

# ACADEMIC RULES AND PRACTICES

## Examination Taking Regulations

- Students may not bring their own scratch paper into examination rooms. Bluebooks and scratch paper will be furnished by the proctor;
- Use of a telephone or any other electronic device, other than an authorized computer, during examinations is prohibited. Any incoming call to the front desk, 714-796-7169, during an examination that is of a vital emergency nature will be relayed promptly to the student concerned;
- Students who are taking examinations may not use the library at any time during the examination period unless so instructed by the professor;
- Students who fail to turn in answers to all of the questions on an examination because they fail to realize that the examination contains more questions, or for any other reason, will be graded on the basis of the normal weight of the questions answered. No make-up opportunities will be allowed for the questions omitted. Unanswered questions will receive no credit;
- Students arriving late to begin an examination will not be given extra time to complete the examination;
- Students who take their bluebooks home, or who otherwise fail or forget to turn them in at the time of the examination, will not be permitted to turn them in for a grade later;
- Students are not permitted to write personal notes or comments on examination papers that may be construed as an attempt to influence the grading of the examination;
- Students engaging in any other activity that indicates reliance on sources outside the examination room during testing times are in violation of the cheating prohibition.
- Students who encounter computer problems during the examination will not be provided with technical assistance. They may attempt to correct the problem or must immediately raise their hand to receive a bluebook from the proctor to continue with the examination by handwriting. No extra time will be allotted. The examination must be handwritten to receive a score and the exam cannot be retaken. The examination will count against the student's grade notwithstanding computer problems.

## Grading on Examinations and Papers

Examinations and student papers in the Juris Doctor program are graded using a strict curve rather than on a criteria basis. When classes are sufficiently small to warrant deviation from the curve, professors may depart from the curve in grading so as to assure that grading is generally consistent with grades given in other classes.

Examinations and student papers in the Master of Legal Studies program are graded on a criteria basis. Criteria are determined by the professor.

## Standing

The minimum cumulative grade point average necessary to maintain good standing is 2.0 for the Juris Doctor Degree program and 3.0 for the Master of Legal Studies degree program.

## Juris Doctor Ranking

To assist students in assessing their own academic performance, students enrolled in the Juris Doctor program who have completed 18 or more units will be provided a rank in the student portal. Students who have completed 18 or more units will be ranked within two tiers. Those students completing 18-54 units are considered the middle tier. Those students earning 55-89 units are considered the upper tier. The ranking information on the student portal will indicate the number of students in their tier and their ranking within that tier.

On October 1st of each year, all students who will have graduated within the preceding 12 months will receive an electronic document indicating their rank among all the students who graduated during that year.

Ranking is not indicated on the students' transcripts.

## Contesting Grades

An examination or course grade, once recorded, shall not thereafter be changed except after consultation with the professor of record and with the approval of the Law Faculty Senate. A grade may be changed by the professor with the approval of the Registrar in the instance of a calculation error.

A student who claims that a grade was the product of unfairness or a departure from established grading policy may elect to have such claim reviewed by the Law Faculty Senate. All requests for a grade change must be made using a student petition form and must be filed within 20 days of the date that grades and copies of the graded exams are posted by the Registrar's Office. The Law Faculty Senate will review such requests and may seek input from the faculty member who graded the class. The Law Faculty Senate will make the final decision on requests for a grade change.

## Specific Course Requirements

Specific requirements and weighting for graded components that make up the course grade are set forth in the course syllabus.

## Transfer Credit

The transferability of credits you earn at Trinity Law School is at the complete discretion of an institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the J.D. or M.L.S. degrees you earn in the Juris Doctor or Master of Legal Studies programs is also at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. If the J.D. or M.L.S. degrees that you earn at this institution are not accepted at the institution to which you seek to transfer, you may be required to repeat some or all of your coursework at that institution. For this reason you should make certain that your attendance at this institution will meet your educational goals. This may include contacting an institution to which you may seek to transfer after attending Trinity Law School to determine if your J.D. or M.L.S. degrees will transfer.

Trinity Law School does not have any course-to-course articulation agreements that identify individual courses or sequences of courses from a sending institution that are acceptable in lieu of a corresponding course or sequence of courses in the Juris Doctor or Master of Legal Studies program.

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

The maximum age of units that will be considered for transfer credit is 36 months and the maximum number of units that can be transferred is 45 semester units. A unit of credit is considered to consist of 15 classroom hours. One classroom hour is defined as 50 minutes of classroom-based

instruction. Transfer credit is normally granted only for courses taken at an ABA-approved or California Accredited Law School. Transfer credit is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Classes are individually considered for transfer and only classes with grades at the prior school's good standing level may be accepted for transfer credit subject to similarity to Trinity Law School course contents.

#### **Master of Legal Studies Degree Program**

The maximum number of units that can be transferred from an outside institution is 15 semester units, or 50% of the degree. Students transferring from the Juris Doctor program at Trinity Law School may transfer up to 18 units to the Master of Legal Studies program. A minimum of twelve units must be taken in the Master of Legal Studies program. A unit of credit is considered to consist of 15 classroom hours. One classroom hour is defined as 50 minutes of instruction. Transfer credit is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Classes are individually considered for transfer and only classes with grades C- or higher at the prior school may be accepted for transfer credit subject to similarity to Trinity Law School course contents.

## **Grading for Elective Courses in the Juris Doctor Program**

Elective courses will be graded according to Table B in Appendix 1. Law Review, Moot Court, clinical courses and internships are graded on a credit/no credit basis.

## **Transcript Notations**

Non-letter grades on student transcripts will be reflected as follows:

**CR - Credit:** Represents the successful completion of a course offered on a credit/no credit basis. These units apply toward graduation requirements but are not calculated in the grade point average.

**NC - No Credit:** Represents the failure to complete successfully a course offered on a credit/no credit basis. These units are calculated as units attempted but do not apply toward graduation requirements and are not used in the calculation of grade point average.

Transcript notations where no grade is given will be reflected as follows:

**AU - Audit:** Indicates registration for a class on an audit basis, which normally indicates regular attendance in class and participation in discussion. Students who audit courses are not enrolled for credit. No grade is assigned, and grade points and units are not awarded for courses audited.

**N - In Progress:** Represents course work in progress.

**AW - Authorized Withdrawal:** Indicates withdrawal from a course while doing acceptable work. These units do not apply toward graduation requirements and are not calculated in the student's grade point average.

**UW - Unauthorized Withdrawal:** Indicates student failure to withdraw from a course in a timely manner, or administrative withdrawal from a course. These units do not apply toward graduation requirements and are not calculated in the student's grade point average.

## **Repeating Courses**

#### **Juris Doctor Degree Program**

A student on probation or in good standing receiving a grade below C may retake courses to seek a higher grade. A student will not be permitted to repeat a course in which the student received a grade of C or

higher. Both grades will be reflected on the student's transcript, but only the highest grade will be used for purposes of computing the student's cumulative grade point average.

In all cases of repeating courses, students will be charged the normal rate of tuition.

Students in the Juris Doctor Flex Track program do not have the option to retake Flex Track courses.

#### **Master of Legal Studies Degree Program**

A student may elect to repeat any course in which a grade of B- or lower is earned provided that the repeated course is taken through a regularly scheduled class, or as an independent study/guided research course with the instructor's permission. The higher grade earned in the course will be used in the calculation of the grade point average. A repeated course for which credit has been earned may produce an improved grade and improved cumulative grade point average but will not provide additional credits. A required course in which a C or higher is earned may be repeated only once. All courses, grades, and grade point average calculations will remain printed on the transcript.

In all cases of repeating courses, students will be charged the normal rate of tuition.

## **Academic Advancement, Probation, and Dismissal**

#### **Juris Doctor Degree Program**

If a student's cumulative grade point average after any semester is less than 2.0, the student will be placed on academic probation for the following semester. This applies to fall, spring, and summer sessions. Any student failing to earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 at the end of the semester during which they are on probation will be academically dismissed. An academic dismissal is noted on the student transcript; probation is not noted on the transcript.

Students will not be allowed to graduate with a cumulative grade point average below 2.0.

Students are prohibited from completing law school prior to 32 months as required by the State Bar rules.

Students should also be aware that failing a required course necessitates that the course be repeated. No credit will be earned for the failed course. Students should be advised that failing a course will have implications on registration and may delay anticipated graduation date.

#### **Master of Legal Studies Degree Program**

The minimum cumulative grade point average to earn a degree is 3.0. If a student's cumulative grade point average after completion of any term is less than 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. The probationary status will remain in effect until the student raises the cumulative grade point average to 3.0. Any student who earns a C- or below in any three courses will be academically dismissed. An academic dismissal is noted on the student transcript; probation is not noted on the transcript.

Students will not be allowed to graduate with a cumulative grade point average below 3.0.

Students should also be aware that failing a required course necessitates that the course be repeated. No credit will be earned for any failed course.

Students should be advised that failing a course will have implications on registration and may delay anticipated graduation date.

## Special Rules for Spring Matriculates

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

Students who start their legal studies in the spring semester are subject to distinct rules regarding academic advancement, probation, and dismissal. All year-long classes started in the spring semester must be completed during the following summer. A student matriculating in the spring semester who receives a grade point average of less than 2.0 at the end of that semester is placed on academic probation. If students on probation under these circumstances do not raise their grade point average to at least 2.0 by the end of the summer, they will be academically dismissed. A student wishing to repeat a required course must file a petition with the Registrar. Students matriculating in the spring are subject to the 32-month residency requirement set by the California State Bar. Due to this requirement, any student who matriculates in the spring and wishes to graduate in three years will complete the program during the summer session.

## Special Students

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

Students admitted as special students (students who have not completed the minimum two years of college work but have demonstrated equivalent intellectual achievement by achieving acceptable scores on Committee-specified examinations (CLEP) prior to beginning the study of law) must pass the First-Year Law Student's Examination to advance to the second year of study. In accordance with Rule VIII of the Rules Regulating Admission to Practice Law in California, credit is not received until the applicant has passed the examination. Once a special student becomes eligible to sit for the First Year Law Students Examination, they must pass the exam within the first three administrations. Special students at Trinity Law School are not allowed to accumulate more than 40 units if the exam is not passed.

## Requirements for Graduation

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

The Juris Doctor degree is conferred upon students who have met the admissions requirements for the degree and who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed program of law study. To graduate with a Juris Doctor degree, students must successfully complete the prescribed program of 90 units of study within 5 years. The 90 units must include all of the required courses. A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or above is required for the degree.

Candidates for the Juris Doctor degree must complete their studies no earlier than 32 months and no later than 60 months after the student has commenced law study at Trinity Law School, or a school from which the law student has transferred credit. A student who requires more than 60 months to complete the Juris Doctor degree must file a petition with the Registrar for authorization. Final responsibility for meeting degree requirements for graduation rests with each student.

Candidates for the Juris Doctor degree must complete six units of practical skills courses. Courses that meet the practical skills requirement include legal research and writing, clinics and practical skills electives. Each practical skills course description indicates if a specific course meets the practical skills requirement.

### Master of Legal Studies Degree Program

The Master of Legal Studies degree is conferred upon students who have met the admissions requirements for the degree and who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed program of study. To graduate with a Master of Legal Studies degree, students must successfully complete the prescribed program of 30 units of study and may not exceed 6 years from date of matriculation in the program. The 30 units must include all of the required courses for the degree. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above is required for the degree. Final responsibility for meeting degree requirements for graduation rests with each student.

## Inspection and Photocopying of Examinations

All students are permitted to obtain and keep copies of their essay examinations. If a student does not receive copies of his or her essays within two weeks of the posting of grades, the student may request copies from the Registrar. Multiple-choice questions and answers will not be released to students.

## Make-up Examinations

Make-up examinations will only be allowed in very limited circumstances. No student will be allowed to defer taking an examination without prior approval by the Dean's Office. The Dean's Office will not entertain any pre-examination request for deferral by reason of lack of time for preparation. Failure to take an examination at the regularly scheduled time and date without approval by the Dean's Office will result in a failing grade for the examination. Students who are unable to inform the Dean's Office of their absence at an examination because of an emergency should petition the Dean's Office for relief from the failing grade immediately upon their availability to do so. Emergency situations will be limited to (i) hospitalization of the student or a member of the student's immediate family that requires the student's presence at the hospital, (ii) vehicular accidents occurring while traveling to the law school for an examination, and (iii) extraordinary circumstances that, in the discretion of the Dean's Office, justify a make-up examination. Any student who is determined to be eligible to take a make-up examination must pay \$500 to cover the cost of preparing a separate examination.

This charge is not intended to be punitive and applies without regard to the reason for the late examination. All late examinations must be taken as soon as possible but in no event later than two weeks after the scheduled examination date or such later date that is determined by the Dean's Office

## Anonymity

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

To preserve anonymity in examination grading, students are assigned an examination number. The examination number is to be used on every examination or paper in lieu of the student's name. Students can locate their examination number by logging in to the student portal under passwords. Students must maintain the confidentiality of their assigned numbers. New confidential examination numbers are issued once per academic year.

Courses requiring the professor to interact extensively with students' written work, such as Legal Research and Writing and certain writing-intensive elective courses, do not require anonymity in grading. These courses require the professor to interact with students in person to give feedback on written assignments. Students should refer to the course syllabus to determine if the course is not graded anonymously.

## Exam Taking Options

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

Students may either handwrite an exam in a bluebook provided at the time of examination or type answers on a laptop computer. Students wishing to take an examination on a laptop computer must be registered on ExamSoft prior to the day of the exam. Students will receive notification each semester when the ExamSoft software, Exemplify, is available for downloading. Students must conform to the exam taking protocols given by ExamSoft when registering.

## State Bar Requirements for Admission to Practice Law

The State Bar of California regulates legal education in California. Each student has the responsibility to comply fully with the Rules Regulating Admission to Practice Law in California. Students are strongly advised to obtain a copy of the rules from the Office of Admissions of the State Bar of California.

## Professional Responsibility Examination

### Juris Doctor Degree Program

All applicants for admission to practice law in California are required to pass the Multi-state Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners. The law school recommends that students complete the Professional Responsibility and Ethics course prior to taking the MPRE exam. Students should consult the California State Bar website for details regarding this examination.

## Admission to Practice Law Outside of California

Trinity Law School is accredited by the Committee of Bar Examiners of the State Bar of California. Juris Doctor students are qualified immediately upon graduation to take the bar examination in California.

Study at, or graduation from, this law school may not qualify a student to take the bar examination or be admitted to practice law in jurisdictions other than California. A student who intends to seek admission to practice law outside of California should contact the admitting authority in that jurisdiction for information regarding its education and admission requirements.

Admissions standards for each state are set forth in the American Bar Association's Comprehensive Guide to Admission to the Practice of Law. This resource may be obtained at [ncbex.org](http://ncbex.org) (<http://ncbex.org>).

## Records

Trinity Law School retains all documents received in the admissions process for at least two years for students who do not enroll. For students who do enroll, documents are retained for at least five years beyond the date last attended. Records of students' academic performance while at the law school are retained permanently.

## Release of Transcripts

Unofficial transcripts are available online. Official transcripts will not be released if the student is delinquent in financial obligations to the school. Official transcripts may be ordered online at [www.tls.edu](http://www.tls.edu) ([http://](http://www.tls.edu)

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## Emergencies Affecting Coursework

Requests for extensions for completion of course requirements are directed to the Registrar's Office by filing a Student Petition Form.

Such requests are considered only in cases of serious illness or other unforeseeable emergencies and are authorized on a case-by-case basis.

## Law School Student Petition Form

The Student Petition Form has been devised as a convenient medium of communication between the student and administration. This form is available at the Records Office. It should be filled out completely and forwarded to the Registrar's Office.