

# JURIS DOCTOR

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## Our Curriculum

Tulane's first-year program emphasizes developing core analytic and legal writing skills. Faculty teach required first-year courses in classes of approximately 75 students to encourage close participation in the give-and-take of Socratic discussion. Using the case method, students dissect judicial decisions, respond to professors' and classmates' questions and carefully consider competing arguments. First-year legal research and writing professors also teach small-section courses, in which students develop the writing strategies and skills to succeed in practice.

After the first year, students are free to design their own curriculum from an array of electives. Tulane offers specialized courses in conjunction with our certificate programs, which approximately one-third of students complete. Many students also earn academic credit through in-depth training opportunities outside the classroom. Some choose to hone their writing and editing techniques by joining one of our eight legal journals. Others compete in trial and appellate moot court teams to train in oral and written advocacy. Students acquire real-world experience in our law clinics and labs. Our clinics, Trial Advocacy course and boot camp skills-training program teach the students key skills to succeed in their future practice.

## Areas of Study

Tulane is proud to offer six distinctive programs in which students may earn a certificate of concentration: Civil Law, International and Comparative Law, European Legal Studies, Maritime Law, Environmental Law and Sports Law.

Beyond the certificate programs, Tulane holds core courses in alternative dispute resolution; constitutional law; consumer law; corporate and commercial law; civil law and procedure; criminal law and procedure; energy law; legal ethics and professionalism; family law; health law; labor and employment law; property and real estate law; administrative and regulatory law; state and local government procedure; tax law; and advanced legal writing. Faculty in both specialty and traditional areas of study are nationally and internationally recognized for their contributions to their fields. Upper-level students have the freedom to choose from our broad range of course offerings and can select any combination of classes.

## Civil Law Program

Tulane Law's capacity to teach the world's two preeminent legal systems is one of its greatest strengths. Students who intend to practice in common law jurisdictions will find the same extensive course offerings at Tulane as at other national law schools. However, Tulane offers students who plan to practice internationally or in civil law jurisdictions an assortment of civil law classes not offered at most law schools. Students may take either common or civil law courses, and many take a mix of both to expand their legal knowledge and practice potential.

## Requirements

### 1. General Degree Requirements for the JD Program

To be eligible for graduation, a JD student must have spent six full-time semesters in academic residence and complete 88 semester hours at the Law School with at least a 2.0 or C average. Transfer students must earn at least 59 of the 88 semester hours at Tulane and must have spent at least four full-time semesters in academic residence at Tulane to receive the JD degree. The credit-hour and residency requirements for students enrolled in approved joint degree programs are set forth in Section II.B of the Student Handbook (<https://law.tulane.edu/policies>). A full-time semester is one in which a student has registered for a minimum of 10 law credits and satisfactorily completed 9 credits. Attendance and accumulation of credits at a summer school in law will not reduce the number of full-time semesters for which a student must be in academic residence.

A student who has earned 88 credits toward the JD degree may not enroll in any more courses that will appear on the student's transcript or average into the student's GPA. Thus, a student may not register for any courses after 88 credits have been earned for the purpose of increasing his/her GPA. A student who has not yet earned 88 credits toward the JD degree may register in a semester or summer school session for up to the maximum number of credits allowed during that semester or session. In such case, all of the courses taken during that semester or session will be reflected on the student's transcript and the grades earned in all of the courses averaged into the student's GPA.

To receive any degree from the Law School, a student must receive the approval of the faculty and must have satisfied all financial obligations to the University. Students must also have completed all course requirements (i.e., paper, exam) in courses for which they have received an Incomplete as any "I" converts to "F" upon graduation.

To graduate, all JD students must successfully complete (pass) all of the courses in Tulane's first year curriculum and the Legal Profession course. The Professional Responsibility Seminar does not substitute for Legal Profession. Transfer students who completed their first year at another law school must take and successfully complete (pass) any Tulane first year course for which they did not take and complete a comparable course in their first year. These required first year courses and the Legal Profession course must be taken for a letter grade and may not be taken on a Pass/D/Fail basis. If, however, a student transfers from an ABA-Accredited law school that requires a two-hour rather than three-hour Legal Profession course, successful completion of the two-hour course at the student's home institution will satisfy the Legal Profession requirement under this Section. Further, all students must successfully complete one rigorous writing project after the first year of law school, the experiential learning requirement and the pro bono service requirement. See Section V.D.2-4 of the Student Handbook (<https://law.tulane.edu/policies>).

## 2. Upper-Class Writing Requirement

In order to promote the further development of effective legal writing skills, emphasize the intellectual rigor required for complex legal analysis, reasoning, and argumentation, and expose students to advanced legal scholarship, each JD student must, as a requirement for graduation, successfully complete one rigorous writing project after his or her first year of law school. Successful completion is defined as earning a grade of "C" or better in a course graded on the normal grading scale or earning a "Pass" in a course that is graded Pass/D/Fail. If a grade of "C" or better is not earned in a course graded on the normal grading scale, the project does not satisfy the upper class writing requirement, even if the student has exercised the Pass/D/Fail option in the course.

The upper class writing requirement may be satisfied by successfully completing an approved seminar, course, or a directed research project approved and supervised by a faculty member. Students may also fulfill the writing requirement through production under faculty supervision of a publishable Case Note or Comment in any of the law school's journals.

In all cases, to satisfy this requirement, the student must do all of the following:

- develop a topic, individualized research plan, and written proposal in consultation with the supervising faculty member;
- present at least one draft of the paper to the supervising faculty member for the faculty member's critique; and
- complete at least one revision of the paper taking into account the comments and critique provided by the supervising faculty member.

The final paper must consist of no fewer than 25 double-spaced pages. The supervising faculty member must certify at the end of the project that it has been completed successfully. A copy of the final draft and certification shall be submitted to the Academic Services Office. For papers completed as a Directed Research, a copy of the written proposal and plan of research must be submitted with the final draft and certification.

## 3. Experiential Learning Requirement

Professional skills are necessary for effective and responsible participation in the legal profession. Therefore, starting with students matriculating in Fall 2016, JD candidates must successfully complete (pass) courses providing a minimum of six experiential learning credits. In order to qualify for experiential credits, an approved course must be designated as an "experiential course" as provided in Section V.I of the Student Handbook. The courses that fulfill this requirement are designated and separately listed in the registration materials.

## 4. Pro Bono Requirement

In addition to the academic requirements set forth above, in order to be eligible for the JD degree, each student must complete a total of 50 hours of approved uncompensated, supervised, law-related public interest service. It is recommended that the required 50 hours be performed at a single placement during one semester or during the summer when feasible. Students are also encouraged to do more than one pro bono placement once their first assigned placement is satisfactorily completed.

For students to receive credit towards the Pro Bono requirement, the student cannot receive remuneration or academic credit. Students may choose to contribute any number of hours in excess of the minimum required and should report all pro bono hours via the electronic time reporting mechanism provided by the Office of Experiential Learning and Public Interest Programs. All pro bono hours will be reflected on the student's transcript. In order to receive credit towards the Pro Bono requirement, time records and the Supervisory Form must be received by the Office of Experiential Learning and Public Interest Programs on or before the relevant deadline, which typically occurs at the end of the semester in which the work was completed. Students who contribute exemplary pro bono service are recognized annually at the Pro Bono Luncheon. Additionally, each Spring, qualifying 3Ls are eligible for induction into the Pro Bono Krewe, an honorary community/society of distinguished pro bono volunteers.

Because the Tulane pro bono requirement is designed to instill in each student a sense of responsibility to the community when each becomes a member of the bar, a student's work should address the needs of underserved individuals or the community-at-large. Qualifying pro bono service covers a wide spectrum of activities and locales:

- Students may work under the supervision of private practitioners or firms where the work is performed at no cost on behalf of persons of limited means or otherwise underrepresented groups.
- The work may be performed in the public sector on behalf of a local, state or federal government entity (e.g., the district attorney's office, the indigent defender program, the Department of Justice, the courts, EPA).
- Work may be performed on behalf of public-interest non-profit organizations (excluding trade organizations) qualifying under IRS sections 501c (3) and (4), which endeavor to protect rights of underrepresented persons and groups.
- Students may contribute to a qualifying student-led organization serving public interest goals, such as SUFEO (Stand Up for Each Other), VITA (tax assistance for low-income individuals through Tulane Law School), or a community legal education program benefitting low-income individuals.

Qualifying pro bono work must be law-related. Qualifying tasks include client interviewing, document drafting and review, case planning and preparation, legal research and writing, drafting of legislation or regulations, formulation of legal policy, and participation in legal education programs in the public schools. Training time (up to 5 hours in a 50-hour placement) and limited administrative tasks, pertinent to the legal assignment, are viewed as law-related work counting toward the fulfillment of the requirement.

Students may opt for one of many placements advertised and coordinated through the Office of Experiential Learning and Public Interest Programs. Placements during the academic year are generally located in the New Orleans metro area. In addition to pre-approved placements scheduled through the Office of Experiential Learning, students may also submit an Independent Placement proposal for pro bono credit before beginning proposed volunteer work. Once determined to satisfy the law school requirement, the work may be performed in any location around the globe.

All JD students must complete the requisite number of pro bono hours on or before April 15 of the third year of law school. Completion of this requirement shall be demonstrated by appropriate submission of electronic time records reflecting the requisite minimum hours (or more) and the "services performed" in an approved placement. The Time Sheet is to be certified by the electronic signature of the student's supervising attorney. The Office must also receive the completed Pro Bono Supervisory Report form submitted by the supervising attorney and the Pro Bono Student Survey form. All forms are subject to the approval of the Associate Dean for Experiential Learning and Public Interest Programs.

Third year students must submit their time records and/or report on progress towards the requirement before they will be permitted to register for spring classes. Third-year students failing to complete the Pro Bono requirement by the April 15 deadline are subject to an administrative assessment of \$75.00. In addition to payment of the fee, the late student must then complete the Pro Bono requirement by April 25 to be eligible for graduation at the end of the spring semester. As there is ample opportunity to complete the Pro Bono requirement any time between matriculation and April 15 of the third year, there will be no extension of this deadline, absent truly extraordinary circumstances approved by the Assistant Dean of Students. Students not completing the requirement within that period will have the opportunity to complete it thereafter and then be eligible to graduate at the end of a subsequent term (provided all other graduation requirements are also met).