

## **For Students who started law school in May 2009 or thereafter**

This letter is to serve as an explanation of the terms used in your degree audit report. The degree audit form provides you with a snapshot look at your progress toward your J.D. If you disagree with anything on the audit report, then I strongly suggest that you come to see me (Jack) or Dean Baum at the Registrar's Office.

You can find your DAR on-line through Wolverine Access (<http://wolverineaccess.umich.edu/>), under "Student Business."

The report outlines all of the degree requirements one by one. With the exception of the first year requirements, most students meet their requirements in their fifth or sixth semester, so **DON'T PANIC** if you see a lot of "Not Satisfied" headings! The key thing, at this time, is to make certain that your course load will lead you to meeting those requirements.

Although every effort has been made to present the DAR information in as clear a manner as possible, there is still no small number of students who need help navigating through it; either that or they find me charming (or they like to talk baseball). **If you feel that you need assistance, then please come visit me at the Registrar's office (300 Hutchins Hall) and I will be happy to walk you through your requirements. I do ask that you first read this document and then make an attempt at reading your DAR.**

### **How to read the Degree Audit Report:**

I equate reading the DAR with driving in Boston: if you already know where you're going, then it's easy.

For all of our requirements, there are three classifications: "Satisfied," "Pending-Satisfied" and "Not Satisfied. I'd like to think that the first and third are pretty self-explanatory (but that might be a stretch), but "Pending-Satisfied" does sound a bit sketchy. Simply put, it means that, based on your current enrollment, and any incompletes you might have, you will meet that particular requirement once those outstanding grades have been posted. See, I told you it was sketchy!

We have two (2) types of requirements: course and unit. "Course" means particular courses or course types that you need to take. Transnational Law, is a good example of the former (as it's our only required, post 1L course). For "course type" think of upper class writing or professional responsibility.

Under each of our "Units" requirements, you will see three (3) categories: required, used and, needed.

- "Required:" the number of credits you need to meet that particular requirement.
- "Used:" the number of credits you currently have (to include current enrollment) to meet that particular requirement, and;
- "Needed:" the difference between required and used; how many more you have to take in order to meet the requirement.

Words to the wise: re bullet point #2, it is easy to be tricked by the term "used," as it includes your current enrollment, essentially assuming that there won't be any changes to your schedule (a dangerous assumption early in the semester). Be careful.

### **First year requirements:**

Civil Procedure; Introduction to Constitutional Law; Contracts; Criminal Law; Property; Torts; Legal Practice (I and II), Legal Practice Skills

*Note: you might hear the term "First Year Elective" being bandied about. Feel free to ignore it, as it is not required for you folks. Summer starters may begin taking electives (more than one) in the winter term; fall starters may take one elective in the winter term, if they wish..*

**Additional Requirements:**

***Professional Responsibility:*** One course is required. These are easily identified on the course schedule as they will have a "3" in the "Footnotes" column.

***Six full-time terms:*** You must complete six full-time terms or their equivalent in law school. A full-time term requires carriage throughout the term and completion of at least 10 credit hours with a grade of "D" or better. This category appears in the current version of the DAR under "Residence Terms."

***Upper Class Writing Requirement:*** This may be met through a number of means: a two-credit seminar designated to meet the requirement (most do, but check the footnotes first!); a two-credit course requiring a substantial research paper or other writing requirement (again, check first); a three-credit paper connected to either a study abroad or externship, or; a two credit independent research paper with a substantial writing requirement. Please note that you cannot fulfill this requirement until after you have completed your second semester of law school.

***Cumulative GPA:*** A minimum GPA of 2.0 is required to graduate from law school.

***82 total credits are required:*** pretty self-explanatory!

***Transnational Law (Law 606):*** Required of all students entering UM Law School. No exceptions, even if you have no interest in international law, and even if you have taken other international law-related courses.

***64 Rule:*** By ABA rules, all law school graduates must have 64 credit hours in "regularly scheduled law classes." First year courses, upper class courses, law courses taken outside of UM Law , seminars and most clinical law courses count toward fulfilling this requirement. Independent research, externships, and non-law courses do not. *If you took/plan to take an externship and/or are a dual degree student, then you should pay special attention to this rule.*

***76 non-research credits are required:*** Assuming you graduate with exactly 82 credits, you are permitted a maximum of six (6) research (aka independent study, Law 900) credits while in law school. This count represents your total of non-research credits.

***70 law credits are required:*** Assuming you graduate with exactly 82 credits, you are permitted a maximum of twelve (12) hours of credit for coursework taken outside of UM Law School. These are ordinarily courses taken at another UM department. Prior approval for this coursework is necessary.

***76 credits must be taken while enrolled at UM Law School:*** Assuming you graduate with exactly 82 credits, you are permitted a maximum of six (6) law credits from another ABA approved law school. Again, prior approval is necessary. These six credits are included in the twelve you are permitted to take outside of UM Law School.

### Conversion of a Letter Grade to a "Pass"

Up to two times during your career, you may convert a letter grade of "C" or better to a "P" (which means "Pass") in an upper-level (that is, a non first-year) course. Please see Part One, Section VI. B. for the specific rules and limitations concerning this option.

**62 graded credits for honors eligibility:** Assuming you graduate with exactly 82 credits, you are permitted a maximum of 20 TOTAL pass/fail hours to be eligible for honors. Total pass/fail hours combines the number of credits you convert from a letter grade to a "Pass" (which appear as "P" on your transcript and are described in the previous paragraph) and mandatory pass/fail ("S" on your transcript). Mandatory pass/fail courses are those in which the Law School requires you to earn a grade of "S" for a grade of "C" (and in the case of clinical law courses, "C+") or better. Examples of mandatory pass/fail courses are Legal Practice, Clinics, Externships (but not the paper), and non-UM law courses (be they non-law courses, or law courses taken elsewhere). For those who are NOT going to graduate with honors (GPA of 3.400 or higher, no rounding off), there is no limit on mandatory pass/fail credits, provided that all other graduation requirements (in particular, the "64 rule") are met

#### HONORS ELIGIBILITY

The GPA rules are applicable to everybody, but there is some variation in the pass/fail requirements, so please read carefully those which pertain to you. *Please bear in mind that there is no rounding off for honors.* The GPA rules are as follows:

Summa Cum Laude:	GPA of 4.000 or higher
Magna Cum Laude:	GPA of 3.700 to 3.999
Cum Laude:	GPA of 3.400 to 3.699

GOOD LUCK,

Jack Atkinson  
Law School Registrar