal Research Methodologies I and II (1 credit for year; posted to spring semester)*
• Negotiation (1 credit)

*Legal Practice and Legal Research

The law school divides research and writing into two separate programs. The required writing component is called Legal Practice and the required research part is Legal Research Methodologies. Students take both courses each semester in their first year of law school. Although these courses are separate, they are coordinated so that writing projects utilize legal research skills. Upper-level law students can also elect to take separate advanced research and writing classes. Although such upper-level courses are purely elective, they are highly encouraged as a way to hone legal research and writing skills needed for the successful practice of law.

First-Year Legal Practice and Research Courses

Legal Practice I and II is a two-semester, 4-credit graded course taught in the fall and spring, respectively, by full-time professors of practice, who often serve as informal course advisers.

• Students meet twice a week in small groups to discuss writing projects with their professors, allowing students to build on their previous week's work and further developing their analytical skills.
• Students receive significant individual written feedback on their major writing projects which can include office memoranda, client letters, settlement letters, and agreements.
• Trial court and appellate briefs are usually used in oral argument during the advocacy section while, typically, oral presentations on a writing project occur each semester. Legal Research Methodologies I and II is a required 1-credit, two-semester course that is also graded. Classes are taught by lecturers in Law who are attorneys as well as law librarians.
• Students are introduced to primary sources of law such as cases, statutes and regulations as well as secondary sources, including form books, law periodicals and treatises.
• Students learn how to use finding aids such as digests and online indexes.
• Students are instructed on how to devise an efficient research plan.
• Emphasis is put on using material in electronic format.

Upper-Level Legal Practice and Research Courses

Seminars are offered during the fall and spring semesters. Upper-level students are required to take at least one Seminar, but many take more than one before graduating. Most Seminars are 3-credit courses offered by faculty in their areas of specialty which also give students the opportunity to delve deeply into advanced research and writing in a small-class-size setting.

Advanced Legal Research is a graded 2-credit course that is typically offered in the spring. This course provides intensive hands-on training in statutory interpretation and using free online legal sources as well as subscription databases containing foreign and international law. Students also are instructed in using hard-copy legal resources, both primary and secondary materials.

Upper-Level Courses

Upper-level students fulfill the remaining 56 credit hours by tailoring their studies to fit their individual interests. Students may take a variety of courses to meet the upper-class writing requirement, ethics requirement, and applied lawyering/professional skills course requirements. Faculty members and administrators provide guidance about course selection.

For a list of current course offerings, please visit links from the Courses section of this Bulletin. For Applied Lawyering/Professional Skills courses (ALPS) or for Ethics courses, search our online course listings under Law courses.