J.D. DEGREE HONORS ELIGIBILITY AT MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

GENERAL INFORMATION
Types of Honors:
- Cum Laude
- Magna Cum Laude
- Summa Cum Laude
- Order of the Coif

Definitions
For the purpose of determining J.D. honors eligibility, the following terms have rigid definitions:
- Matriculation occurs on the J.D. student’s first day of class of their first academic term.
- A Graduating Class is represented by two separate groups per academic year:
  - August & December Graduates
  - May Graduates

Calculations
To preserve the value of honors, the results of all calculations are never rounded:
- GPA is represented by 4 digits (to the thousandth) with no rounding. For example, a GPA calculation that results in 3.79878 would have the final value of 3.798, not 3.799.
- Cutoff Percentages will always be used to extract a whole number of candidates with no rounding. For example, the top 37.5% of a graduating class of 100 people would result in consideration for the top 37 positions, not 38.
- Vacancies left by ineligible candidates do not open up a corresponding spot for a lower rank to shift into a position of consideration. For example, if the top 37.5% results in 37 positions, and 5 students within the group are ineligible for honors, there are not 5 vacancies passed down to the next 5 lower ranks.

ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATION
Minimum Letter-Graded Credits Requirement
Students who matriculated prior to May 2015 must earn a minimum of 62 letter-graded credits in law classes taken at the University of Michigan Law School in order to be eligible to receive degree honors. Students who matriculated in May 2015 or thereafter must earn a minimum of 63 such credits to be eligible.

The following credits do not count towards the 62 or 63 minimum letter-graded credit requirement:
- Non-law classes taken at the University of Michigan or at another university, whether or not a student receives a letter grade in such a course.
- Law classes taken at another law school, with two exceptions: 1) credits earned by a transfer student during their first year at another law school; and 2) credits earned by a student who was given permission by the Academic Standards and Practices Committee to visit another law school for one or
two semesters due to compelling and unusual personal reasons. (Note: letter grades earned pursuant to these exceptions are not factored into a student’s Michigan Law School GPA.)

- Law classes in which a student earns a mandatory pass (“S”) grade, e.g., Legal Practice classes, mini-seminars, external studies classes, semester study abroad classes, and some clinical law classes.
- Law classes in which a student has converted a letter grade to a pass (“P”) grade.

**Honors Determination**
Only J.D. graduates who have earned the minimum required letter-graded credits in law school classes at Michigan Law School are eligible for honors. Honors-eligible graduates are awarded honors based on the additional qualifications below:

**I. Students Who Matriculated Prior to May 2012**
If an honors-eligible graduate’s GPA meets one of the three criteria below, the corresponding honors will be awarded.

- An honors-eligible graduate with a 3.400 to 3.699 GPA will receive **cum laude**.
- An honors-eligible graduate with a 3.700 to 3.999 GPA will receive **magna cum laude**.
- An honors-eligible graduate with a 4.000 or higher GPA will receive **summa cum laude**.

**II. Students Who Matriculated in May 2012 or Thereafter**
Only honors-eligible graduates within the top 37.5% of a graduating class (which includes non-eligible and honors-eligible graduates) are qualified for honors. Non-eligible graduates do not create a vacancy.

Honors-qualified graduates receive only one (1) honor (the highest honor they qualify for):

- **Cum laude** as the standard award.
- **Magna cum laude** for qualified graduates among the top 10% of the **graduating class**.
- **Summa cum laude** for qualified graduates with a GPA of 4.0 or higher.

**EXAMPLE:** Assume there are **100** graduates in a graduating class.

- The top **37** graduates will be considered for honors (i.e., **Rank 1 through 37**).
- Assume two (2) graduates are determined to be ineligible for honors.
- There will only be a total of **35** graduates who receive honors.
- Assume the Rank 1 graduate is the only one with a 4.0 or higher.
  - This graduate receives **summa cum laude** only.
    -- (Current Award Count: 1 summa)
- Rank 2 - 10 graduates fall into the top 10% of the graduating class and receive **magna cum laude** only.
  - However, assume the Rank 3 graduate is our first ineligible graduate and does not receive honors.
    -- (Current Award Count: 1 summa + 8 magna = 9 awards; 1 ineligible graduate)
- Rank 11 - 37 graduates receive **cum laude** only.
  - However, assume the Rank 37 graduate is our second ineligible graduate and does not receive honors.
    -- (Final Award Count: 1 summa + 8 magna + 26 cum laude = **35** awards; 2 ineligible graduates)
III. Order of the Coif

For Coif purposes, graduates from the full academic year are combined for honors determination (e.g. August & December 2015, and May 2016). Only honors-eligible graduates within the top 10% of the combined graduating class (which includes non-eligible and honors-eligible graduates) will be considered for Order of the Coif. The final determinant for receipt of Order of the Coif is ultimately conditioned on a vote by the Law School faculty.

For students who transferred to UM Law (beginning with the graduating class of 2014), credits earned in graded courses taken at their first-year law school will count towards the 62 or 63 graded credits required for Coif eligibility. (These graded credits will not be factored into their UM Law GPA.) However, credits taken at another law school earned while a visiting (i.e., non-degree) student will not count towards the graded credits.

HONORS ANNOUNCEMENT

Honors are not announced at Senior Day (the commencement ceremony), as final grades required for honors determination will not be available at that time.

For August graduates, degrees will be updated with honors designations in mid-February.
For December graduates, degrees will be awarded with honors designations included in mid-February.
For May graduates, degrees will be awarded with honors designations included in the beginning of July.

Students with questions about honors eligibility should contact the Office of Student Records (416 Hutchins Hall; lawrecords@umich.edu; 734.763.6499).

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