The **Vanderbilt Law School Catalog** contains an in-depth look at many official regulations and a considerable amount of other important information. It is an essential document for students who are currently enrolled. The official Catalog [may be found online](#) under Academic Life on the VLS website.

This **Student Handbook** supplements the official Law School catalog for the 2016-2017 academic year and contains additional, detailed information needed by current students. Please read through this information carefully to be familiar with the responsibilities you have as a Vanderbilt Law School (VLS) student.
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**Note:** FORMS required for any academic process are available on the [Academic Life page](#) on the Law School intranet. An email from the professor often eliminates the necessity for a paper form.
**Mission, Goals and Values**

Vanderbilt University is a center for scholarly research, informed and creative teaching, and service to the community and society at large. Vanderbilt will uphold the highest standards and be a leader in the:

- quest for new knowledge through scholarship;
- dissemination of knowledge through teaching and outreach;
- creative experimentation of ideas and concepts.

In pursuit of these goals, Vanderbilt values most highly:

- intellectual freedom that supports open inquiry;
- equality, compassion, and excellence in all endeavors.

The mission of Vanderbilt University Law School is to educate leaders who contribute to the advancement of justice. To achieve this goal, we provide students with a rigorous program of legal education, in an intellectually vibrant community of teaching and scholarly excellence that prepares them for admission to the bar and for effective, ethical, and responsible participation as members of the legal profession.

**Learning Outcomes**

In furtherance of our mission, **Vanderbilt University Law School** has established learning outcomes that shall, at a minimum, include competency in the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law;
- Legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication in the legal context;
- Exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system; and
- Knowledge and understanding of the workings of the regulatory state.

**J.D. Degree Requirements**

Each student bears the responsibility for fulfilling these requirements as described in greater detail below:

- Earn 88 credits and complete six (6) semesters in residence in full-time study, or the equivalent;
- Complete all first-year courses with a passing grade;
- Complete a course in Constitutional Law I with a passing grade;
- Complete a Professional Skills course (at least one credit) with a passing grade. Note: beginning with the entering JD class of 2016, six credits are required;
- Fulfill the substantial research/writing requirement (seminar paper) with a passing grade.
- Earn a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher;
- Be determined by the faculty as meeting the standard of personal and professional integrity ("good moral character"), traditionally associated with the profession of law;
- Pay all outstanding financial obligations to the University.

**Credit Hour**

Vanderbilt Law School adheres to the ABA definition of a credit hour: For purposes of Standard 310, a credit hour is comprised of fifty minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two 60 minute hours of out-of-class student work per credit per week for a period of 15 weeks* (one
exam week is included), or at least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities such as externships, clinics, simulation courses and extracurricular courses. With this standard in mind, when proposing a course, individual faculty determine the amount of in/out of class time necessary to achieve their learning outcomes and suggest credits accordingly.

Credit Requirements and Limitations
A minimum of 88 total credits is required for the law degree and may include both academic and extracurricular credits. Academic credits are derived from courses in which a professor assesses a student’s performance and determines the final grade. In contrast, extracurricular credits result from involvement in approved student-supervised courses in which students assess performance or in certain instances when others who are not members of the faculty participate in the evaluation process. Course descriptions in the catalog and on the course schedule indicate whether academic credit or extracurricular credit will be earned for each course.

Because there are limits on the particular types of credits that can be applied toward the J.D. degree, students must be aware of different credit limits, as explained below.

Student-In-Residence Requirement / Minimum Credit Limits
Students must be enrolled as a full-time student-in-residence for six semesters or, in the case of students requiring more than six semesters, the equivalent. Transfer students must be enrolled as a full-time student-in-residence for four full-time semesters.

To qualify as a full-time student in residence, students must attempt at least ten (10) credits and pass at least nine (9) credits during each semester. Students normally complete law school in six (6) semesters of at least ten (10) credits, thereby fulfilling the residence requirement. The ABA requires that students complete the J.D. degree within 84 months (7 years) of commencing legal study. [ABA Standard 311(c)]

A student is not permitted to drop to 9 credit hours or be considered a part-time student without receiving special permission from the Assistant Dean of Academic Life.

Credits earned during the summer months may not be used to circumvent residency requirements.

First Year Course Requirements
Students must take and pass all first-year courses. If a first-year course is failed it must be retaken. Because some upper-level courses require the fundamental knowledge acquired in first-year courses, students may be prohibited from taking certain upper-level classes until all first-year requirements have been fulfilled.

First Year Elective
In the spring semester of the first year, students will select one elective course from the list of available qualifying courses. Qualifying courses include:

- courses taught by full-time faculty (courses taught by adjunct faculty are not eligible).
- courses that do not require an upper-level pre-requisite course;
- courses that are three or four-credits (seminars are excluded);
- only letter-graded courses (pass/fail courses are excluded).
Additional Course Requirements
Constitutional Law I
Passing this course is required for graduation.

Professional Responsibility
Passing this course is required for graduation.

Professional Skills / Experiential Learning Requirement
Each student must receive at least one credit of instruction of experiential learning generally regarded as experience that is reasonably similar to that of a lawyer advising or representing a client or engaging in lawyering tasks that are necessary for effective, ethical, and responsible participation in the legal profession. Beginning with the entering JD class of 2016, this requirement will increase to six credit hours.

An experiential course must be a simulation course, a law clinic, or a field placement. *Simulation courses* provide substantial experience not involving an actual client, that (1) is reasonably similar to the experience of a lawyer advising or representing a client or engaging in other lawyering tasks in a set of facts and circumstances devised or adopted by a faculty member, and (2) includes: direct supervision of the student's performance by the faculty member; opportunities for performance, feedback from a faculty member, and self-evaluation; and a classroom instructional component (ABA Standard 303).


Substantial Writing Requirement / Seminars and Supervised Research Project
All students are required to complete a substantial, upper-level writing requirement (research paper) to obtain the J.D. degree. For most students this requirement is satisfied by enrolling in and completing a course which is designated in the official course listings as a three-credit Seminar. If, however, a student wants to pursue a topic outside the scope of the available Seminars, the requirement may be satisfied by enrolling in and completing a two-credit “Supervised Research Project.” [Registration form required]

To qualify as a substantial research paper, whether written for a Seminar or as a Supervised Research Project, the student's paper must present a fair and accurate description of the factual setting that gives rise to the issue being addressed, explain adequately existing law and doctrine, and develop a normative thesis that not only analyzes current doctrine but presents a reasoned view of how policy should respond to the presented issue. The paper must be well-researched with all sources cited properly (in Blue Book format or a similar convention) and must make appropriate use of relevant literature—primary sources and secondary literature. While rigid rules about the length of the papers are not warranted, an expectation exists that such papers would be at least 30-40 pages in length.

The *Supervised Research Project* course provides students the flexibility to pursue topics that would otherwise not be available to them through Seminars during their second and third years.
Although it demands less by way of scheduled class time, the supervised research project is otherwise meant to provide the student with the same experience of researching and writing a major paper as is provided by Seminars, which includes familiarizing oneself with existing scholarship on the chosen subject. Students who choose to satisfy the substantial research paper requirement through a Supervised Research Project must, in addition to producing a paper meeting or exceeding the above-stated standards, adhere to the following procedures and expectations in order to receive credit:

- submit a written proposal outlining the research project to a full-time faculty member no later than the last day of scheduled classes in the first semester of the student’s third year of law school. The full-time faculty member must agree, on the basis of the proposal, to serve as supervisor. Only full-time faculty (whose primary or secondary appointments are in the Law School, including visiting faculty) may act as supervisors. Neither adjunct faculty nor legal writing instructors may act as supervisors.
- complete and return to the Academic Life Office a supervised research form signed by the student and the faculty supervisor by the conclusion of the Open Enrollment period of the second semester of the student’s third year. The completed form must include a brief description of the proposed research project. Only after the form has been received by the Academic Life Office will the course be added to the student’s schedule.
- work closely with the faculty supervisor in refining the research topic, identifying existing literature on the subject, and developing his or her own thesis. Typically, the student will turn in at least one complete draft of the research paper for comments from the supervising faculty member prior to submitting the completed paper. A student will not satisfy this expectation if, after obtaining faculty approval, the student has little or no contact with the faculty supervisor prior to submitting a paper for credit.

Note: Students completing significant research papers should be aware of awards, prizes, and competitions. A number of opportunities are available to achieve recognition and, in some instances, a financial award, for achievement in a research and writing project. Papers written in connection with a course or Supervised Research Project are often eligible for a prize. The deadline for papers to be considered for VLS awards and prizes is typically the last day of Spring semester classes, even if the deadline for the course is later.

Students who are interested in obtaining further information about external writing competitions and awards should go to the information and links posted on the Academic Life page on the intranet under “Awards and Journals.”

Good Standing
A student must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above to graduate.

A 1.7 cumulative average at the end of each semester is required to remain in school and to be considered in “Good Standing.” There is no probation period and any cumulative GPA that falls below 1.7 results in “automatic withdrawal.” Incomplete grades are not considered in the calculation of the semester GPA. Thus, if the GPA falls below 1.7 with an incomplete course during the semester, the student is automatically withdrawn. After an automatic withdrawal, when the course is completed, if the GPA exceeds 1.7, a former student may apply to the Admissions Committee to be readmitted. A student whose GPA is below a 2.0 may have difficulty retaining federal financial aid.

Personal and Professional Integrity (Good Moral Character)
Law is a public profession which carries with it the potential for inflicting a substantial degree of harm. As such, an applicant’s character and fitness to practice law must be established as a
prerequisite to licensure. Students are strongly encouraged to determine the requirements for any jurisdiction in which they intend to seek admission by contacting the jurisdiction soon after commencing their legal education: http://www.ncbex.org/. To ensure the accuracy of the student record, each student is responsible for disclosing disciplinary and criminal matters that occurred prior to and during law school attendance. In order to supplement or update the student record, contact the Academic Life Office.

Good moral character is also a requirement for the J.D. degree. The faculty, in accordance with established Law School procedures, may remove a student from the J.D. program at any time for failure to meet the standard of good moral character required for the degree. Sanctions other than suspension or expulsion may be imposed by the faculty.

Violations of the Good Moral Character Requirement: Due Process

When a possible violation of the good moral character requirement comes to the attention of a faculty member, the matter should be referred to the Dean who will appoint an individual or a committee to investigate the possible violation. As a part of this investigation, the individual whose actions are in question will be notified of the inquiry and will be given an opportunity to discuss the allegations with the investigator(s) and to submit a written statement for the file. The investigator(s) will submit a report, with recommendations, to the faculty. At that point, the faculty will vote on whether there is a need to proceed further on the issue.

Should the faculty vote to continue the investigation, the student in question will be given an opportunity to appear before the faculty in person and in writing, and will be given the opportunity to decide whether to subject himself or herself to questions from the faculty. The student may be accompanied by counsel to the faculty hearing; counsel may not participate in discussion at the hearing.

After the completion of the investigation and hearing, the faculty will meet to vote on whether the student satisfies the good moral character requirement for degree candidacy. A negative vote shall result in the student’s suspension or automatic and immediate withdrawal, any later readmission to the School shall be by vote of the full faculty on the recommendation of the Admissions Committee. A vote not to terminate the student’s degree candidacy shall preclude any further action to terminate the candidacy or withhold the degree unless further evidence is discovered or further violations are alleged.

Faculty decisions at each point in this process will be governed by a majority vote of the faculty members present. At the outset of any investigation, the investigator(s) will give a copy of these procedures to the student whose actions are in question and advise the student that he or she may seek the assistance of counsel.

Financial Clearance

Any student with an unpaid balance from the previous semester will not be allowed to register without first obtaining financial clearance from the Office of Student Accounts located in the Baker Building at 110 21st Ave South, Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37203. Any student with a financial hold will not be allowed to register or receive a diploma or transcript.

Maximum Credit Limits

Students may enroll in a maximum of 17 credits in any semester. Course requests exceeding 17 hours will be rejected by Your Enrollment Services (YES). [ABA Standard 311(d)]
Pass/Fail Credits
Pass/Fail grading is used in courses only when the course is approved as such by the full faculty. Students do not have the option of taking a course for pass/fail credit. Typical pass/fail courses include Clinics, Trial Advocacy, Externships, Short Courses, and extracurricular activities. The catalog description of a course states whether the course will be graded on a pass/fail basis. **There is no limit on the number of pass/fail courses/credits that a student may take.**

Non-Class Credits
The faculty has authorized a limited number of non-class credits that may be applied towards the J.D. degree. Non-class courses include Externships, Journals, and other extracurricular credits, Legal Writing Assistance, Independent Study, Supervised Research Project, and credits taken outside Vanderbilt Law School. See the “Synopsis of Credits for the J.D. Degree” below for more detailed information.

Extracurricular Credits
**No more than five (5) extracurricular credits will be applied toward the J.D. degree.** Extracurricular courses include the Jessup Competition Team, Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law, Journal of Transnational Law, Law Review, Legal Aid Society, Moot Court Competition, Moot Court Board, Moot Court Traveling Team, Mock Trial Board, and National Moot Court Team. Extracurricular courses are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Legal Aid Society (LAS): To receive this one (1) extracurricular credit, students must complete 55 hours of work on a Legal Aid project(s). This is generally completed within a single semester. Students may enroll for more than one semester and with special permission receive up to two (2) extracurricular credits in any one semester. Project information is available through the LAS Board.

Moot Court Competition: Students competing in the Moot Court Competition will receive one (1) extracurricular credit for satisfactorily completing the competition.

Moot Court Board: Students secure membership on the Board in the second semester of their 2L year. One (1) extracurricular credit is awarded in the 2L Spring semester and in both the Fall and Spring semesters of the 3L year, for a total of three (3) credits. Three semesters of participation are required and credits that have been awarded may be rescinded for lack of participation.

Mock Trial Board: Students who compete in the mock trial competition in the 2L year are chosen to serve on the Mock Trial Board in the 3L year. To receive one (1) extracurricular credit, a student must participate in the competition and satisfy Board responsibilities for two semesters in the 3L year. Credit is awarded in the spring semester of the 3L year.

Jessup Competition and National Moot Court Competition teams: These activities receive two (2) extracurricular credits which are generally completed within the semester for which they are enrolled. In the same way, the Traveling Moot Court Team receives one (1) extracurricular credit. Students are selected through an audition process which is held in the spring semester.
Journal Credits

Law Review
Members receive one (1) extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation in the 2L year. This credit is awarded in the 2L Spring semester. One (1) additional extracurricular credit is awarded in both the fall and spring semesters of the 3L year, for a total of three (3) credits for four semesters of participation. Four semesters of participation are required and credits that have been awarded may be rescinded for lack of participation.

For specified Board positions, one (1) additional extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation is awarded in the 3L year, for an overall total of four (4) credits. This credit is awarded in the 3L spring semester.

Journal of Transnational Law
Members receive one (1) extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation in the 2L year. This credit is awarded in the 2L Spring semester. One (1) additional extracurricular credit is awarded in both the fall and spring semesters of the 3L year, for a total of three (3) credits for four semesters of participation. Four semesters of participation are required and credits that have been awarded may be rescinded for lack of participation.

For specified Board positions, one (1) additional extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation is awarded in the 3L year, for an overall total of four (4) credits. This credit is awarded in the 3L spring semester.

Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law
Members receive one (1) extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation in the 2L year. This credit is awarded in the 2L Spring semester. One (1) additional extracurricular credit is awarded in both the fall and spring semesters of the 3L year, for a total of three (3) credits for four semesters of participation. Four semesters of participation are required and credits that have been awarded may be rescinded for lack of participation.

For specified Board positions, one (1) additional extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation is awarded in the 3L year, for an overall total of four (4) credits. This credit is awarded in the 3L spring semester.

Publication Note Credits
Faculty advisors read and evaluate students’ Publication Notes and award one (1) academic credit (pass/fail) for a Note of publishable quality, meaning that the Note need not be published to receive credit. Credit is awarded during the fall of the 3L year.

Note: No additional credit is awarded for notes that are actually published. The publication note does not satisfy the substantial writing requirement. Students, who “note on” to a Journal in the second year, receive one (1) extracurricular credit for two semesters of participation in the 3L year. A Publication Note credit is also usually awarded.

Externship Credits
Students receive pass/fail credits for externship work. These are academic credits and are not counted in the extracurricular limit. Students may enroll for externship credits at the same approved site for a maximum of two semesters. No more than six (6) regular externship credits may be counted toward J.D. requirements.
Exception: Students who participate in a full-semester externship will receive eight (8) externship credits for their work. An externship paper, for two (2) graded credits, is also required. The externship paper does not satisfy the substantial writing requirement. Students who participate in a full-semester externship after having completed other externship credits will have only eight externship credits count toward the graduation requirement.

Research Assistance for Credit
Students serving as research assistants for full-time faculty members (faculty whose primary or secondary appointments are in the Law School) may earn two (2) hours of pass/fail academic credit per semester, provided that such assistance includes significant components of both research and writing activity. In general, each credit requires 55 hours of acceptable work product. Students who wish to enroll in Research Assistance for Credit may do so only with faculty permission. A student may count up to six (6) credit hours of Research Assistance for Credit toward the completion of the J.D. requirements. Students may not receive credit for research for which they are paid. [Registration form required]

Independent Study Credits
This pass/fail course may be taken only once for one (1) or two (2) academic credits to meet graduation requirements. A student develops his or her own project to be carried out under the supervision of a full-time faculty member. A faculty member’s approval of the academic merit of the project and agreement to supervise the project must be obtained in writing before the student may enroll in this course. An independent study paper does not satisfy the substantial writing requirement. [Registration form required]

Credits for Non-Law Electives and Approved Courses Taken Outside VLS
Up to six (6) academic credits taken outside the Law School may be applied toward graduation requirements. This limit includes courses in non-law Vanderbilt electives and those taken at another ABA-accredited law school. All non-law courses must be approved by the Assistant Dean for Academic Life. Transfer students are limited to approved non-law Vanderbilt electives only; these credits are in addition to the credits transferred from their original law school. Dual degree students are limited to twelve (12) credits from their other Vanderbilt school.

Non-law Vanderbilt electives must meet the following requirements:

- Non-law school electives must not duplicate or overlap available law school courses or courses that the student has previously taken at this or another institution.
- Only graduate level, letter-graded ** courses will be approved for credit towards graduation. Courses designated as Pass/Fail Credit/No Credit, in the non-law school, will not apply towards graduation.
- The course must contain substantial legal content, or be directly related to the student’s course of study in law school. The focus is on the content of the course.
- The burden is on the student to demonstrate that these principles have been met in his or her individual case.

When requesting permission to enroll in a non-law Vanderbilt course, students will be asked to provide additional information including the course content and educational purpose. [Registration form required]

**To receive credit toward the degree requirements for courses taken outside VLS or at another ABA-accredited law school, a student must earn a grade of “C” or its numerical equivalent. On
VLS records, the grade is recorded as a “Pass” and is not included in the GPA. If a student earns a grade below a “C” no credit will be received for the course, even if the grade is a passing grade in the other school and is not an “F.” In general, approval of classes at another law school is limited to courses that do not duplicate or overlap available VLS law school courses.

Courses taken prior to attending VLS are not eligible for credit toward the law degree, except in the case of a rising 2L student transferring from another accredited law school whose credits from that institution have been officially approved at the time of acceptance to VLS. For information on transfer credits from other law schools, see the chart below and the discussion under Transfer Students.

**Summer Credits**
Credit for course work during the summer, from any source, is limited to a total of eight (8) credit hours applied toward the J.D. degree. This number includes both letter-graded and Pass/Fail credits through VLS or graded credits transferred from another law school’s program.

### Synopsis of Credits for the J.D. Degree
**Revised June 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Required for Graduation</th>
<th>88</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three-Year Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Regular Class credits required (minimum)</td>
<td>65 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Class credits allowed (VLS and other)</td>
<td>23 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Non-Law School credits (i.e. Owen, Peabody, Divinity, and/or transfer credits from another university)</td>
<td>6 of 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dual Degree Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Regular Class credits required</td>
<td>59 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Class credits allowed</td>
<td>17 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Non-Law School credits (Vanderbilt and/or transfer credits from another university)</td>
<td>0 of 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total credits from school of dual degree</td>
<td>12 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Regular Class credits required</td>
<td>41 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Class credits allowed</td>
<td>17 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Non-Law School credits (Vanderbilt only)</td>
<td>6 of 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Transfer credits from prior institution</td>
<td>30 of 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Specific Non-Class Credit Limits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a maximum of 17 to 23 credits will be counted toward the 88 credits required for graduation – see above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externships (LAW 7900 or 7905 - 6; LAW 7910/7915 full semester externships - 10)</td>
<td>6 or 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Transfer Requirements

Students who transfer to Vanderbilt from other schools are generally treated as though they had started law school at Vanderbilt. Joining in the life of VLS is readily accomplished.

Up to 30 letter-graded credits can be transferred from law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. Courses satisfactorily completed at the other school are usually accepted, even when the number of credits for a particular course exceeds the number of credits for the same course at Vanderbilt, but only if it appears that the other school actually conducted a more extensive course. Transfer students are required to complete four (4) full-time semesters at Vanderbilt to receive a J.D. degree from VLS. **Transfer students are not eligible for dual degree programs.**

Transfer grades are recorded as “Pass” credits, not as the numerical or letter grades originally awarded, and they are not included in the cumulative grade point average. Transfer students are able to receive an additional six (6) credits for other approved non-law courses within Vanderbilt. [See Synopsis of Credits for the J.D. Degree]

### Distance Education

Vanderbilt Law School offers no distance education courses. The faculty, however, has agreed that students may transfer in up to 12 credits of distance education courses (credits that may count toward a Vanderbilt JD degree subject to the overall cap on the Vanderbilt non-law school credits), provided that: (1) students receive advance approval from the Assistant Dean for Academic Life to enroll in any distance education courses; (2) the courses must be courses that Vanderbilt Law School does not offer; (3) the courses must be offered by an ABA-accredited law school; and (4) the courses must be approved by the sponsoring law school as credit-bearing for their JD students and certified as meeting ABA Standard 306. The Registrar of the sponsoring school must provide written documentation that the courses meet ABA Standard 306.

### Dual Degree Requirements

The arrangements for dual degree programs are well established with the Owen Graduate School of Management, the Medical School, the Divinity School, and the Peabody School. A J.D./Ph.D. in Law and Economics or a J.D. and Ph.D. in Neuroscience is available through the Graduate School. A less structured opportunity is also available through the Graduate School, where a wide variety of subjects may be pursued, and under present practice, each program is
individually developed for the student. Students must obtain admission independently in each school for all dual degree programs.

The dual degree arrangements provide for each school to accept a certain number of credits earned at the other school, thus reducing the time needed to obtain the two degrees.

Dual degree programs include:

- J.D./MBA (Owen Graduate School of Management)
- J.D./MSF (Owen Graduate School of Management)
- J.D./MD (Vanderbilt Medical School)
- J.D./MDIV (Divinity)
- J.D./MTS (Divinity)
- J.D./MPP (Peabody)
- J.D./Ph.D. in Law and Economics (Graduate School)
- J.D./Ph.D. in Neuroscience (Graduate School)

Other individualized programs with the Graduate School

One challenge of the dual degree program is the potential for time conflicts between scheduled classes in dual schools. Scheduled classes may not overlap to any extent. In addition, courses from the two schools may not overlap in content. For example, a J.D./MBA student can receive credit for Negotiation or Introduction to Accounting in only one school.

**Law and Business Certificate Requirements**

To earn the Law and Business Certificate students must:

**A.** Pass the five required law courses:

- Introduction to Accounting*
- Introduction to Corporate Finance for Lawyers*
- Corporations and Business Entities or Corporations
- Federal Tax Law
- Securities
- File a Law & Business Certificate Intent to Enroll Form

*Introduction to Accounting and Introduction to Corporate Finance for Lawyers are required unless a waiver for one or both courses is obtained. A waiver will be granted if one of the following applies: 1) you are currently pursuing either a J.D./MBA or J.D./MSF; 2) you have earned an MBA or MSF; or 3) you have earned a grade of B or better in college-level accounting or finance (with the exception of personal finance, public finance, or international finance) courses. A waiver form is required and must be approved by the Assistant Dean for Academic Life for students to be exempted from Introduction to Accounting or Introduction to Corporate Finance for Lawyers. If a student elects to take these courses, but one of the above requirements is true, the student will be required to take the courses on a pass/fail basis.

**B.** J.D.s: Earn nine additional credits in courses among the approved Law and Business elective courses listed on the Academic Life page of the intranet.

LL.M.s: Earn six to nine additional credits in courses among the approved Law and Business elective courses listed on the Academic Life page of the intranet. With permission, Corporate Tax may be substituted for Federal Tax.
LL.M. Degree Requirements
Candidates for the degree of Master of Laws must have:
- pursued full-time resident law school study for a Fall and Spring semester, in that order, during one academic year;
- for the course track option, earned at least 24 credit hours, not to exceed 28 total credits;
- for the thesis option, earned at least 24 credit hours including 4-7 credits for a scholarly research project, not to exceed 28 total credits.
- completed Life of the Law-LLM;
- completed Introduction to Legal Research and Scholarly Writing in the U.S.;
- maintained at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average in the required work, and received the favorable recommendation of the faculty for the degree; and
- paid all financial obligations due the University.

LL.M. Law & Business Track Requirements
Candidates for the degree must have:
- pursued full-time resident law school study for a fall and spring semester, in that order, during one academic year;
- earned at least 27, not to exceed 30, total credits;
- completed Life of the Law-LLM;
- completed Introduction to Legal Research and Scholarly Writing in the U.S.;
- successfully completed the five required Law & Business courses;
- earned at least six elective credit hours beyond the core curriculum;
- maintained at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average in the required work, and received the favorable recommendation of the faculty for the degree; and
- paid all financial obligations due the University.

University Policies and Procedures
The Vanderbilt University Student Handbook
The Vanderbilt University Student Handbook contains policies and regulations related to non-academic matters. It is published by the University’s Dean of Students Office. All students are subject to the regulations in this handbook and should familiarize themselves with its contents.

The Graduate Student Conduct Council has original jurisdiction in all cases of nonacademic misconduct involving graduate and professional students. The Graduate Student Conduct Council is composed of the Chair of the Conduct Council, or his/her designee, and two students and two faculty members from the Graduate School and each of the professional schools. This Conduct Council may hear cases of violations of University policies referred to it by academic or Student Life administrators, or the Council Chair. The Chair, or the Chair’s designee, may hear a case without benefit of the full Council at the student’s option, except in cases involving sexual misconduct or other serious charges. All cases involving sexual misconduct are referred to a panel of the Conduct Council. In a matter not involving sexual misconduct, but nevertheless deemed serious, the Chair of the Conduct Council, in consultation with and upon the concurrence of the Dean of the appropriate school, shall require that the case be heard by the joint faculty - student panel of the Conduct Council from the accused student's school. Only the Council members from the school in which a violation is alleged to have occurred will participate in a hearing regarding the violation.
The VLS Honor System and Honor Code/Academic Integrity

The Honor System presumes that all work submitted as part of VLS academic requirements is the product of the student submitting it unless credit is given with proper footnoting and bibliographic techniques, or as prescribed by the course instructor.

The honor system is set forth in separate publications by the VLS Honor Council. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the provisions of the Honor Code. “The Law School Honor Code” and “The Law School Honor Code Procedures” are available on the intranet. Specific violations are noted below.

Violations of the Honor Code (from the VLS Honor Code)

Violations of the Code may include, but shall not be limited to, the following student acts or acts that a student reasonably should have known would assist another student in committing a violation:

i. Unauthorized materials: The use of any materials not expressly authorized by the instructor in an examination or other academic endeavor, when the student knew or should have known that such use was not expressly authorized.

ii. Unauthorized collaboration: Unauthorized collaboration on any examination or other academic endeavor, when the student knew or should have known that such collaboration was not expressly authorized.

iii. Exam discussion: Any discussion of an unscheduled examination, when the student knew or should have known that the discussion was with, or in proximity of, another student who will take the examination at a later time.

iv. Destruction or other misuse of materials: The theft, sequestration, mutilation, or destruction of materials needed by another student for a specific academic endeavor, when the student intended to steal, sequester, mutilate, or destroy such materials. Such materials include, but are not limited to, materials needed for the first-year writing program, any Moot Court program or competition, any Journal or Law Review competition, and any reserve materials used for class preparation. The theft, sequestration, mutilation, or destruction of another student’s textbooks, notes, outlines, or other materials needed for an academic endeavor, when the student intended to steal, sequester, mutilate, or destroy such materials.

v. Misleading an employer: Any knowing falsification or misrepresentation by the student to a potential employer, or to potential employers, regarding a material fact.

vi. Plagiarism: Any act of plagiarism committed by the student. Plagiarism is defined as the act of knowingly incorporating into one’s own work a substantially similar portion of another’s work without adequately or properly indicating that source. Because plagiarism is a concept with which all graduate students should be familiar, it is presumed that an individual will know when he has incorporated another’s work into his own. Therefore, once it has been established that an individual has incorporated a substantially similar portion of another’s work without adequately or properly indicating the source, that individual is presumed to have done so knowingly; however, the individual may rebut this presumption by establishing by a preponderance of the evidence that the act was not done knowingly.

vii. Abusing the Code:
(A) The knowing misrepresentation of facts by the student to the Council, or to any
Council member, either in the invocation of, or the participation in, the Council
Procedures.

(B) Interfering with an Honor Code investigation including, but not limited to (a)
destruction of relevant evidence with intent to keep such evidence from the Council;
(b) intentionally attempting to coerce or exert undue influence on persons known to
be involved in an investigation or proceeding; (c) intentionally failing to maintain the
confidentiality of proceedings when under a sworn duty to do so.

(C) Misrepresentation of a Code Violation: Student organizations are responsible for
communicating with the Council regarding the Honor Code and will inquire of the
Council prior to representing to students that specific conduct constitutes a Code
violation. A student organization shall not misrepresent the contents or substance of
the Honor Code. Officers who misrepresent the Code can be charged with having
violated this provision.

viii. Instructor-prohibited conduct: Any act expressly prohibited by the instructor, when the
student knew or should have known such act was expressly prohibited by the instructor.

ix. Unfair advantage: Any act not listed above, when the student knew or should have
known such act could give the student or another student an unfair academic or
professional advantage.

Tuition Payments
Tuition payments are due on the dates established by the Office of Student Accounts.

Students must also pay the cost of medical insurance (unless covered by other insurance and
waived no later than August 1), an activity fee, and a recreation fee, all payable in two equal
installments. University procedures require the fulfillment of financial obligations at the
beginning of the semester.

A bill is sent to students before the beginning of classes. It will show any unpaid charges
relating to past semesters and the amounts for the coming semester. Payment may be made
online, by mail, or in person at the Student Accounts Office at Room 100 in the Baker Building
(110 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203). If payment is not made on time, late charges
are automatically added to the account. Students may access the Billing Portal through their
landing page in YES.

Financial Aid
All financial aid and student account questions can be directed to the Law School Admissions
Office. Refund checks may be direct deposited or mailed to the local mailing address specified
by students. For direct deposit, log into YES, click the Direct Deposit icon, and enter your
account and routing number. Otherwise, check your local mailing address in YES and update it
as needed to ensure timely delivery of your refund. Processing of in-school loan deferment
paperwork, resulting in a verification of current enrollment, is handled through the University
Registrar’s Office.

Medical Insurance Requirement
The University requires that all students have adequate health insurance. As a result, the
University has a standard insurance plan and will include the charge for this on each student’s
tuition bill. If students have other coverage and do not wish to participate in the University-
sponsored plan, they must complete an Online Waiver Form and provide their other insurance
information. The Online Waiver Form (located at gallagherkoster.com) must be submitted **no later than August 1.** Students who fail to complete the Online Waiver Form by the deadline will be automatically enrolled in the University plan and will be responsible for paying the annual insurance premium. Students who do not receive the insurance information should contact the University’s **Office of Student Accounts.** Students having separate coverage must ensure that it remains in effect. If such coverage has terminated, the student must obtain coverage under the University plan.

**International Student Health Insurance Requirement**

International students and their eligible dependents who reside in the United States are required to purchase the University International Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan unless the University determines adequate coverage is provided from another source. Students who wish to obtain a waiver of the Vanderbilt coverage for themselves and/or their dependents must contact the **University’s International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)** at 615-322-2753 each year.

**Student Accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students who need accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act must contact the **VU Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD)** at 322-4705. All accommodations are arranged through the EAD in cooperation with the Director of Student Affairs. **Faculty should not be contacted regarding these issues.** It is imperative that students contact the EAD for accommodations as soon as possible after registration. A copy of the Law School's policy regarding reasonable accommodations may be found on the Academic Life page of the intranet under Accommodations.

**Parking Permits**

All registered students who park a car on campus at any time are required to obtain a University parking permit. Parking permits are obtained from the campus Traffic and Parking Office at 2800 Vanderbilt Place. A yearly fee is charged. Permits can be purchased online at the **Traffic and Parking** website.

**Academic Policies and Procedures**

**Student Complaint Procedure (ABA Accreditation Standard 510)**

The ABA Standards of Legal Education establish accreditation standards to ensure that law schools meet certain legal educational requirements to qualify an individual to be eligible to sit for the bar examination. The Standards may be accessed at: [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html)

Vanderbilt Law School wants to hear any student concerns about significant problems that directly implicate the school’s program of legal education and its compliance with ABA Accreditation Standards (for example, a failure to provide students with notice of the graduation requirements and the curriculum to meet those requirements, or inadequate library resources to support student scholarship and research). Any student having such a complaint should submit it in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

When filing a complaint, the student must describe the subject of the complaint, provide a citation to the relevant ABA Standard(s), and include his/her full name and address.

When a formal written complaint is received, the Associate Dean will investigate and will attempt to resolve the matter within 30 days. Upon completing the investigation of the complaint, the
Associate Dean will communicate the School’s findings and, if appropriate, the School’s intended actions to the complainant.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or resolution, that individual has the right to appeal the decision. The complainant should submit written comments to the Dean within two weeks of the communication of the findings of the initial investigation. The Dean’s decision will be communicated to the complainant within 30 days, if possible, and that decision will be final. The Law School will maintain a complete written record of each complaint and how it was investigated and resolved. These records will be maintained in a confidential manner in the Dean’s Office for a period of seven (7) years. The School will not in any way retaliate against an individual who makes a complaint, nor permit any faculty member, administrator or other student to do so.

This procedure does not in any way eliminate or limit other Law School and University processes for filing other kinds of complaints.

VLS “Open Door” Policy
Vanderbilt has a long established tradition of faculty accessibility, often referred to as the “Open Door” Policy. Communication, understanding, and good will are characteristics that are valued and encouraged. Students should feel free to request consultation with any member of the faculty, although it may be necessary to arrange a time which is mutually convenient for both parties.

Visitation at another Law School
Students are encouraged to obtain the full benefit of the legal education offered at VLS, and the J.D. degree should represent all three (3) years of Vanderbilt education unless compelling reasons mandate an exception.

In unusual circumstances, a student may be given permission to take courses as a visiting student at another law school and transfer the credits toward the Vanderbilt J.D. degree to complete a legal education. Reasons suitable for warranting visitation must be of a compelling nature and as a result, such requests are rarely granted. The desire to attend another school where tuition is less expensive, to finish law school in the city where employment has been obtained, or to improve one’s chances of obtaining employment in a different city, for example, do not constitute compelling reasons. Requests to visit at another law school should be directed to the Assistant Dean of Academic Life.

Leaves of Absence and Part-time Status
On occasion, illness or another serious reason may justify a leave of absence from VLS. Consultation with the Assistant Dean of Academic Life should precede any formal request to assess the options of a leave of absence or permanent withdrawal from the Law School. A formal request must be submitted in writing and should set forth substantial reasons warranting the leave. If granted, leaves of absence are for one semester or one year. Students may not enroll in classes at another law school while on leave. When a student’s leave of absence is approved after the first week of classes, a permanent “W” is recorded on the transcript for all courses.

A written request to take fewer than the ten (10) credits required each semester must also be submitted to the Assistant Dean of Academic Life. Part-time study is allowed only in unusual circumstances and for compelling reasons. In the case of students requiring part-time status, students must be enrolled as a full-time student (at least 10 credits) for no longer than 84 months after commencing the study of law.
Grades
Grades are due 30 days after the end of the exam period and are made available to students as soon as possible thereafter. Students are graded on the grading scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students may access their academic records through YES. The site may also be accessed through the Law School intranet Quick Links. The VUnetID and e-password are necessary to access student information.

Anonymous Grading of Examinations
Anonymous grading is accomplished by a carefully planned system in which each student receives a randomly-assigned identification number for each exam period. Students are not personally identified until the professor reports the grades of the written examination. Any adjustments to the exam grades, for class performance or other reasons, are made separately. Students may obtain the exam grade from the Academic Life Office. Final grades are posted in YES. Not all courses are anonymously graded.

Re-grading and Final Grade Review
Re-grading and re-examination are not accepted practices in the Law School. Such measures would be in serious conflict with the anonymous grading system and are not regarded as appropriate methods to administer a fair, uniform, unbiased grading system. Accordingly, grade changes are made only in the event of a clerical error.

Written Work Submitted for Credit
A paper that served as the basis for the receipt of credit in any course, seminar, project, publication or otherwise, cannot be used in its original or in a revised form as the basis for credit in any other VLS course, seminar, project, publication or otherwise. Papers may be submitted for external (non-VLS) publication or competitions.

Class Attendance Requirements
Regular class attendance is required. Excessive absences may result in automatic withdrawal from the course, exclusion from the final examination with a failing grade, or a reduction in grade, all at the discretion of the faculty member involved.

Faculty members are expected to inform students of the standards that will be applied and the consequences of excessive absence. However, it is the student’s responsibility to confirm the professor’s attendance policy for each course.

Note: Students may not miss any Short Course class sessions. Faculty cannot waive this policy.
The faculty has adopted a policy which does not permit any time conflicts between courses for which the student is registered (whether for credit or audit or in another school), including courses that begin and end at the same time.

Failed Courses
Graduation requirements (first year courses, Constitutional Law I, Professional Responsibility, the Skills Requirement, and the Substantial Writing Requirement), must be retaken if failed. As a general rule, failed elective courses need not be retaken. A course may be retaken if an “F” is received; however, the “F” remains on the student’s record and the grade earned after retaking the course is recorded as a separate grade. Both grades are included in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average.

Grades of “I” – “Incomplete”
The designation of “I” is used when a student has not completed the requirements for a course but is permitted and expected to do so. When the requirements are completed and a grade is awarded, the record will be amended to reflect the letter grade. When an “I” is changed to a final grade, the grade point average will be recalculated. (Note: An “I” may be changed to an “F” or become a permanent “I” at the professor’s discretion if assigned coursework is not completed).

Students have until April 15 of the following semester to complete classes taken in the prior fall semester for which they have received an “I.” October 15 is the deadline by which classes taken in the spring semester must be completed. February 15 is the deadline by which classes taken in the summer semester must be completed. If the student does not complete the course requirements by the deadline, the professor may leave the grade as a permanent “I” or may change the grade to an “F” or another final grade that reflects the student’s failure to complete the assigned work.

Incompletes in the Moot Court Competition may be treated as unexcused failures and result in an “F” rather than an “Incomplete.”

Incomplete courses will not be considered in the calculation of the semester’s GPA and will not have an effect on the determination of Good Standing.

Grades of “IP” – “In Progress”
The grade designation “IP” stands for “In Progress” and is used when course credits are dependent on completion of more than one semester, for instance a capstone seminar.

No credit is given until multiple semesters are completed. The “IP” grade remains on a student’s transcript until completion of all course requirements at which time the “IP” grade is changed to a final grade and the grade point average will be recalculated.

While IP credits appear as Attempted Hours on some copies of the academic record, attempted hours are not reflected on the official transcript.

Class Designation Requirements
Each law school class is based on the number of credits a student has earned:

- First Year 0-31 credits
- Second Year 32-57 credits
- Third Year 58 or more credits
Transcripts
Current students may print an “unofficial” copy of their academic record at VLS (a sorted courses report) through YES or request an official transcript from the Office of the University Registrar. While enrolled as a student, official transcript requests may be made through YES. Transcripts are not available through the Law School.

Note: Access to YES terminates four months after graduation.

Vanderbilt University assesses newly admitted students a one-time $30 transcript fee, which will cover the cost of all transcript requests. Students and alumni are not charged for transcripts.

Ranking and Release of Academic Information
Vanderbilt Law School does not rank its students. The Academic Life Office can produce a letter to that effect for employers or schools.

When students enter VLS, they are given an opportunity to sign a statement authorizing VLS to release grade information as follows:

I authorize representatives of Vanderbilt Law School, including faculty members, to secure and/or release information about my Law School academic record and character and fitness to prospective employers, Boards of Bar Examiners, and graduate and other schools or their representatives (including faculty members) in connection with my endeavors or endeavors pursued by faculty members on my behalf to obtain a position or further study.

This authorization is revocable, but once signed, remains in effect until canceled in writing by the student. Even when the student signs this authorization statement, transcripts are released only by the University Registrar and only when specifically requested by the student, in writing, on each occasion. Students requesting a faculty reference should provide the faculty member with an official transcript or a copy of the Sorted Courses Report available in YES.

VLS is pleased to cooperate with students’ wishes when responding to inquiries. Students are responsible for ensuring that VLS records of authorization and instructions accurately reflect their current wishes.

Directory information, consisting of name, local address, telephone, email address, and undergraduate school, will be included in the online VLS Photo Directory. This information is automatically included unless a student requests in writing that specific information be omitted.

Letters of Good Standing / Enrollment Verification / No Rank / Dean’s Certification of Graduation for Bar Examiners
Requests for letters of good standing, VLS “no rank” policy, or graduation are made through the Academic Life Office.

Enrollment verification is provided by the University Registrar's Office, Baker Building, Suite 110, 21st Avenue South.

Honors and Awards
For a full list of honors and awards, see the Law School Catalog on the Vanderbilt University website.
Dean’s List: Students whose grades are in the top 20% of their class, in any semester, receive Dean’s List honors for that semester. Students must complete at least six (6) letter-graded credits to qualify for the Dean’s List.

Vanderbilt Scholastic Excellence Awards: The recipients of these awards are designated by faculty as the top academic performance in graded classes except seminars and other limited enrollment courses.

Archie B. Martin Memorial Prize is awarded to the student in the first-year class who has earned the highest grade point average for the year.

Robert F. Jackson Memorial Prize is awarded to the student in the second-year class who has maintained the highest scholastic average during the two years.

Founder’s Medal signifies first honors and is awarded to the student in the graduating class who has attained the highest cumulative grade point average, having completed at least 55 credit hours and five full-time semesters in residence at Vanderbilt.

The Order of the Coif: The Order of the Coif, the national legal scholarship society, has a chapter at Vanderbilt. Election to membership in the order is limited to those students in the top 10 percent of the senior class who have completed at least 75 percent of their law studies (66 class hours) as graded* class hours at Vanderbilt. Because Vanderbilt accepts transfer credits but not grades, it is unlikely a transfer student can meet the 75% rule to qualify for Order of the Coif. More information about the Order of the Coif can be found by on the society’s website.

*Graded class hours are those for which letter grades in the A+ through F range are awarded and are recorded on the transcript. Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis are not included.

Journal Selection Process
Journal selection procedures are determined through journal by-laws and faculty advisement. Journals sponsor three opportunities for membership each year. These include the 1L Joint Write-On Competition, Transfer Student Write-On Competition, and the Second Year Note-On Competition. Participation is anonymous, and numbers and competition instructions are available through the Academic Life Office. Exceptions to any procedures or guidelines are at the discretion of the journal. Requests for exceptions must be in writing to the Academic Life Office to maintain the anonymity of the student.

1L and Transfer Student Write-On Competitions: Participants in the Write-On Competitions are required to submit a 10-12 page mini-note, a Bluebook exercise, and an editing exercise. Only students who complete the write-on competition, including the citation exercise, in “good faith” will be issued invitations to join the staff of a journal. “Good faith” is determined by the journal members grading the submissions, and includes but is not limited to the following:
- Mini-notes of one or two pages do not meet the required standard;
- A student may be disqualified for mini-notes that exceed the word limit;
- Students who do not follow the competition rules;
- The standard for scoring submissions is The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation. Improper citation may also be a violation of the Honor Code.

Write-On Competition Selection: Students who compete in the Write-On Competitions are asked to complete a preference ranking sheet, indicating only those journals for which they are willing to accept membership. If a student has not expressed a preference for a particular journal, membership in that journal will not be offered.
Each journal selects thirty-two (32) members through the 1L Write-On Competition. Members also are selected through the Transfer Student Write-On and Note-On competitions at the discretion of the journal leadership; the number of students who are invited to join will vary.

**Law Review**: The first 16 offers of membership are determined by the top 16 writing scores obtained during the 1L joint competition. The next 16 students receive an offer based on the highest GPAs in the 1L class. Transfer students and Note-On competitors are selected for membership based on submission scores only.

**Journal of Transnational Law**: The first 16 members are selected based on a 50%-50% weighting of grades and writing scores. The next 16 members are selected based on their score in the writing competition.

**Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law**: All 32 members are selected based on a 50%-50% weighting of grades and writing scores.

**Second Year Note-On Competition**: All 2Ls who are not currently on a journal are able to compete in the Note-On Competition. Second-year students are not eligible to compete if they have received and declined an offer of membership on any journal through the 1L or Transfer Student Competitions. Comments on journal submissions for those students not selected for any journal in the 1L or Transfer Student competitions are available by contacting the journal offices.

Each journal has its own Note-On submission dates and policies. Students participating in the Note-On process may submit their note to each journal; however, students interested in submitting their notes to multiple journals, should speak to the Note-On representative of each journal to ensure that the topic fits within the purpose/mission of the journal.

Note-On participants are offered membership to Law Review, The Journal of Transnational Law, and The Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law for submitting a note of publishable quality as determined by the journal editorial board. Notes submitted to JETL or The Journal of Transnational Law will be considered for publication. Notes submitted to Law Review will not be considered for actual publication.

Participants are encouraged to seek faculty assistance while writing their notes. Participants may speak with faculty concerning topic, substance, development, and structure of the note. A participant may not seek or accept any editing of their work with regard to the mechanics of the participant’s writing (grammar, syntax, sentence structure, word choice, etc.). Any acceptance of this sort of guidance is considered grounds for disqualification and an Honor Code violation.

**Course Descriptions and the Approved Curriculum**

Course descriptions are easily accessed on the VLS website under Curriculum and in YES; these sites provide the most current course information. Additional curricular information may be found under Curriculum and Registration on the Academic Life page of the intranet.

The VLS curriculum is also published annually in the official Law School Catalog, a PDF of which may be accessed from the VLS website.

**Course Selection and Advising**

Students are responsible for planning a curriculum that satisfies the requirements of their degree. Accordingly, students should anticipate the courses needed during each semester until graduation. In the second year especially, care should be exercised to take courses that are
prerequisite to advanced courses that may be desired in the third year. While VLS has relatively few courses with prerequisites, it is necessary to plan ahead for those that do; more information below.

Course selection can be a complicated process because of the many electives offered each semester and because time conflicts are inevitable when trying to organize them into a five-day weekly schedule. In addition, because some courses and extracurricular activities do not have scheduled times it is important to consider the amount of time necessary for completion of these unscheduled courses and activities in planning a semester’s schedule. Furthermore, because exams are rarely rescheduled, students should carefully review the exam schedule when it is posted at the beginning of the Open Enrollment (drop/add) period and finalize their course schedules, anticipating any conflicts during the examination period in the semester for which they are registering.

To assist students in planning their curriculum, the Academic Life Office provides a required counseling session in the 1L fall semester to assist students in the selection of their spring elective and in the 1L spring to assist students in course selection for their subsequent years. In addition, there is a required degree audit in the fall semester of the 3L year. Consulting with faculty and individual meetings with the Assistant Dean for Academic Life are also highly recommended options and available on an ongoing basis. Finally, students are encouraged to track their individual academic record through YES, and to seek clarification with the Assistant Dean for Academic Life as needed to be certain that all degree requirements are met. A PowerPoint on course choices used in the most recent 1L advising sessions and an interactive degree audit calculator are located on the Academic Life page of the intranet for student use.

**Prerequisite Courses**

Prerequisite courses are specified for some advanced level courses and are noted in the catalog descriptions. Prerequisites assume a level of knowledge upon which a course will build, so it is to the student’s advantage to pay close attention to those assumptions. The progression of prerequisites is especially important in the succession of taxation courses, litigation courses, and for the Law and Business Certificate. In planning courses for the 2L year of law school, it is wise to take the prerequisites for courses likely to be taken in the 3L year. Faculty members have the authority to waive prerequisite requirements for the courses they teach; however, such waivers cannot be expected and are granted only when circumstances provide a compelling reason. Without such a waiver, students will be unable to register for courses for which they have not met the prerequisites.

**Procedures for Course Registration**

**Registering Online for Law Courses**

Requesting courses for each semester is completed on-line through YES. Instructions for accessing YES are found on the Academic Life Page of the intranet. The YES User Guide is available on the University Registrar’s web page and should be read/reviewed before each registration period. It is located at: [http://registrar.vanderbilt.edu/registration/yes-user-guides/](http://registrar.vanderbilt.edu/registration/yes-user-guides/)

Students may not register for more than 17 credit hours. Considering that registration is “first come, first served,” a delay in registration may prevent students from obtaining the courses they desire. After the registration period ends, students may drop or add courses during the Open Enrollment period which begins the week prior to the start of classes for the semester through the end of the first week of classes.

Most law courses are “open enrollment” courses (subject to prerequisites and room capacity), allowing students to enroll themselves through YES. Other courses are “limited enrollment"
Open Enrollment Courses in which students may enroll themselves include:

- Open Enrollment Electives
- Open Enrollment Short Courses
- Jessup Team [if selected]
- Environmental Law Policy Annual Review; Journal of Entertainment Law and Practice; Journal of Transnational Law; Law Review; and each of the three Journal Executive Boards [if selected]
- Legal Aid Society
- Moot Court Competition; Moot Court Board; and National Moot Court Team [if selected]
- Mock Trial Board [if selected]

**Note:** Students who enroll without having been “selected” will be removed.

Limited Enrollment Courses that are first come, first served or require faculty approval [request form] include:

- Clinics
- Seminars
- Trial Advocacy
- Limited Enrollment Courses and Short Courses
- Externships [Request Form]
- Independent Study [Request Form]
- Research Assistance for Credit [Request Form]
- Supervised Research Project [Request Form]
- Approved non-law courses [approval required of non-law school (Owen, Peabody, etc.)]

Registering for Seminars, Limited Enrollment Courses, Limited Enrollment Short Courses, Trial Advocacy, and Clinics

Enrollment is gained on a first come, first served basis for Seminars, Limited Enrollment courses, Limited Enrollment Short Courses, Trial Advocacy, and Legal Clinics. If students choose to drop Limited Enrollment courses, seats will automatically be filled by the waitlist through the end of the Open Enrollment period.

**Note:** When registering for limited enrollment courses, go to your Class Cart and select “Waitlist if Full” from the pulldown menu for the class you want. If you don’t get a seat, you will automatically be waitlisted. The University Registrar runs the waitlist every three hours. Please be patient.

There is no limit on the total number of Limited Enrollment courses, including Seminars, which can be applied toward the graduation requirements.

Attendance at First Class Meeting for Seminars and Limited Enrollment Classes

Students must attend the first class to retain a seat in a Limited Enrollment class. Students who are absent from the first class will be removed and those seats may be filled, at the professor’s discretion, by other non-registered students in attendance. Priority goes to students on the waitlist and then to students in attendance who are not on the waitlist. Students on the waitlist
who are not in attendance at the first class will remain on the waitlist and be added via the YES waitlist function through the end of Open Enrollment.

**Students will not be automatically removed from the roster of any open-enrollment course.** Be certain to check your enrollment near the end of the drop/add period.

**Registering for Approved Non-Law Electives and Other Non-Law Courses**

Law students are permitted to take any courses at Vanderbilt University at no additional tuition charge in any semester in which they are enrolled as full-time law students. (Non-tuition fees are charged for some courses at other Vanderbilt schools, and law students will be charged those fees.)

If a law student wants a non-law course to count toward the 88 hours required for graduation (to transfer the credit for that course to the Law School), the student must request approval from the Academic Life Office. If the course is approved as a non-law elective, the credit for the course will be transferred to the Law School transcript with a grade of “P” if the student has earned a grade in the course that is at least equal to the grade average required to be in good standing at the teaching school.

Decisions about approving courses as non-law electives will be made in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The course cannot substantially overlap with a course being offered by the Law School;
2. The course does not substantially duplicate coursework that the student has already completed outside the Law School;
3. The course must be a graduate-level course, meaning that it must be approved for credit for students in the Vanderbilt Graduate School or one of the University’s post-baccalaureate professional degree programs;
4. The course must contain substantial legal content, or be directly related to the student’s course of study in the Law School.

The limit for non-law courses is six (6) credit hours. Dual degree students are not eligible to take additional non-law courses beyond the hours transferred from their dual program.

Prior to submitting the “Request for Permission to Enroll in a Non-Law Course” form, the student must contact the Non-Law Course Professor and Non-Law School’s Office of Enrollment (i.e. Owen, Peabody, etc.) for permission to enroll.

A “Request for Permission to Enroll in a Non-Law Course” Form is available on the [Academic Life page of the intranet](#).

When permission has been granted, a student will be registered for the course through the Academic Life Office. If permission for credit is not granted, the student may still be registered for the course, with permission from the non-law school; however, credit toward graduation will not be awarded.

**Note:** The Law School Faculty has pre-approved a limited number of non-law courses with other Vanderbilt graduate and professional schools; however, the student must submit a “Request Form” after having obtained permission to enroll from the professor and the other school’s Enrollment Office. Law students cannot self-register in non-law classes. The
registration process is completed by the Academic Life Office. Requests to be registered in a non-law class must be during the VLS Registration or Open Enrollment periods.

**Dropping/Adding Courses**

Students may drop and add most courses during the designated Registration and Open Enrollment periods. After Open Enrollment ends, students may drop only with the instructor’s permission. Although permission to drop will usually be granted for courses in which enrollment is not limited, no student can assume that permission will be provided. Permission will not be granted if other students may be adversely affected, the student has incurred an obligation in the course, the student’s education will be seriously impeded or impaired, or for any other reason making it inadvisable to permit a course to be dropped. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm the drop/add policy of the professor for each course, especially courses with a limited enrollment. While students may be permitted to drop a course, semester-long courses cannot be added unless warranted by extenuating circumstances. Special permission must be granted by the professor.

In the window of time between Registration and Open Enrollment many courses may be dropped, however, adding a class is not possible. Be careful not to drop below 10 credit hours, it will delay your financial aid.

**Note:** Short courses or courses meeting only for part of the semester may be added up until the first class session but will require action by the Academic Life Office after Open Enrollment ends.

**Dropping any semester-long course after Open Enrollment, or short course after the second class session, will require action by the Academic Life Office and will result in a permanent “W” on the transcript.**

**Registering for VLS Summer Courses**

Courses offered through VLS during the summer include the Summer in Venice courses, Research Assistance for Credit, Independent Study, and Externships. Except for the Venice and on-campus courses, faculty approval and/or registration through the Academic Life Office is required.

**Auditing a VLS Course**

Students wishing to attend a course in the Law School without credit may request to audit the class. Auditing of regular courses is allowed only with faculty approval. When a course is audited, it will appear on the transcript with an AUDIT (AU) designation and no credit will be earned for the course. Auditors are expected to attend class conscientiously and fulfill any other requirements considered appropriate by the instructor in order to derive the full benefit from the course. Auditors may be excluded from a course at any time, as the educational value for enrolled students takes precedence. **Limited Enrollment courses, Seminars, Trial Advocacy, and Clinical courses are not generally available for audit.**

**Changing the Status of a Course to Audit**

Professor permission is required to change a course being taken for credit to an audit. This change can be made by submitting a Course Change Card with the professor’s signature to the Academic Life Office.

Students must change to an audit in the designated period before the last class meeting. No changes to an audit will be made after the last class session. See the Academic Calendar.
Auditing a Non-VLS Course
Students may choose to audit an undergraduate language class or other non-law class. No credit is received, but it will appear on the transcript as an audited class. A student must receive approval from the professor and non-law school Enrollment Office before being enrolled by the Academic Life Office. Students should review the law schedule before attempting to add non-law classes.

Student Responsibility for Final Course Schedule Each Semester
Students are responsible for their final course schedule as listed in YES after the first week of classes. Prior to that time, the schedule may still be affected by changes. Students can view or print their final schedules from YES after registering and after each change during the Open Enrollment period. Accuracy of the schedule is the student’s responsibility.

First Day Assignments
Assignments for the first class will be made available via Blackboard, email, or at Handout Central, located in in the main reading room of the law library. It is the student’s responsibility to check for assignments. Semester start dates are available on the VLS Academic Calendar.

Textbooks
A student’s specific book list is available in YES during the Registration period. A list of textbooks for the regular courses offered in each semester is available through the University Bookstore. A link is available on the Academic Life page of the VLS intranet.

Insufficient Enrollment and Heavily Enrolled Courses
Registration occurs through YES. Infrequently, the registration exceeds the maximum classroom size of 120. If this occurs, a lottery is used to award seats and students who are lotteried out of a course are waitlisted. (The waitlist will be managed by YES before and during Open Enrollment.)

It is occasionally necessary to delete a course from a semester’s course offerings due to insufficient enrollment. Students will be notified.

Examination Procedures

Scheduled/Unscheduled Examination System
VLS has gone to great lengths to create a fair and equitable examination system. The process has worked well with the mutual understanding and cooperation of all those involved. Exams in first year courses are scheduled and taken at specified times. The six upper-level courses with the largest enrollments are also scheduled at specific times. All other upper-level exams are unscheduled and must be taken during a designated “Unscheduled” exam time. During unscheduled exams, students report to the examination table about one half-hour before the starting time and request the exam by turning in the “ticket” for that class which reveals the student’s exam number.

Because the examination schedule is published at the beginning of the Open Enrollment period and the flexible exam system allows a student advance notice and considerable personal control of time in which to study and plan for accommodation of other needs, adjustments to the exam schedule are permitted only in extraordinary circumstances, such as serious illness or death in the family.

Note: In the spring semester attention is given to courses that contain graduating students whose exams must be evaluated by the faculty in time for Commencement. Consequently, in
both semesters, scheduled exams on consecutive days do not constitute an exam conflict. A conflict is defined as two scheduled exams on one day or three scheduled exams on three consecutive days. Rescheduling one exam does not warrant rescheduling other exams.

Changes to the Exam Schedule
A request for exam rescheduling must be made to the Assistant Dean for Academic Life. To protect the validity of the anonymous exam system, students must not discuss such requests with any professor. Unexpected emergencies, such as illness or the death of a close relative, sometimes arise, and any request to change the date for a scheduled exam or to extend the examination period will be given careful attention. However, to maintain the objective of fairness of the examination system, individual adjustments can be made only for compelling reasons. The desire to attend a wedding or someone else’s graduation, to help out in the family business, or to arrange a more favorable sequence of examinations, while understandable, cannot be honored. As previously noted, students should consider the examination schedule when finalizing their class schedule. Faculty should not be contacted regarding these issues.

Unless such permission is obtained and the exam is taken and passed in accordance with arrangements made with the Assistant Dean for Academic Life, a grade of “F” will be recorded as the consequence of not taking the exam. (Note: An “Incomplete” or “F” cannot be changed to a “Withdrawal.” To withdraw, a student must do so before the beginning of the exam period.)

Special Accommodations
Students who need accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act must contact the Vanderbilt Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD) at 322-4705. All accommodations are arranged through the EAD, in cooperation with the Director of Student Affairs. Faculty should not be contacted regarding these issues.

Timed Exams and Running Overtime on an Exam
Faculty members determine the time allocated for exams; proctors monitor the time accordingly. Students are not given additional time when they arrive after the start of an examination. Depending on the circumstances and in order to avoid disturbing other students, the late student may not be allowed to join other students already taking exams. While circumstances beyond control may arise, causing a student to be late for an exam, students must anticipate unforeseen difficulties and plan accordingly. If a student feels that the circumstances warrant a request for an adjustment to the exam administration, the requests are made to the Assistant Dean of Academic Life. Students should not assume that a compelling reason to them will also be viewed in the same light by the Law School and should make every effort to arrive on time.

Running overtime on an exam can have serious consequences. The professor has broad discretion in deciding the consequences. Students who turn in exams after the stated time period should expect to receive a reduction in their grade.

Proctors who administer the examinations have no authority to adjust the time allowed or to change the arrangements specified for an exam by the professor. A student must not only submit the exam electronically, if using a computer, but also place the exam envelope in the designated box before the top is placed on it, indicating time has expired. The proctor will mark late all exam materials turned in after that time by the number of seconds or minutes. In addition, the professor will be given a copy of the exam log to indicate when the exam was submitted electronically for any late exam.
Examinations and Computer Use
VLS allows students to use laptops for their examinations using software which may limit or restrict the access of the computer to outside programs and resources at the professor’s discretion. Each student is given the choice of handwriting or electronically writing an exam; however, students who choose to electronically write an exam must provide their own computers and power cords. Personal computers are not provided to students who wish to electronically write their exams. Battery usage during an exam is not permitted. No external monitors may be used.

Computers can be unreliable tools. Thus, it is the student’s responsibility to be sure, before leaving an exam, that the exam is received in its entirety and to seek assistance from the IT staff or the Academic Life Office if there is any doubt.

When taking a Take Home exam, students may use their computers to access outside resources only if previously approved or instructed by the professor. Students are bound by the Honor Code to turn in a finished exam which is within the guidelines set by the professor. In the absence of specific directions, students should use the computer comparably to how it is used in a proctored exam, meaning that cutting and pasting material into the exam from previously prepared materials is prohibited.

Faculty Contact during Exams and the Grading Period
Students are required to refrain from discussing courses with professors once the exam period has begun and/or when all review sessions have ended unless directed otherwise by the professor. In addition, students may not discuss any exam or the grading of exams with a professor until all grades have been submitted.

Grade Reports
Grades are submitted by the Faculty approximately 30 days after the exam period ends. Students may view their final grades in YES and print an unofficial grade report for their personal use. If an official report is needed, students must request a transcript through YES or directly from the Office of the University Registrar.

Grade reports (transcripts) are not provided by the Law School. It is the students’ responsibility to maintain a printed copy of the current academic record in their files.

Exam Review
Many students seek to improve future exam performance by reviewing their most recent exams. This may be accomplished through the exam review process. Meeting with faculty for the purposes of grade review and/or change is not an accepted practice in the Law School. Grades are changed only when a clerical error has occurred.

Faculty members decide for themselves what they view as the most pedagogically beneficial way to review an exam with a student. Some will provide a model answer while others prefer a personal meeting. Notification about the Exam Review Process will be distributed by the Academic Life Office early in each semester. At a student’s request, an exam may be retrieved from storage for review and a meeting may be scheduled with the professor. Students should request and review their exam, and allow the faculty member time to review their exam, before scheduling a meeting. Examinations are not retained indefinitely.

Computing / Electronic Device Policies and Procedures
The following policies and procedures apply to the use of all Vanderbilt Law School computing resources including standalone computers such as email terminals, as well as computing
support from the Information Technology department. These policies and procedures are in addition to the Vanderbilt University Computer Privileges and Responsibilities, located on the Internet at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/aup.html. Use of VLS computing resources as defined above and/or use of your VUNETID to access campus services implies acceptance of these policies as well as the campus Computer Privileges and Responsibilities.

**Student Laptops and Support Hours**
The Vanderbilt Law School's Information Technology Department provides limited support for laptop computers owned by law students. The IT department will take all precautions and follow industry-standard practices to ensure data integrity to the best of their ability; however, the student has sole responsibility for having a backup of data in the unlikely event data loss occurs. Additionally, in the event a student needs to leave a laptop with the IT department staff, a loaner laptop will not be provided.

The IT staff will analyze, diagnose, and service/repair the laptop computer when the necessary service/repair falls into one of the following categories:

- Virus, Spyware, or Malware removal
- Network connectivity issues (wired or wireless)
- VLS Intranet or Blackboard issues
- Replacement of faulty/damaged hardware for Dell and Apple laptops currently covered by a valid Dell/Apple warranty plan

This support will be provided during the hours posted outside of the door to the Information Technology Services Office. During these posted hours the IT staff will be available to assist students. Students seeking assistance outside of these hours will be seen if staff is available or may schedule a mutually convenient time for assistance by submitting a Tech Help Request at http://techhelp.law.vanderbilt.edu, or by emailing law.support@vanderbilt.edu.

For additional information concerning IT support, see the IT team.

**Email**
Certain federal statutes require that information be delivered to each student. Vanderbilt delivers much of this information via email. Official electronic notifications, including those required by statutes, those required by University policy, and instructions from University and VLS officials, will be sent to students' Vanderbilt email addresses. Some messages will include links to the YES Communications Tool, which is a secure channel for official communication of a confidential nature.

Students are charged with the knowledge of the contents of all official University and VLS notifications, and are required to respond to instructions and other official correspondence requiring a response. Accordingly, students bear the responsibility for checking their Vanderbilt email account frequently and for managing their email account to prevent important messages from being returned as “undeliverable.” Students forwarding their Vanderbilt email communications to another account do so at their own risk.

The University and VLS make every effort to avoid inundating students with nonessential email (often called "spam"), and maintains separate lists from which students may unsubscribe for announcements of general interest.
Personal Electronic Devices (iPods and Cell Phones)
Each faculty member determines the policy governing the use of personal electronic devices, such as laptops, iPods, and cell phones, during class. No personal electronic devices other than the laptop being used to take the exam are allowed during an exam.

Miscellaneous

Student Employment Policy
Vanderbilt Law School prohibits a law student from being employed more than 20 hours per week in any week in which the student is enrolled in more than 12 class hours.

Immunization Requirements
The State of Tennessee requires certain immunizations for all students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) on university campuses. As such, Vanderbilt University will block student registration for those who are not in compliance with the requirements.

The state-mandated requirements include:

1. Meningococcal meningitis vaccine (one injection) for all incoming students living in on-campus housing. Click here for health questionnaire.

2. Measles, mumps, and rubella (two injections) for all incoming students born after January 1, 1957. Any waivers for this vaccine are very strict, and include only certain religious or medical exemptions that must be approved by the Medical Director of the Student Health Center. For more information regarding this waiver, please call the Director’s assistant at 615-322-2254 or email her at studentthealth@vanderbilt.edu. Click here for health questionnaire.

3. Varicella vaccine (two injections) is required for all students who have not had documented chickenpox. Students born before 1980 are exempt from this requirement. Any waivers for this vaccine are very strict, and include only certain religious or medical exemptions that must be approved by the Medical Director of the Student Health Center. For more information regarding this waiver, please call the Director’s assistant at 615-322-2254 or email her at studentthealth@vanderbilt.edu. Click here for health questionnaire.

Vanderbilt University Smoking Policy
As a premier educator, research enterprise and health care provider, Vanderbilt recognizes the effects and costs of smoking, tobacco and nicotine use on our society. As a result, Vanderbilt is a smoke-free campus. The smoking policy includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaporizers and chewing tobacco on the list of items that may be used only in outdoor designated areas.

Blackboard
Blackboard is used to post assignments, announcements, and handouts. From time to time, faculty may distribute printed handouts to a class at Handout Central located in the main reading room of the law library. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the information disseminated for each class.

Electronic Bulletin Boards and Monitors
Information about upcoming events and other important announcements are posted on the TV monitors in the main hallways. More detailed information about events, student organization
meetings, and other activities will be posted on the intranet. Individual students and student organizations can post information on this site. In addition, student organizations are encouraged to create and maintain their own web pages.

Lockers
Lockers are available for students upon request. Once assigned a locker, students will have the use of that locker for their law school career. Every effort is made to accommodate the needs of students for a locker.

Requests are made via an online form and lockers are assigned by the Vanderbilt Student Bar Association on a rolling basis. An email with a link to the locker request form is sent to all incoming students before the start of classes. The request form will remain open on the VBA Anchor Link page through April.

At the end of each academic year, graduating J.D. and LL.M. students must remove the lock and empty their locker. All locks will be removed after August 1. Students are responsible for items left in the locker. Students must notify the Student Affairs Office before August 1 if more time is needed.

Students are responsible for items left in unsecured lockers.