Understanding Degree Requirements and the Degree Audit Report (DAR)

This document serves as an explanation of the terms used in your degree audit report (DAR). The degree audit application on Wolverine Access provides you with a snapshot look at your progress toward your J.D. degree. If you have any questions about your DAR, please contact the Office of Student Records (lawrecords@umich.edu; 300 Hutchins Hall), or see Dean Baum.

You can find your DAR online through Wolverine Access (https://wolverineaccess.umich.edu/), under “Student Business.”

This report outlines all of the degree requirements, one by one. With the exception of the first year requirements, most students meet their requirements at the conclusion of their fifth or sixth semester, so please do not be concerned if you see a lot of “Not Satisfied” headings. The key is simply to make certain that your credit load and curricular choices will enable you to meet all of the requirements.

Although every effort has been made to present the degree audit report information in as clear a manner as possible, there is still no small number of students who need help navigating through it. If you feel that you need assistance, please come to the Office of Student Records (300 Hutchins Hall) and ask to speak to someone about your Degree Audit Report. Before coming to the office, please be sure to read through it first.

How to read the Degree Audit Report:

For all of our requirements, there are three classifications: “Satisfied;” “Pending-Satisfied,” and; “Not Satisfied.” The first and third are fairly self-explanatory, but “Pending-Satisfied” might sound a bit ambiguous. Simply put, it means that, based on your current enrollment and any incompletes that you might have, you will meet that requirement once those outstanding grades have been posted.

There are two (2) types of requirements: course and unit. “Course” means particular courses or course-types that you need to take. Your first year curriculum, Introduction to Constitutional Law and Transnational Law (our only required post-1L courses) make up the former. For “course type” think of the Upper-Class Writing and Professional Responsibility requirements.

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 and incompletes) to meet the requirement, and;
• Needed: the difference between required and used; how many more you have to take in order to meet the requirement.

**Please Note:** In the second bullet point, it’s easy to be tricked by the term “used,” as it includes your current class enrollments, and assumes that there will be no schedule changes (a dangerous assumption early in the semester).

**First Year Requirements:**

*For Students Who Matriculated Prior to May, 2013:*
Civil Procedure; Introduction to Constitutional Law; Contracts; Criminal Law; Property; Torts; Legal Practice (I and II); Legal Practice Skills

*For Students Who Matriculated in May, 2013 or thereafter:*
Civil Procedure; Contracts; Criminal Law; Property; Legislation and Regulation; Torts; Legal Practice (I and II); Legal Practice Skills

**Additional Requirements:**

**Professional Responsibility:** One course is required. Eligible courses are easily identified on the course schedule as they will have a “3” in the “Footnotes” column. **Note that some state bars have a more rigorous professional responsibility requirement. For example, any student who matriculated in May 2012 or thereafter will have to take a course that focuses exclusively on professional responsibility [namely, Law 731 Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility, Law 797 Model Rules and Beyond, Law 723 Corporate Lawyer: Law & Ethics, or Law 402 Ethics Colloquium (two credit section)] to be eligible to sit for the New York bar exam. Please be sure to check with the board of law examiners of the state in which you intend to practice for specific requirements.

**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 in a number of ways: a two or three-credit seminar designated to meet the requirement (most do, but check for footnote #4 in the class schedule); a two-credit course requiring a substantial research paper or other writing requirement
(again, check the class schedule first); a three-credit paper connected to either a study abroad or externship, or; a two-or-more-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. Also, mini-seminars (Law 885, worth one credit each) cannot meet this requirement.

**Cumulative Grade Point Average (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):** No exceptions, even if you have no interest in international law, and even if you have taken other international law-related courses. For students who matriculated in May, 2011 or thereafter, Law 606 must be completed in the third or fourth semester.

**Introduction to Constitutional Law (Law 540):** For students who matriculated in May, 2013 or thereafter, Law 540 must be completed in the third or fourth semester. Alternatively, students may fulfill the requirement by completing Law 541 (Introduction to Constitutional Law 1).

**64 Rule:** By ABA rules, all law school graduates must have 64 credit hours in “regularly scheduled law classes.” First year required courses (except Legal Practice Skills), upper class courses, law courses taken outside of UM Law, seminars, and most clinical law courses count toward fulfilling this requirement. Independent research, externships (to include the three-credit paper), study abroad papers, and non-law courses do not. If you took/plan to take an externship, or are a dual degree student (or are taking more than two non-law courses), then you should pay special attention to this rule.

**76 non-research credits are required:** Law 900 (independent research), Law 942 (Law Practicum Research), and Law 992 (Research: Special Projects) are the only “courses” that do not count toward this rule. If you are doing or plan to do a lot of research for credit, then you should pay close attention to this and the 64 rule. Assuming that you graduate with 82 total credits, then you may take up to six (6) research credits while in law school.

**70 law credits are required:** This is not to be confused with total credits (see above). Assuming that you graduate with exactly 82 credits, you are permitted a maximum of 12 hours of credit for coursework taken outside of UM Law School. Prior approval for this coursework from Dean Baum is necessary. (See the online Registration Instructions for specific information about how to get approval.) A quick note about non-law classes and “Not for Degree Credit”: Until non-law credits are posted to your law record, which won’t happen before the final grade is submitted, they will not appear under total credits on your DAR. Also, you might have a notation on your unofficial transcript that reads NDC, or Not for Degree Credit. Don’t worry. As long as
you have Dean Baum’s approval for the course, and you receive an acceptable final grade (B- or better), then you will receive the credits.

**76 credits must be taken while enrolled at UM Law School:** Assuming that you graduate with exactly 82 credits, you are permitted a maximum of six (6) hours of credit for coursework taken at another ABA accredited law school. Prior approval for this coursework from Dean Baum is necessary. (See the online Registration Instructions for specific information about how to get approval.) Important note: these six credits are included in the 12 you are permitted to take outside of UM Law School (see immediately above). Therefore, if you plan to take some non-law credits at UM and, perhaps, pick up some law credits elsewhere, make sure to check with the Office of Student Records or Dean Baum, as this rule can be a bit confusing.

**Conversion of a Letter Grade to a “Pass”:** Up to two times during your law school 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.

**Honors Eligibility:**

Students can get complete information about degree honors at the link on the Office of Student Records web page entitled "Honors Eligibility for JD Students."

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