

STUDENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

2023-2024

Mission Statement

Boston College Law School is committed to the highest quality integrated graduate and professional education, recognizing its obligations as a national law school to both the academic and professional worlds. Our commitment is to foster new insights through research and scholarship, to impart knowledge and analytical skills through instruction of the highest caliber, and to critically evaluate the role of law and legal institutions. We are also committed to developing those qualities and skills that our students will need to become successful practitioners; toward this end, we search for ways to combine theory and practice in our instruction, and for opportunities to instill in our students the moral and ethical values that underlie a rational and just application of law.

Boston College and its Law School are rooted in the Jesuit tradition of service to God and others. In that tradition, we believe that the purpose of higher education is both the search for knowledge and the preparation of women and men who are moved to a constructive, responsible, and loving use of their knowledge. The Law School recognizes its commitment to social and economic justice, and strives to advance this commitment both through its curricular offerings and in the extracurricular projects that it supports.

We encourage our students to develop their own individual commitment to others and to explore those themes that are central to the Jesuit tradition: the dignity of the human person, the advancement of the common good, and compassion for the poor. We seek to train a diverse student body not merely to be good lawyers, but to be lawyers who lead good lives,

and who will be prepared to seek and to find meaningful work in service to others that will enrich their communities.

We stand out nationally among other law schools because we respect and are concerned for each individual. We strive to

community of growth and learning. We believe that such a diverse, supportive community provides the best possible environment for instruction and learning. Just as importantly, it represents the model for the types of intellectual and professional interaction that we hope to instill in our alumni who are engaged in the practice of law.

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ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Students shall not indulge in any form of cheating or breach of professional ethics as they pursue course work or co-curricular activity. The School has adopted a Code of Academic Conduct setting out these standards. All students should carefully review the Code because they are charged with knowledge of its provisions.

CODE OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT

The standards of academic conduct for students at Boston College Law School are distributed to all students to ensure that

the standard of integrity expected of future members of the bar. Furthermore, the community benefits from an explicit statement of standards of academic integrity.

All language is subject to interpretation; if any question exists in the mind of any student as to proper conduct in any specific instance, the student is required to clarify the matter by appropriate inquiry or to adhere to the strictest possible interpretation. Infractions of this Code are serious matters which may lead to expulsion, suspension, or other sanctions.

Infractions also reflect upon the moral character of the actor, one of the prime considerations for admission to the bar. The School has

II. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and

than the required 26 credit hours per year or fewer than 12 credit hours for one semester may do so in extraordinary circumstances with permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

The maximum number of credit hours that may be taken in one semester is 17.

Under ABA Standard 311, at least 64 credit hours must be taken in regularly scheduled law classes. This means that during their second and third years, students must take at least 31 credits from in-class courses at the law school and these credits cannot include any of the following:

- (1) Semester in practice and other externship credits (other than those for the seminar portion)
- (2) Law Review credits, UCC Digest, and Moot Court credits
- (3) Independent Study credits
- (4) Semester in Practice: Dublin the practice portion credits
- (5) Credits from dual degree classes not taken at the law school
- (6) Classes taken at other schools within the university or at other non-law schools

C. Independent Study

Upper Level students may undertake an independent study under the supervision of a faculty member and with the approval of the Office of Academic & Student Services. This can be for up to six credits of coursework (maximum of three credits in any one semester). Work receiving independent study credit must include a significant writing component of 15 pages per credit granted and be supervised and graded by a faculty member. Students will work with their supervising faculty members on all details

appropriate, the Committee may deny the petition, or the Committee may require the student to reapply through the ordinary admissions process.

III. LL.M. Degree

A. Residency

The minimum period of residence required for completion of the degree of Master of Laws (LL.M.) is one academic year (two semesters). A minimum of 24 credit-hours is required for graduation.

B. Credit Hours

The number of credit hours in which an LL.M. student enrolls each semester should be designed to permit the student to earn the LL.M. degree in one academic year (two semesters). LL.M. students normally must enroll in no fewer than 12, and no more than 14, credit-hours per semester. A student may take as many as 15 credit-hours in a given semester only with permission in writing from the Director of Graduate and Global Programs.

C. Course Work

work in the regular second- and third-year curriculum. The following exceptions apply to all LL.M. students: (a) special permission will be required for enrollment in clinical courses, and (b) with the permission of the Director of Graduate and Global Programs, students may take one graduate level course elsewhere in the University.

In addition, the following exceptions apply to foreign-trained LL.M. students who do not have significant exposure to U.S.

law: they are required to take the courses (a) The United States Legal System; (b) Legal Research, Writing and Analysis for LL.Ms, or another legal writing course approved by the Director of the Graduate and Global Programs.

Further courses taken during the LL.M. degree are tailored to the goals of the individual student. For example, students who wish to take a bar examination in the U.S. may be required to take one or more first-year courses, and/or specific courses such as professional responsibility. While state bar admission requirements differ, and it to understand how these requirements apply, they will be assisted by the Director of Graduate Legal Education. Students may take one first-year course, and a second first-year course with the permission of the Director of Graduate and Global Programs.

D. Written Work

All LL.M. students must satisfy a written work requirement. This can be done in one of the following two ways: By completing the writing assignments required for the courses The United States Legal System and Legal Research, Writing and Analysis for LL.M. students, or by completing a piece of writing of a breadth

with their supervisor on all details concerning the scope of the work (whether by letter grade or pass/fail), all deadlines and the amount of the course credit to be given to the project.

E. Completion of Degree

No credit hours will be given for a course in which an F is received. The entire program must be completed within two academic years following matriculation at the Law School unless this time is extended for good cause by the Academic Standards Committee. Leaves of absence from the Law School, with the right to re-enter and resume candidacy for the degree, may be granted for good cause by the Dean or their designee. Students contemplating a request for a leave of absence should consult with the Director of Graduate and Global Programs.

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In accordance with the American Bar Association accreditation standards, work submitted to meet course requirements is retained for one calendar year after the completion of the course. The papers, examination books, and other materials may then be destroyed.

The faculty has adopted the following policy:

It is the obligation of every member of the faculty individually to strive for the highest possible degree of fairness in the

III. Grading Definitions By Verbal Descriptions

The following descriptions explain the meaning of the grade labels used at Boston College Law School. Faculty members should assign grades consistently with this explanation.

A, A- Exceptional work which demonstrates a superior level of academic accomplishment in the area of study.

B+, B, B- Good work, which demonstrates achievement of a level of academic accomplishment in the area of study distinctly above that expected of a minimally competent graduate of an accredited American law school. Given the standards of Boston College Law School, this level of performance is expected of most graduates of the Law School.

C+, C Competent work, which demonstrates achievement of a level of academic accomplishment in the area of study expected of a minimally competent graduate of an accredited American law school. Given the standards of Boston College Law School, this level of performance is below that expected of most graduates of this law school.

C-, D Unsatisfactory work, which does not demonstrate achievement of the minimum level of competence expected of any graduate of an accredited American law school but which demonstrates enough potential for improvement that the student could reasonably be expected to achieve such a level by conscientious study.

F Failing work, which reflects a level of learning and ability in the area of study so low as to indicate that the student has failed to perform the work, reading, and study expected of students enrolled in the course. No credit is given for a course in which an F is received, although the F will be used in computing cumulative and annual averages.

The distribution of grades should be approximately as follows:

A	A-	B+	B and below	B-	C+ and below
15-20 %	20-25 %				

the instructor to adjust his or her grading approach so as to bring it into conformity with the grading standards set forth above.

C.

VI. Grade Ranking and Honors

Boston College Law School does not rank its students. An approximation of grade distributions is issued for the 2L and 3L classes at the end of each semester, and for the 1L class at the end of the Academic Year.

Latin Honors are awarded at graduation as follows:

Summa cum laude is awarded to the top 2% of the class

Magna cum laude is awarded to the top 10% of the class

Cum laude is awarded to students graduating in the upper third of the class.

VII. Grade Review Policy

Students are encouraged to review the results of examinations or other work for classes with their instructors, and instructors are encouraged to offer students constructive feedback about the nature and quality of work performed. However, an instructor
faculty vote, except
in cases of mechanical or clerical error.

VIII. Good Academic Standing & Administrative Dismissal

In order to remain in good academic standing and not subject to administrative dismissal, a J.D. student must maintain a cumulative grade point average above 2.3 and must not receive a semester GPA of 2.3 or below for any two semesters of law school. A student who fails to maintain a cumulative GPA above 2.3, or who receives a GPA of 2.3 or below for any two

semesters, shall be administratively dismissed from the Law School, as discussed below.

First Year Students who either fail a required first-year course or fail to achieve above a 2.3 average during either semester of law school will be referred to the Academic Standards Committee for determination of eligibility to continue.

LL.M. Students must maintain a cumulative average above 2.3, measured at the end of each semester, in order to remain in good academic standing and not subject to administrative dismissal.

IX. Academic Supervision and Administrative Dismissal

A. Academic Supervision

In order to ensure that all students have access to the resources and support they need to succeed in law school, BC Law has established an Academic Supervision program.

A J.D. student will be placed on academic supervision if the student:

1. received a grade of C- or below in any course;
2. achieved a GPA of 2.9 or below either semester of 1L year; or
3. achieved a GPA of 2.9 or below for any two academic semesters or cumulatively

Once on academic supervision, the student is required to meet with the Director of Academic Success Programs to discuss academic success strategies, have his/her schedule of selected courses approved each semester, and take other steps related to

Criteria to Reschedule:

- 2 exams in 1 day
- 3 exams in 3 consecutive days
- 4 exams in 5 consecutive days

Beyond the defined conflict, exams may only be rescheduled in these limited circumstances: student health; family emergency; the birth of a child; a conflict with a religious holiday that the student observes; military obligations for active or reserve service members; and extraordinary and compelling circumstances as determined by the Assistant Dean, Academic & Student Services. Individual vacation travel plans or outside, work commitments do not constitute extraordinary circumstances.

Students who seek to have an exam rescheduled for one of the above stated reasons should contact Academic & Student Services as soon as possible. *Faculty do not have the authority to reschedule exams or otherwise administer exams. When a faculty member assigns an incomplete grade, the faculty member must notify the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Services and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to determine the next steps and timeline for completion.*

Students are responsible for reviewing and understanding the exam schedule and the consequences before the Drop/Add period ends. Any changes to the exam schedule before the end of the Drop/Add period will not constitute a reason for rescheduling exams.

B.

SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I. Students Seeking Accommodations

Students who have special needs such as physical limitations, particular health requirements, or documented learning disabilities may be entitled to certain individual accommodations. If special accommodations are required for classes, examinations, co-curricular activities, or other matters, students should visit the [Accessibility](#) section of the BC Law website and contact the Office of Academic & Student Services at lawADAservices@bc.edu as soon as possible.

II. Students for Whom IID vsp BDC q0IID TfJETQq7011BT/F10ff100

expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, ability, age, national origin, or marital, family, or military status.

The University is opposed to all forms of harassment and discrimination and has adopted a policy that covers harassment and discrimination. Law students are provided protection under, and are subject to, this policy, which is outlined here:

[bar/current-students/Academics/documents-forms/bclaw-dei-concern-policy.pdf](#)

V. Student Complaints Implicating Compliance with ABA Standards

ABA Standard 510 governs student complaints implicating compliance with ABA Standards. A student or group of students at Boston College Law School who believes a significant

education and its compliance with the ABA standards has the right to file a complaint regarding that problem. Such a complaint may be filed either with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean of Strategic & Student Affairs. The complaint must be filed in writing and must identify the behavior, action or inaction complained of and the Standard or Standards that is alleged to have been violated. The ABA Standards may be found online [www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards].

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the person receiving the complaint shall, within 30 business days, meet with the student or students making the complaint and, if necessary, conduct an investigation into the substance of the complaint. Upon completion of any investigation, the person receiving the complaint shall prepare a written report of their findings. Such a report will include a determination as to whether or not a

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of legal education exists. If such a significant problem is found to exist, a recommendation of action to be taken to resolve the complaint shall be included. The student or students filing the initial complaint shall be given a copy of the report.

integrity and will be subject to Law School procedures governing academic discipline.

General Policy: The Law School policy provides that students may not record any classes (including through their computers, tablets or other recording devices). This policy reflects both wiretapping statutes (see Mass Gen. Laws. Ch. 272 Sec.99 and 18 U.S.C. Sec. 2511) and pedagogical goals.

Classes are not automatically recorded. Any student who needs to miss class for an extended period due to a health/family emergency, shall contact the Assistant Dean, Academic &

responsibility to meet with their professor to talk through how to make up what they will miss.

Faculty members should disclose to students in any class to be recorded that such recording is taking place. Appropriate signage in the classroom will also notify those present of the possibility of recording. Faculty and students can find and access class recordings by clicking the "Panopto Recordings" located in your

A. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Disability Accommodations

Federal law mandates that a qualified student with a disability may request class recording as an appropriate reasonable

Recording devices are specifically mentioned in Section 504 of the Federal

least three business days in advance. The faculty member has discretion to allow or deny the request. If granted, the faculty

XI. Examination Numbers

Most grading is completed utilizing student exam numbers rather than names to preserve student anonymity. Every year, each student is provided a four-digit examination number which the

Students are responsible for confirming that the course names, course numbers, credits, and grades earned are accurate. Students who believe that there are any inaccuracies should notify the Office of Academic & Student Services at 617-552-2527 immediately.

XIII. Non BC Law Graduate Courses

With the permission of the Office of Academic & Student Services, second and third-year students may take a maximum of four law-related courses (12 credits) at the graduate level in other departments and programs at Boston College or through the consortium agreement at Boston University School of Law. Grades for courses taken in other BC departments (and through cross-registration at Boston University School of Law) will

All courses taken outside of Boston College and Boston University will appear as transfer credits only. Neither the course title nor grades will appear on the BC transcript. All courses taken as part of a BC Law academic exchange program will appear as transfer credits only.

XIV. Leaves/Visits Away/Study Abroad

Any student contemplating a change of status such as a leave of absence, transfer, or visit away, must contact the Assistant Dean, Academic & Student Services. If a student is interested in studying abroad, they should first meet with the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Services or the Director of Graduate and Global Programs.

A personal leave of absence may be taken with the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Once approved,

program may count these semesters of study toward the four resident semesters. For the purpose of this four semester includes students enrolled in a joint degree program with the Law School and another Boston College graduate program.

Students who visit away at another institution pay the tuition of the semester or semesters enrolled.

In the case of International Exchange Programs, students are required to pay tuition and fees to Boston College Law School.

An administrative fee of \$1,000 per semester will be assessed for any student who visits away at another law school and who is not paying tuition to Boston College Law School. The Boston College Law School fee is intended to cover the administrative costs associated with services provided by Boston College Law School for its students while studying at another institution, such as financial aid and student service counseling, degree audits and transcript preparation, and participation in commencement activities.

XV. Medical Leave of Absence and Continuation of Health Insurance of Students on Medical Leave of Absence

Requesting a Medical Leave of Absence

If a student is unable to complete the coursework or other course of study for a semester due to medical reasons, the student may request a medical leave of absence. Medical leave, whether requested for mental health or physical health reasons, must be supported by appropriate documentation from a licensed care provider and approved by the University and the Assistant Dean,

disabilities. Students may not bring pets or non-Service Animals into the Law School buildings.

XVIII. Law School Communication with Students

The primary sources of official information at the Law School are the Law School website and the Law School student site

(<http://www.bc.edu/law> and <https://tinyurl.com/bclawstudents>), the School's internal communications platform, MyBC (www.bc.edu/mybc), and the Boston College email system, including our weekly Monday Headlines email newsletter. All community members receive the newsletter via their BC email inbox.

MyBC (powered by Engage

WBZ Radio (1030-AM), WBZ-TV (Channel 4), or WCVB-TV (Channel 5) beginning at 6:00 a.m. The University will also send text and email notification through the RAVE Emergency Notification System before 6:00 a.m. Students may also call (617) 552-INFO for information on emergency closings or early releases. Announcements will also be posted on the Boston College home page, as well as on the website www.bc.edu/emergency.

If we have a delayed opening, the assumption will be that classes that were scheduled to begin prior to the opening time will not be held. Faculty must inform students of any alternative arrangements and provide adequate notice of the change.

Individual Law School faculty members may choose to cancel classes even if the University has decided to remain open. To

In certain circumstances, the Law School administration may decide to cancel all evening classes (and close the Library early), even if the University remains open. In such a case, the administration would make the decision by early afternoon, and notify all students with an email message.