

ACADEMIC ADVISING GUIDANCE MEMO

A. Summary of Graduation Requirements (set forth more fully in Ch. 4 & Ch. 5 of the ASL Student Catalog & Handbook)

1. **Total Credit Hours/GPA:** Students must earn a total of **92 credit hours over six semesters** to graduate. In addition, a student must obtain a cumulative GPA for all courses that is **2.3000 or higher** in order to graduate. **Note that there is no mechanism currently set forth in our standards for an “early graduation.”*

2. **Required Courses:** There are **required courses** for each semester as **specified in the charts below under Section E (Fall Starts) and Section F (Spring Starts).**

3. **Externship:** Students are required to complete an **externship**. For fall starts, students generally complete the externship in the summer between 1L and 2L years. For spring starts, students generally complete the externship the summer after their 3rd semester.

4. **Practicum Courses:** All students must complete **8 hours of Practicum courses** (designated with P), **one of which must meet the Upper-Level Writing Requirement** (designated with PW).

5. **Seminar Writing/Rigorous Writing Requirement:** Students must successfully complete the **Seminar Writing Requirement**, which requires the student to complete an expository or argumentative research paper of at least twenty pages in length, not including endnotes or footnotes. Most students satisfy the Seminar Writing Requirement by completing one of the Seminar courses (designated with S) although some students satisfy the requirement through work on Law Journal or Moot Court or through Independent Study.

6. **Community Service Requirement:** Each student must complete **25 hours of community service each semester**. During their first semester in law school, students satisfy this requirement by taking the mandatory Introduction to Community Service class (spring start students currently take this in their second semester).

B. Courses with Prerequisites: Many courses have prerequisites. Ch. 4 contains course descriptions. If there are prerequisites, those will be noted in the description. ***The student should always consult the course descriptions before registration to determine prerequisites for any course the student is planning to take.***

C. Certificate Programs: If a student wishes to pursue an ASL certificate, the student should consult the requirements for the certificate (Ch. 4) when planning courses prior to registration.

D. Important Rules

1. **Reduced Load:** ASL does not have a part-time program. **Special permission from the CAO is required to enroll in less than 12 credit hours in a semester.**

2. No full-time student may work more than 20 hours per week during any week in any term or semester for which the student is enrolled.

3. **Maximum Student Load:** At no time may a student be enrolled in more than **18 credit hours**. Note that this maximum includes any credits a student is taking as a visiting student at another law school while concurrently enrolled at ASL.

4. Limitation on number of credits: **No more than a total of 4 of the required 92 hours may be in the form of Law Journal, Moot Court, Independent Study, or Assistantship credit.**

5. Limitation on online credit: Absent permission from the CAO, a student may **not take more than 4 credit hours in any term** of distance learning courses, nor may a student take **more than a total of 15 credit hours** of distance learning courses.

6. Scholarship/Financial Aid in **last semester at ASL:**

a. Students receiving ASL scholarships: Generally, students are required to maintain full-time status (12 hours) each semester in order to keep an ASL scholarship. **This does not apply to the final semester at ASL.** We will not force students to take a full load in the final semester if the student does not need it to graduate. If the student only needs to take six hours in the final semester to graduate, for instance, the scholarship will cover it if the student only takes those six credits. The student is allowed, however, to take a full load in the final semester. **Note that if the scholarship does not cover 100% of tuition and/or living expenses and the student uses federal loans to cover the rest, the rule below will apply.*

b. Students receiving federal loans: In order to be eligible to receive federal loans, a student must be enrolled at least half-time (6 hours) in courses that are necessary for the student to graduate. *If the student uses federal loans to fund any portion of the education, the student should not get so close to graduating in the second-to-last semester that the student only needs 5 or fewer hours to graduate;* the Department of Education will not allow a student to take out loans for less than half-time enrollment. Additionally, the Department will not allow a student to use loan funds for any course that isn't necessary to graduate. The best way to avoid this issue is for the student to make sure that the student has a combination of required courses and/or needed credits to get to 92 that will ensure that the student must be taking at least 6 hours in the final semester.

7. **Withdrawal** from Courses: At any time between the end of the add/drop period and the mid-way point in a course, a student may, with permission of the CAO, drop a course and receive the grade of "W." At any time after the mid-way point in a course, a student who withdraws from a course shall receive the grade of "F."

8. Pass/Fail grading in **retaking failed course:** Students who retake a failed course are graded in that course on a pass/fail basis. Note that students retaking a course they have passed, but which they are retaking to increase their competency in the subject, will not receive academic credit or a new grade for the retake, which will be treated as an audit.

E. Required Courses – Fall Starts

1L Fall Starts

Fall Courses	Credit hours		Spring Courses	Credit hours
Civil Procedure	4		Contracts II	2
Contracts I	3		Negligence	3
Intentional Torts	2		Property II	3
Property I	2		Criminal Law	3
Legal Process I	3		Legal Process II	3
Intro to ASL Legal Studies	2		Introduction to Externship	1
Intro to Community Service	0			

2L Fall Starts

Fall Courses	Credit hours		Spring Courses	Credit hours
Constitutional Law I	3		Constitutional Law II	3
Criminal Procedure	3		Professional Responsibility	3
Evidence	4		Legal Writing with a Purpose II (if student took Legal Writing with a Purpose I)*	1
Appellate Advocacy (3) or Legal Writing with a Purpose I (1)*	3 or 1			

** Students take either Appellate Advocacy (Natural Resources or Criminal Law Section) or Legal Writing with a Purpose I and II*

3L Fall Starts

Fall Courses	Credit hours		Spring Courses	Credit hours
MBE: Strategies & Skills	2		Bar Essays: Strategies & Skills (2) or Virginia Civil Procedure & Practice (4)**	2 or 4
Bar Subject Review I	1		Bar Subject Review II	1

*** Students taking the Virginia Bar Exam take VCPP instead of Bar Essays*

F. Required Courses – Spring Starts

1L Spring Starts

Spring Courses	Credit hours		Fall Courses	Credit hours
Civil Procedure	4		Contracts I	3
Negligence	3		Intentional Torts	2
Criminal Law	3		Property I	2
Legal Process I	3		Legal Process II	3
Intro to ASL Legal Studies	2		Constitutional Law I	3
			Intro to Community Service	

2L Spring Starts

Spring Courses	Credit hours		Fall Courses	Credit hours
Constitutional Law II	3		Evidence	4
Professional Responsibility	3		Criminal Procedure	3
Contracts II	2		Appellate Advocacy (3) or Legal Writing with a Purpose I (1)*	3 or 1
Property II	3			
Intro to Externship	1			

** Students take either Appellate Advocacy (Natural Resources or Criminal Law Section) or Legal Writing with a Purpose I and II*

3L Spring Starts

Spring Courses	Credit hours		Fall Courses	Credit hours
Legal Writing with a Purpose II (if student took Legal Writing with a Purpose I instead of App Ad)*	1		MBE: Strategies & Skills	2
Bar Essays: Strategies & Skills (2) or Virginia Civil Procedure & Practice (4)**	2 or 4		Bar Subject Review I	1
Bar Subject Review II	1			

*** Students taking the Virginia Bar Exam take VCPP instead of Bar Essays*