DEFINITIONS

As used in the Standards, Interpretations and Rules of Procedure:

(1) “Accreditation Committee” or “Committee” means the Accreditation Committee of the Section.

(2) “Approved law school” means a fully approved law school that the Council or Accreditation Committee has determined meets the requirements of Standard 103 or a provisionally approved law school that the Council or the Accreditation Committee has determined meets the requirements of Standard 102.

(3) “Association” means the American Bar Association.

(4) “Branch campus” means a type of separate location at which a student may earn more than two-thirds of the credit hours that the law school requires for the award of a J.D.

(5) “Council” means the Council of the Section.

(6) “Dean” means the chief administrative officer of a law school and includes an acting or interim dean.

(7) “Full-time faculty member” means an individual whose primary professional employment is with the law school, who is designated by the law school as a full-time faculty member, who devotes substantially all working time during the academic year to responsibilities described in Standard 404(a), and whose outside professional activities, other than those described in Standard 404(a), if any, do not unduly interfere with his or her responsibilities as a full-time faculty member.

(8) “Governing board” means a board of trustees, board of regents, or comparable body that has ultimate policy making authority for a law school or the university of which the law school is a part.


(10) “Interpretations” mean the Interpretations of the Standards for Approval of Law Schools.

(11) “J.D. degree” means the professional degree in law granted upon completion of a program of legal education that is governed by the Standards.
(12) “Managing Director” means the Managing Director of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association.

(13) “President” means the chief executive officer of a university or, if the university has more than one administratively independent unit, of the independent unit. If a law school is not part of a university, “president” refers to the chief executive officer of any entity that owns the law school, if there is such a person, or else the Chair of the Board of Directors of the law school.

(14) “Probation” is a public status indicating that a law school is not being operated in compliance with the Standards and is at risk of having its approval withdrawn.

(15) “Rules” mean the Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools.

(16) “Section” means the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association.

(17) “Separate location” means a location within the United States at which the law school offers more than sixteen credit hours of the program of legal education and that is not in reasonable proximity to the law school’s main location.

(18) “Standards” mean the Standards for Approval of Law Schools.

(19) “University” means a post-secondary educational institution, whether referred to as a university, college, or by any other name, that confers a baccalaureate degree (and may grant other degrees).
Chapter 1 – GENERAL PURPOSES AND PRACTICES

Standard 101. BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL

(a) A law school seeking approval by the Council shall demonstrate that it is being operated in compliance with the Standards.

(b) Approval of a law school by the Council is not transferable. A transfer of all, or substantially all, of the academic programs or assets of (1) a law school, or (2) a university or college of which the law school is a part does not include the transfer of the law school’s approval.

Standard 102. PROVISIONAL APPROVAL

(a) The Council shall grant provisional approval to a law school if at the time the school seeks such approval it demonstrates that it has achieved substantial compliance with the Standards and presents a reliable plan for bringing the law school into full compliance with each of the Standards within three years after receiving provisional approval. In order to demonstrate that it has a reliable plan to come into full compliance with the Standards within three years after receiving provisional approval, a law school must clearly state the specific actions that it plans to take to bring the school into full compliance and demonstrate that there is a reasonable probability that such actions will be successful. A provisionally approved law school may apply for full approval no earlier than two years after receiving provisional approval and must obtain full approval within five years after receiving provisional approval.

(b) The Council may withdraw provisional approval if the Council determines that the law school is no longer in substantial compliance with the Standards, is not making adequate progress toward achieving full compliance with each of the Standards, or is no longer able to demonstrate that there is a reasonable probability that the school will achieve full compliance with each of the Standards within the allotted time frame.

(c) If five years have elapsed since the law school was provisionally approved and the Council has not granted full approval, provisional approval shall terminate. Before the end of the five-year period in an extraordinary case and for good cause shown, the Council may extend the time within which the law school must obtain full approval.

(d) A provisionally approved law school shall not offer a post-J.D. degree program or other non-J.D. degree program, offer a program in a country outside the United States, or seek to establish a separate location.

(e) A provisionally approved law school shall state that it is provisionally approved in all of its printed and electronic materials describing the law school and its program and in any other publication that references the law school’s approval by the Council.
(f) A law school seeking provisional approval shall make its status clear in any printed and electronic materials describing the law school and its program and in any other publication that references the law school’s approval status. At a minimum, the law school shall state the following in all such communications:

The law school is not currently approved by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association and makes no representation to any applicant that it will receive approval from the Council before the graduation of any matriculating student.

(g) A law school seeking provisional approval shall not delay conferring a J.D. upon a student in anticipation of obtaining approval. An approved law school may not retroactively grant a J.D. degree as an approved school to a student who graduated from the law school before its approval.

Interpretation 102-1
Plans to achieve substantial compliance with any of the Standards are not sufficient to demonstrate substantial compliance.

Standard 103. FULL APPROVAL

(a) The Council shall grant full approval to a provisionally approved law school if at the time the school seeks such approval it demonstrates that it is in full compliance with each of the Standards. Plans to achieve full compliance with any Standard are not sufficient to demonstrate full compliance.

(b) A law school granted approval under this Standard remains approved unless the Council withdraws that approval.

Standard 104. PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY LAW SCHOOLS TO ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL

A law school shall furnish a completed annual questionnaire, self-study, site evaluation questionnaire, and such other information as the Accreditation Committee or Council may require. This information must be complete, accurate, and not misleading, and must be submitted in the form, manner, and time frame specified by the Council.

Standard 105. ACQUIESCENCE FOR MAJOR CHANGE IN PROGRAM OR STRUCTURE

(a) Before a law school makes a major change in its program of legal education or organizational structure, it shall obtain the acquiescence of the Council for the change. A major change in program or structure that requires application for acquiescence includes:

(1) Acquiring another law school, program, or educational institution;
(2) Acquiring or merging with another university by the parent university where it appears that there may be substantial impact on the operation of the law school;

(3) Transferring all, or substantially all, of the program of legal education or assets of the approved law school to another law school or university;

(4) Merging or affiliating with one or more approved or unapproved law schools;

(5) Merging or affiliating with one or more universities;

(6) Materially modifying the law school’s legal status or institutional relationship with a parent institution;

(7) A change in control of the school resulting from a change in ownership of the school or a contractual arrangement;

(8) A change in the location of the school that could result in substantial changes in the faculty, administration, student body, or management of the school;

(9) Establishing a branch campus;

(10) Establishing a separate location;

(11) A significant change in the mission or objectives of the law school; and

(12) The addition of courses or programs since the most recent AC period, such as that represent a significant departure from existing offerings or method of delivery since the last most recent accreditation period including combined undergraduate and J.D. programs, such as 2/4, 4/2 programs, and programs leading to a J.D. and a first-degree program at foreign institution; instituting a new full-time or part-time division; or changing from a full-time to a part-time program or from a part-time to a full-time program;

(13) The addition of a permanent location at which the law school is conducting a teach-out for students at another law school that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study;

(14) Contracting with an educational entity that is not certified to participate in Title IV, HEA programs, that would permit a student to earn 25 percent or more of the course credits required for graduation from the approved law school;

(15) Establishing a new or different program leading to a degree other than the J.D. degree;

(16) A change in program length measurement from clock hours to credit hours; and
(17) A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours required for graduation.

(b) The Council shall grant acquiescence only if the law school demonstrates that the change will not detract from the law school’s ability to remain in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 106. SEPARATE LOCATIONS AND BRANCH CAMPUSES

(a) A law school that offers a separate location shall provide:

(1) Full-time faculty adequate to support the curriculum offered at the separate location and who are reasonably accessible to students at the separate location;

(2) Library resources and staff that are adequate to support the curriculum offered at the separate location and that are reasonably accessible to the student body at the separate location;

(3) Academic advising, career services and other student support services that are adequate to support the student body at the separate location and that are reasonably equivalent to such services offered to similarly situated students at the law school’s main location;

(4) Access to co-curricular activities and other educational benefits adequate to support the student body at the separate location; and

(5) Physical facilities and technological capacities that are adequate to support the curriculum and the student body at the separate location.

(b) In addition to the requirements of section (a), a branch campus must:

(1) Establish a reliable plan that demonstrates that the branch campus is reasonably likely to be in substantial compliance with each of the Standards within three years of the effective date of acquiescence as required by Rule 22;

(2) Comply with instructional requirements and responsibilities as required by Standard 403(a) and Standard 404(a); and

(3) Offer reasonably comparable opportunities for access to the law school’s program of legal education, courses taught by full-time faculty, student services, co-curricular programs, and other educational benefits as required by Standard 311.

(c) A law school is not eligible to establish a separate location until at least four years after the law school is granted initial full approval.
Interpretation 106-1
“Separate location” and “branch campus” as used in this Standard are defined terms that apply only to locations at which a law school offers more than sixteen credits of the program of legal education.

Interpretation 106-2
A law school with more than one location may have one dean for all locations.

Standard 107. VARIANCES

(a) A law school proposing to make any change that is or may be inconsistent with one or more of the Standards may apply to the Council for a variance only on one of the following bases:

(1) A law school may apply for a variance in response to extraordinary circumstances in which compliance with the relevant Standard or Standards would create or constitute extreme hardship for the law school and/or its students. In such cases, the law school must demonstrate that: i) the proposed variance is consistent with the general purposes and objectives of the overall Standards, and ii) the anticipated benefits of granting the variance outweigh any anticipated harms to the law school’s program or its students.

The variance, if granted, will be for a term certain and limited to the expected duration of the extraordinary circumstances on the basis of which it was granted. It may be extended once for a further term certain, but only if the extraordinary circumstances persist and are beyond the control of the law school.

The decision granting a variance on this basis may require the law school to report to the Managing Director, the Accreditation Committee, or the Council regularly as specified in the decision.

(2) In all variance applications that do not fall within subsection (a)(1), the law school must demonstrate that: i) the proposed variance is consistent with the general purposes and objectives of the overall Standards, ii) the proposed changes or actions that are the basis for the requested variance are experimental or innovative and have the potential to improve or advance the state of legal education, and iii) the anticipated benefits of granting the variance outweigh any anticipated harms to the law school’s program or its students.

The variance, if granted, shall be for a term certain and can be extended once, with the extension being for either a further term certain or indefinite, but subject to revocation on the basis of either a change in the showing made by the law school when the variance was granted or a change in circumstances.
The decision granting a variance on this basis may require the law school to report to the Managing Director, the Accreditation Committee or the Council regularly as specified in the decision.

(b) If the changes that are the subject of the application for a variance constitute or come to constitute a major change in programs or structure under Standard 105 or 106, then the law school shall seek acquiescence by the Council in order to initiate or continue the changes.

(c) A variance, when granted, is school specific and shall be based on and limited to the facts and circumstances that existed at the law school at the time it applied for the variance.
Chapter 2 - ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Standard 201. LAW SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

(a) The dean and the faculty shall have the primary responsibility and authority for planning, implementing, and administering the program of legal education of the law school, including curriculum, methods of instruction and evaluation, admissions policies and procedures, and academic standards.

(b) The dean and the faculty shall recommend the selection, retention, promotion, and tenure (or granting of security of position) of members of the faculty.

(c) The dean and the faculty shall each have a significant role in determining educational policy.

(d) The policies of a university that are applicable to a law school shall be consistent with the Standards. The law school shall have separate policies where necessary to ensure compliance with the Standards.

(e) A law school that is not part of a university shall be governed by a board with responsibility and authority for ensuring operation of the law school in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 202. RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM

(a) The current and anticipated financial resources available to the law school shall be sufficient for it to operate in compliance with the Standards and to carry out its program of legal education.

(b) A law school that is part of a university shall obtain at least annually from its university an accounting and explanation for all charges and costs assessed against resources generated by the law school and for any use of resources generated by the law school to support non-law school activities and central university services.

(c) A law school is not in compliance with the Standards if its current financial condition has a negative and material effect on the school’s ability to operate in compliance with the Standards; or to carry out its program of legal education.

(d) A law school is not in compliance with the Standards if its anticipated financial condition is reasonably expected to have a negative and material effect on the school’s ability to operate in compliance with the Standards; or to carry out its program of legal education.

(e) A law school shall be given the opportunity to present its recommendations on budgetary matters to the university administration before the budget for the law school is submitted to the governing board for adoption.
Interpretation 202-1
“Resources generated” includes law school tuition and fees, appropriated support, endowment restricted to the law school, gifts to the law school, and revenue from grants, contracts, and property of the law school.

Standard 203. DEAN

(a) A law school shall have a full-time dean with the authority and support necessary to discharge the responsibilities of the position.

(b) Except in extraordinary circumstances, a dean shall also hold appointment as a member of the faculty with tenure.

(c) The dean shall be selected by the university or the governing board of the law school, as appropriate, which shall have and follow a procedure for decanal appointment or reappointment that assures meaningful involvement by the faculty or a representative body of the faculty in the selection of a dean.

Interpretation 203-1
Except for good cause, a dean should not be appointed or reappointed to a new term over the stated objection of a substantial majority of the faculty.

Interpretation 203-2
In the appointment of an interim or acting dean, the university or the governing board of the law school, as appropriate, should follow a procedure that assures meaningful consultation with the faculty or a representative body of the faculty.

Interpretation 203-3
The extension of an interim or acting dean’s service beyond two years is a regular decanal appointment or reappointment for the purposes of Standard 203(c).

Standard 204. SELF STUDY

Before each site evaluation visit the law school shall prepare a self-study comprised of (a) a completed site evaluation questionnaire, (b) a statement of the law school’s mission and of its educational objectives in support of that mission, (c) an assessment of the educational quality of the law school’s program, (d) an assessment of the school’s continuing efforts to improve educational quality, (e) an evaluation of the school’s effectiveness in achieving its stated educational objectives, and (f) a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the law school’s program of legal education.

Interpretation 204-1
The evaluation of the school's effectiveness and description of its strengths and weaknesses should include a statement of the availability of sufficient resources to achieve the school's mission and its educational objectives.
Standard 205. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

(a) A law school shall not use admission policies or take other action to preclude admission of applicants or retention of students on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

(b) A law school shall foster and maintain equality of opportunity for students, faculty, and staff, without discrimination or segregation on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

(c) This Standard does not prevent a law school from having a religious affiliation or purpose and adopting and applying policies of admission of students and employment of faculty and staff that directly relate to this affiliation or purpose so long as (1) notice of these policies has been given to applicants, students, faculty, and staff before their affiliation with the law school, and (2) the religious affiliation, purpose, or policies do not contravene any other Standard, including Standard 405(b) concerning academic freedom. These policies may provide a preference for persons adhering to the religious affiliation or purpose of the law school, but may not be applied to use admission policies or take other action to preclude admission of applicants or retention of students on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. This Standard permits religious affiliation or purpose policies as to admission, retention, and employment only to the extent that these policies are protected by the United States Constitution. It is administered as though the First Amendment of the United States Constitution governs its application.

(d) Non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in legal education includes equal employment opportunity. A law school shall communicate to every employer to whom it furnishes assistance and facilities for interviewing and other placement services the school’s firm expectation that the employer will observe the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability in regard to hiring, promotion, retention and conditions of employment.

**Interpretation 205-1**
A law school may not require applicants, students, faculty or employees to disclose their sexual orientation, although they may provide opportunities for them to do so voluntarily.

**Interpretation 205-2**
So long as a school complies with Standard 205(c), the prohibition concerning sexual orientation does not require a religiously affiliated school to act inconsistently with the essential elements of its religious values and beliefs. For example, Standard 205(c) does not require a school to recognize or support organizations whose purposes or objectives with respect to sexual orientation conflict with the essential elements of the religious values and beliefs held by the school.
Interpretation 205-3
Standard 205(d) applies to all employers, including government agencies, to which a school furnishes assistance and facilities for interviewing and other placement services. However, this Standard does not require a law school to implement its terms by excluding any employer unless that employer discriminates unlawfully.

Interpretation 205-4
The denial by a law school of admission to a qualified applicant is treated as made upon the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability if the basis of denial relied upon is an admission qualification of the school that is intended to prevent the admission of applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability though not purporting to do so.

Interpretation 205-5
The denial by a law school of employment to a qualified individual is treated as made upon the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability if the basis of denial relied upon is an employment policy of the school that is intended to prevent the employment of individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability though not purporting to do so.

Standard 206. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

(a) Consistent with sound legal education policy and the Standards, a law school shall demonstrate by concrete action a commitment to diversity and inclusion by providing full opportunities for the study of law and entry into the profession by members of underrepresented groups, particularly racial and ethnic minorities, and a commitment to having a student body that is diverse with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity.

(b) Consistent with sound educational policy and the Standards, a law school shall demonstrate by concrete action a commitment to diversity and inclusion by having a faculty and staff that are diverse with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity.

Interpretation 206-1
The requirement of a constitutional provision or statute that purports to prohibit consideration of gender, race, ethnicity, or national origin in admissions or employment decisions is not a justification for a school’s non-compliance with Standard 206. A law school that is subject to such constitutional or statutory provisions would have to demonstrate the commitment required by Standard 206 by means other than those prohibited by the applicable constitutional or statutory provisions.

Interpretation 206-2
In addition to providing full opportunities for the study of law and the entry into the legal profession by members of underrepresented groups, the enrollment of a diverse student body promotes cross-cultural understanding, helps break down racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes, and enables students to better understand persons of different backgrounds. The forms of concrete action required by a law school to satisfy the obligations of this Standard are not
specified. If consistent with applicable law, a law school may use race and ethnicity in its admissions process to promote diversity and inclusion. The determination of a law school’s satisfaction of such obligations is based on the totality of the law school’s actions and the results achieved. The commitment to providing full educational opportunities for members of underrepresented groups typically includes a special concern for determining the potential of these applicants through the admission process, special recruitment efforts, and programs that assist in meeting the academic and financial needs of many of these students and that create a favorable environment for students from underrepresented groups.

**Standard 207. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

(a) Assuring equality of opportunity for qualified individuals with disabilities, as required by Standard 205, requires a law school to provide such students, faculty and staff with reasonable accommodations consistent with applicable law.

(b) A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to written policies and procedures for assessing and handling requests for reasonable accommodations made by qualified individuals with disabilities.

**Interpretation 207-1**

Applicants and students shall be individually evaluated to determine whether they meet the academic standards requisite to admission and participation in the law school program. The use of the term “qualified” in the Standard requires a careful and thorough consideration of each applicant and each student’s qualifications in light of reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are those that are consistent with the fundamental nature of the school’s program of legal education, that can be provided without undue financial or administrative burden, and that can be provided while maintaining academic and other essential performance standards.
Chapter 3 – PROGRAM OF LEGAL EDUCATION

Standard 301. OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM OF LEGAL EDUCATION

(a) A law school shall maintain a rigorous program of legal education that prepares its students, upon graduation, for admission to the bar and for effective, ethical, and responsible participation as members of the legal profession.

(b) A law school shall establish and publish learning outcomes designed to achieve these objectives.

Standard 302. LEARNING OUTCOMES

A law school shall establish learning outcomes that shall, at a minimum, include competency in the following:

(a) Knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law;

(b) Legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication in the legal context;

(c) Exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system; and

(d) Other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession.

Interpretation 302-1
For the purposes of Standard 302(d), other professional skills are determined by the law school and may include skills such as, interviewing, counseling, negotiation, fact development and analysis, trial practice, document drafting, conflict resolution, organization and management of legal work, collaboration, cultural competency, and self-evaluation.

Interpretation 302-2
A law school may also identify any additional learning outcomes pertinent to its program of legal education.

Standard 303. CURRICULUM

(a) A law school shall offer a curriculum that requires each student to satisfactorily complete at least the following:

(1) one course of at least two credit hours in professional responsibility that includes substantial instruction in the history, goals, structure, values, and responsibilities of the legal profession and its members;
(2) one writing experience in the first year and at least one additional writing experience after the first year, both of which are faculty supervised; and

(3) one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours. An experiential course must be a simulation course, a law clinic, or a field placement. To satisfy this requirement, a course must be primarily experiential in nature and must:

(i) integrate doctrine, theory, skills, and legal ethics, and engage students in performance of one or more of the professional skills identified in Standard 302;

(ii) develop the concepts underlying the professional skills being taught;

(iii) provide multiple opportunities for performance; and

(iv) provide opportunities for self-evaluation.

(b) A law school shall provide substantial opportunities to students for:

(1) law clinics or field placement(s); and

(2) student participation in pro bono legal services, including law-related public service activities.

Interpretation 303-1
A law school may not permit a student to use a course to satisfy more than one requirement under this Standard. For example, a course that includes a writing experience used to satisfy the upper-class writing requirement [see 303(a)(2)] cannot be counted as one of the experiential courses required in Standard 303(a)(3).

Interpretation 303-2
Factors to be considered in evaluating the rigor of a writing experience include the number and nature of writing projects assigned to students, the form and extent of individualized assessment of a student’s written products, and the number of drafts that a student must produce for any writing experience.

Interpretation 303-3
Rule 6.1 of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct encourages lawyers to provide pro bono legal services primarily to persons of limited means or to organizations that serve such persons. In addition, lawyers are encouraged to provide pro bono law-related public service. In meeting the requirement of Standard 303(b)(2), law schools are encouraged to promote opportunities for law student pro bono service that incorporate the priorities established in Model Rule 6.1. In addition, law schools are encouraged to promote opportunities for law students to provide over their law school career at least 50 hours of pro bono service that complies with Standard 303(b)(2). Pro bono and public service opportunities need not be structured to accomplish any of the outcomes required by Standard 302. Standard 303(b)(2) does not preclude the inclusion of credit-granting activities within a law school’s overall
program of law-related pro bono opportunities so long as law-related non-credit bearing initiatives are also part of that program.

Interpretation 303-4
Law-related public service activities include (i) helping groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights; (ii) helping charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations not able to afford legal representation; (iii) participating in activities providing information about justice, the law or the legal system to those who might not otherwise have such information; and (iv) engaging in activities to enhance the capacity of the law and legal institutions to do justice.

Standard 304. SIMULATION COURSES AND LAW CLINICS

(a) A simulation course provides substantial experience not involving an actual client, that (1) is reasonably similar to the experience of a lawyer advising or representing a client or engaging in other lawyering tasks in a set of facts and circumstances devised or adopted by a faculty member, and (2) includes the following:
   (i) direct supervision of the student's performance by the faculty member;
   (ii) opportunities for performance, feedback from a faculty member, and self-evaluation; and
   (iii) a classroom instructional component.

(b) A law clinic provides substantial lawyering experience that (1) involves one or more actual clients, and (2) includes the following:
   (i) advising or representing a client;
   (ii) direct supervision of the student’s performance by a faculty member;
   (iii) opportunities for performance, feedback from a faculty member, and self-evaluation; and
   (iv) a classroom instructional component.

Standard 305. FIELD PLACEMENTS AND OTHER STUDY OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

(a) A law school may grant credit toward the J.D. degree for courses that involve student participation in studies or activities in a format that does not involve attendance at regularly scheduled class sessions, including courses approved as part of a field placement program, moot court, law review, and directed research.

(b) Credit granted for such a course shall be commensurate with the time and effort required and the anticipated quality of the educational experience of the student.

(c) Each student’s educational achievement in such a course shall be evaluated by a faculty member. When appropriate a school may use faculty members from other law schools to supervise or assist in the supervision or review of a field placement program.

(d) The studies or activities shall be approved in advance and periodically reviewed.
following the school’s established procedures for approval of the curriculum.

(e) A field placement program shall include:

(1) a clear statement of its goals and methods, and a demonstrated relationship between those goals and methods and the program in operation;

(2) adequate instructional resources, including faculty teaching in and supervising the program who devote the requisite time and attention to satisfy program goals and are sufficiently available to students;

(3) a clearly articulated method of evaluating each student’s academic performance involving both a faculty member and the site supervisor;

(4) a method for selecting, training, evaluating, and communicating with site supervisors;

(5) for field placements that award three or more credit hours, regular contact between the faculty supervisor or law school administrator and the site supervisor to assure the quality of the student educational experience, including the appropriateness of the supervision and the student work;

(6) a requirement that each student has successfully completed instruction equivalent to 28 credit hours toward the J.D. degree before participation in the field placement program; and

(7) opportunities for student reflection on their field placement experience, through a seminar, regularly scheduled tutorials, or other means of guided reflection. Where a student may earn three or more credit hours in a field placement program, the opportunity for student reflection must be provided contemporaneously.

(f) A law school that has a field placement program shall develop, publish, and communicate to students and site supervisors a statement that describes the educational objectives of the program.

**Interpretation 305-1**

Regular contact may be achieved through in-person visits or other methods of communication that will assure the quality of the student educational experience.

**Interpretation 305-2**

A law school may not grant credit to a student for participation in a field placement program for which the student receives compensation. This Interpretation does not preclude reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to the field placement.
Standard 306. DISTANCE EDUCATION

(a) A distance education course is one in which students are separated from the faculty member or each other for more than one-third of the instruction and the instruction involves the use of technology to support regular and substantive interaction among students and between the students and the faculty member, either synchronously or asynchronously.

(b) Credit for a distance education course shall be awarded only if the academic content, the method of course delivery, and the method of evaluating student performance are approved as part of the school’s regular curriculum approval process.

(c) A law school shall have the technological capacity, staff, information resources, and facilities necessary to assure the educational quality of distance education.

(d) A law school may award credit for distance education and may count that credit toward the 64 credit hours of regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction required by Standard 310(b) if:

(1) there is opportunity for regular and substantive interaction between faculty member and student and among students;

(2) there is regular monitoring of student effort by the faculty member and opportunity for communication about that effort; and

(3) the learning outcomes for the course are consistent with Standard 302.

(e) A law school shall not grant a student more than a total of 15 credit hours toward the J.D. degree for courses qualifying under this Standard.

(f) A law school shall not enroll a student in courses qualifying for credit under this Standard until that student has completed instruction equivalent to 28 credit hours toward the J.D. degree.

(g) A law school shall establish an effective process for verifying the identity of students taking distance education courses and that also protects student privacy. If any additional student charges are associated with verification of student identity, students must be notified at the time of registration or enrollment.

Interpretation 306-1
Technology used to support a distance education course may include, for example:

(a) The Internet;

(b) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable,
microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;

(c) Audio and video conferencing; or

(d) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD–ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD–ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (a) through (c).

Interpretation 306-2
Methods to verify student identity as required in Standard 306(g) include, but are not limited to (i) a secure login and pass code, (ii) proctored examinations, and (iii) other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity. As part of the verification process, a law school shall verify that the student who registers for a class is the same student that participates and takes any examinations for the class.

Standard 307. STUDIES, ACTIVITIES, AND FIELD PLACEMENTS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

(a) A law school may grant credit for (1) studies or activities outside the United States that are approved in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Criteria as adopted by the Council and (2) field placements outside the United States that meet the requirements of Standard 305 and are not held in conjunction with studies or activities that are approved in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Criteria as adopted by the Council.

(b) The total credits for student participation in such studies or activities may not exceed one-third of the credits required for the J.D. degree.

Interpretation 307-1
The three Criteria adopted by the Council are the Criteria for Approval of Foreign Summer and Intersession Programs Established by ABA-Approved Law Schools, the Criteria for Approval of Foreign Semester and Year-Long Study Abroad Programs Established by ABA-Approved Law Schools, and the Criteria for Accepting Credit for Student Study at a Foreign Institution.

Interpretation 307-2
For purposes of Standard 307, a brief visit to a country outside the United States that is part of a course offered and based primarily at the law school and approved through the school’s regular curriculum approval process is not considered to be studies outside the United States.

Standard 308. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

(a) A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to sound academic standards, including those for good standing, academic integrity, graduation, and dismissal.

(b) A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to written due process policies with regard to taking any action that adversely affects the good standing or graduation of a student.
Standard 309. ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT

(a) A law school shall provide academic advising for students that communicates effectively the school’s academic standards and graduation requirements, and that provides guidance on course selection.

(b) A law school shall provide academic support designed to afford students a reasonable opportunity to complete the program of legal education, graduate, and become members of the legal profession.

Standard 310. DETERMINATION OF CREDIT HOURS FOR COURSEWORK

(a) A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to written policies and procedures for determining the credit hours that it awards for coursework.

(b) A "credit hour" is an amount of work that reasonably approximates:

1. not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

2. at least an equivalent amount of work as required in subparagraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including simulation, field placement, clinical, co-curricular, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Interpretation 310-1
For purposes of this Standard, fifty minutes suffices for one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction. An "hour" for out-of-class student work is sixty minutes. The fifteen-week period may include one week for a final examination.

Interpretation 310-2
A school may award credit hours for coursework that extends over any period of time, if the coursework entails no less than the minimum total amounts of classroom or direct faculty instruction and of out-of-class student work specified in Standard 310(b).

Standard 311. ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC CALENDAR

(a) A law school shall have an academic year of not fewer than 140 days on which classes and examinations are regularly scheduled in the law school, extending into not fewer than eight calendar months. The law school shall provide adequate time for reading periods and breaks, but such time does not count toward the 140-day academic year requirement.

(b) A law school shall require, as a condition for graduation, successful completion of a course of study of not fewer than 83 credit hours. At least 64 of these credit hours shall be
in courses that require attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction.

(c) A law school shall require that the course of study for the J.D. degree be completed no earlier than 24 months and, except in extraordinary circumstances, no later than 84 months after a student has commenced law study at the law school or a law school from which the school has accepted transfer credit.

(d) A law school shall not permit a student to be enrolled at any time in coursework that exceeds 20 percent of the total credit hours required by that school for graduation.

(e) Credit for a J.D. degree shall only be given for coursework taken after the student has matriculated in a law school. A law school may not grant credit toward the J.D. degree for work taken in a pre-admission program.

(f) A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to a written policy requiring regular class attendance.

Interpretation 311-1
A law school may not count more than five class days each week toward the 140-day requirement.

Interpretation 311-2
(a) In calculating the 64 credit hours of regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction for the purpose of Standard 311(b), the credit hours may include:
   (1) Credit hours earned by attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction;
   (2) Credit hours earned by participation in a simulation course or law clinic in compliance with Standard 304;
   (3) Credit hours earned through distance education in compliance with Standard 306; and
   (4) Credit hours earned by participation in law-related studies or activities in a country outside the United States in compliance with Standard 307.

(b) In calculating the 64 credit hours of regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction for the purpose of Standard 311(b), the credit hours shall not include any other coursework, including, but not limited to:
   (1) Credit hours earned through field placements and other study outside of the classroom in compliance with Standard 305;
   (2) Credit hours earned in another department, school, or college of the university with which the law school is affiliated, or at another institution of higher learning;
   (3) Credit hours earned for participation in co-curricular activities such as law review, moot court, and trial competition; and
   (4) Credit hours earned by participation in studies or activities in a country outside the United States in compliance with Standard 307 for studies or activities that are not law-related.
Interpretation 311-3
Whenever a student is permitted on the basis of extraordinary circumstances to exceed the 84-month program limitation in Standard 311(c), the law school shall place in the student's file a statement signed by an appropriate law school official explaining the extraordinary circumstances leading the law school to permit an exception to this limitation. Such extraordinary circumstances, for example, might include an interruption of a student’s legal education because of an illness, family exigency, or military service.

Interpretation 311-4
For purposes of Standard 311(c), the time for determining the commencement of law study is ordinarily the time when a student commences law study at any institution. For example, if a law school accepts transfer credit from another institution, the time begins when the student commenced study at the law school from which the transfer credit is accepted. If a law school accepts a student who has completed law studies at a law school outside the United States as permitted under Standard 505, only the time commensurate with the amount of credit given counts toward the length of study requirements of Standard 311(c).

Standard 312. REASONABLY COMPARABLE OPPORTUNITIES
A law school providing more than one enrollment or scheduling option shall ensure that all students have reasonably comparable opportunities for access to the law school’s program of legal education, courses taught by full-time faculty, student services, co-curricular programs, and other educational benefits. Identical opportunities are not required.

Standard 313. DEGREE PROGRAMS IN ADDITION TO J.D.
A law school may not offer a degree program other than its J.D. degree program unless:
(a) the law school is fully approved;
(b) the Council has granted acquiescence in the program; and
(c) the degree program will not interfere with the ability of the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards and to carry out its program of legal education.

Interpretation 313-1
Acquiescence in a degree program other than the J.D. degree is not an approval of the program itself and, therefore, a school may not announce that the program is approved by the Council.

Standard 314. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING
A law school shall utilize both formative and summative assessment methods in its curriculum to measure and improve student learning and provide meaningful feedback to students.
Interpretation 314-1
Formative assessment methods are measurements at different points during a particular course or at different points over the span of a student’s education that provide meaningful feedback to improve student learning. Summative assessment methods are measurements at the culmination of a particular course or at the culmination of any part of a student’s legal education that measure the degree of student learning.

Interpretation 314-2
A law school need not apply multiple assessment methods in any particular course. Assessment methods are likely to be different from school to school. Law schools are not required by Standard 314 to use any particular assessment method.

Standard 315. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM OF LEGAL EDUCATION, LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

The dean and the faculty of a law school shall conduct ongoing evaluation of the law school’s program of legal education, learning outcomes, and assessment methods; and shall use the results of this evaluation to determine the degree of student attainment of competency in the learning outcomes and to make appropriate changes to improve the curriculum.

Interpretation 315-1
Examples of methods that may be used to measure the degree to which students have attained competency in the school’s student learning outcomes include review of the records the law school maintains to measure individual student achievement pursuant to Standard 314; evaluation of student learning portfolios; student evaluation of the sufficiency of their education; student performance in capstone courses or other courses that appropriately assess a variety of skills and knowledge; bar exam passage rates; placement rates; surveys of attorneys, judges, and alumni; and assessment of student performance by judges, attorneys, or law professors from other schools. The methods used to measure the degree of student achievement of learning outcomes are likely to differ from school to school and law schools are not required by this standard to use any particular methods.

Standard 316. BAR PASSAGE

(a) A law school’s bar passage rate shall be sufficient, for purposes of Standard 301(a), if the school demonstrates that it meets any one of the following tests:

(1) That for students who graduated from the law school within the five most recently completed calendar years:

   (i) 75 percent or more of these graduates who sat for the bar passed a bar examination; or

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(ii) in at least three of these calendar years, 75 percent of the students graduating in those years and sitting for the bar have passed a bar examination.

In demonstrating compliance under sections (1)(i) and (ii), the school must report bar passage results from as many jurisdictions as necessary to account for at least 70 percent of its graduates each year, starting with the jurisdiction in which the highest number of graduates took the bar exam and proceeding in descending order of frequency.

(2) That in three or more of the five most recently completed calendar years, the school’s annual first-time bar passage rate in the jurisdictions reported by the school is no more than 15 points below the average first-time bar passage rates for graduates of ABA-approved law schools taking the bar examination in these same jurisdictions.

In demonstrating compliance under section (2), the school must report first-time bar passage data from as many jurisdictions as necessary to account for at least 70 percent of its graduates each year, starting with the jurisdiction in which the highest number of graduates took the bar exam and proceeding in descending order of frequency. When more than one jurisdiction is reported, the weighted average of the results in each of the reported jurisdictions shall be used to determine compliance.

(b) A school shall be out of compliance with this Standard if it is unable to demonstrate that it meets the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) or (2).

(c) A school found out of compliance under paragraph (b) and that has not been able to come into compliance within the two-year period specified in Rule 13(b) of the Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools, may seek to demonstrate good cause for extending the period the law school has to demonstrate compliance by submitting evidence of:

(1) The law school’s trend in bar passage rates for both first-time and subsequent takers: a clear trend of improvement will be considered in the school’s favor, a declining or flat trend against it.

(2) The length of time the law school’s bar passage rates have been below the first-time and ultimate rates established in paragraph A: a shorter time period will be considered in the school’s favor, a longer period against it.

(3) Actions by the law school to address bar passage, particularly the law school’s academic rigor and the demonstrated value and effectiveness of its academic support and bar preparation programs: value-added, effective, sustained and pervasive actions to address bar passage problems will be considered in the law school’s favor; ineffective or only marginally effective programs or limited action by the law school against it.
(4) Efforts by the law school to facilitate bar passage for its graduates who did not pass the bar on prior attempts: effective and sustained efforts by the law school will be considered in the school’s favor; ineffective or limited efforts by the law school against it.

(5) Efforts by the law school to provide broader access to legal education while maintaining academic rigor: sustained meaningful efforts will be viewed in the law school’s favor; intermittent or limited efforts by the law school against it.

(6) The demonstrated likelihood that the law school’s students who transfer to other ABA-approved schools will pass the bar examination: transfers by students with a strong likelihood of passing the bar will be considered in the school’s favor, providing the law school has undertaken counseling and other appropriate efforts to retain its well-performing students.

(7) Temporary circumstances beyond the control of the law school, but which the law school is addressing: for example, a natural disaster that disrupts operations or a significant increase in the standard for passing the relevant bar examination(s).

(8) Other factors, consistent with a law school’s demonstrated and sustained mission, which the school considers relevant in explaining its deficient bar passage results and in explaining the school’s efforts to improve them.
Chapter 4 - THE FACULTY

Standard 401. QUALIFICATIONS

A law school shall have a faculty whose qualifications and experience enable the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards and carry out its program of legal education. The faculty shall possess a high degree of competence, as demonstrated by academic qualification, experience in teaching or practice, teaching effectiveness, and scholarship.

Standard 402. SIZE OF FULL-TIME FACULTY

A law school shall have a sufficient number of full-time faculty to enable the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards and carry out its program of legal education. The number of full-time faculty necessary depends on (a) the size of the student body and the opportunity for students to meet individually with full-time faculty members; (b) the nature and scope of the program of legal education; and (c) the opportunities for the full-time faculty to adequately fulfill its teaching obligations, conduct scholarly research, participate effectively in the governance of the law school, and provide service to the legal profession and the public.

Interpretation 402-1
A full-time faculty member who is teaching an additional full-time load at another law school may not be considered as a full-time faculty member at either institution.

Interpretation 402-2
Regularly engaging in law practice or having an ongoing relationship with a law firm or other business creates a presumption that a faculty member is not a full-time faculty member under this Standard. This presumption may be rebutted if the law school is able to demonstrate that the individual has a full-time commitment to teaching, research, and public service, is available to students, and is able to participate in the governance of the law school to the same extent expected of full-time faculty.

Standard 403. INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE OF FACULTY

(a) The full-time faculty shall teach substantially all of the first one-third of each student’s coursework. The full-time faculty shall also teach during the academic year either (1) more than half of all of the credit hours actually offered by the law school, or (2) two-thirds of the student contact hours generated by student enrollment at the law school.

(b) A law school shall ensure effective teaching by all persons providing instruction to its students.

Interpretation 403-1
Efforts to ensure teaching effectiveness may include: orientation, guidance and mentoring for new faculty members; a faculty committee on effective teaching; class visits; critiques of videotaped
teaching; institutional review of student course evaluations; colloquia on effective teaching; and recognition and use of creative scholarship in law school teaching methodology.

Standard 404. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FULL-TIME FACULTY

(a) A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to written policies with respect to full-time faculty members’ responsibilities. The policies shall require that the full-time faculty, as a collective body, fulfill these core responsibilities:

(1) Teaching, preparing for classes, being available for student consultation about those classes, assessing student performance in those classes, and remaining current in the subjects being taught;

(2) Participating in academic advising, creating an atmosphere in which students and faculty may voice opinions and exchange ideas, and assessing student learning at the law school;

(3) Engaging in scholarship, as defined by the law school;

(4) Service to the law school and university community, including participation in the governance of the law school, curriculum development, and other institutional responsibilities described in the Standards;

(5) Service to the profession, including working with judges and practicing lawyers to improve the profession; and

(6) Service to the public, including participation in pro bono activities.

(b) The law school shall periodically evaluate the extent to which the faculty discharges its core responsibilities under the law school's policies and the contributions of each full-time faculty member to meeting the core responsibilities of the faculty.

Standard 405. PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

(a) A law school shall establish and maintain conditions adequate to attract and retain a competent faculty.

(b) A law school shall have an established and announced policy with respect to academic freedom and tenure of which Appendix 1 herein is an example but is not obligatory.

(c) A law school shall afford to full-time clinical faculty members a form of security of position reasonably similar to tenure, and non-compensatory perquisites reasonably similar to those provided other full-time faculty members. A law school may require these faculty members to meet standards and obligations reasonably similar to those required of other full-time faculty members. However, this Standard does not preclude a limited
number of fixed, short-term appointments in a clinical program predominantly staffed by full-time faculty members, or in an experimental program of limited duration.

(d) A law school shall afford legal writing teachers such security of position and other rights and privileges of faculty membership as may be necessary to (1) attract and retain a faculty that is well qualified to provide legal writing instruction as required by Standard 302(a)(3), and (2) safeguard academic freedom.

Interpretation 405-1
A fixed limit on the percent of a law faculty that may hold tenure under any circumstances violates the Standards.

Interpretation 405-2
A law faculty as professionals should not be required to be a part of the general university bargaining unit.

Interpretation 405-3
A law school shall have a comprehensive system for evaluating candidates for promotion and tenure or other forms of security of position, including written criteria and procedures that are made available to the faculty.

Interpretation 405-4
A law school not a part of a university in considering and deciding on appointment, termination, promotion, and tenure of faculty members should have procedures that contain the same principles of fairness and due process that should be employed by a law school that is part of a university. If the dean and faculty have made a recommendation that is unfavorable to a candidate, the candidate should be given an opportunity to appeal to the president, chairman, or governing board.

Interpretation 405-5
If the dean and faculty have determined the question of responsibility for examination schedules and the schedule has been announced by the authority responsible for it, it is not a violation of academic freedom for a member of the law faculty to be required to adhere to the schedule.

Interpretation 405-6
A form of security of position reasonably similar to tenure includes a separate tenure track or a program of renewable long-term contracts. Under a separate tenure track, a full-time clinical faculty member, after a probationary period reasonably similar to that for other full-time faculty, may be granted tenure. After tenure is granted, the faculty member may be terminated only for good cause, including termination or material modification of the entire clinical program. A program of renewable long-term contracts shall provide that, after a probationary period reasonably similar to that for other full-time faculty, during which the clinical faculty member may be employed on short-term contracts, the services of a faculty member in a clinical program may be either terminated or continued by the granting of a long-term renewable contract. For the purposes of this Interpretation, “long-term contract” means at least a five-year contract that is presumptively renewable or other arrangement sufficient to ensure academic freedom.
the initial long-term contract or any renewal period, the contract may be terminated for good cause, including termination or material modification of the entire clinical program.

**Interpretation 405-7**
In determining if the members of the full-time clinical faculty meet standards and obligations reasonably similar to those provided for other full-time faculty, competence in the areas of teaching and scholarly research and writing should be judged in terms of the responsibilities of clinical faculty. A law school should develop criteria for retention, promotion, and security of employment of full-time clinical faculty.

**Interpretation 405-8**
A law school shall afford to full-time clinical faculty members participation in faculty meetings, committees, and other aspects of law school governance in a manner reasonably similar to other full-time faculty members. This Interpretation does not apply to those persons referred to in the last sentence of Standard 405(c).

**Interpretation 405-9**
Subsection (d) of this Standard does not preclude the use of short-term contracts for legal writing teachers, nor does it preclude law schools from offering fellowship programs designed to produce candidates for full-time teaching by offering individuals supervised teaching experience.
Chapter 5 - ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Standard 501. ADMISSIONS

(a) A law school shall maintain sound admission policies and practices consistent with the Standards, its mission, and the objectives of its program of legal education.

(b) A law school shall not admit an applicant who does not appear capable of satisfactorily completing its program of legal education and being admitted to the bar.

(c) A law school shall not admit or readmit a student who has been disqualified previously for academic reasons without an affirmative showing that the prior disqualification does not indicate a lack of capacity to complete its program of legal education and be admitted to the bar. For every admission or readmission of a previously disqualified individual, a statement of the considerations that led to the decision shall be placed in the admittee’s file.

Interpretation 501-1
Among the factors to consider in assessing compliance with this Standard are the academic and admission test credentials of the law school’s entering students, the academic attrition rate of the law school’s students, the bar passage rate of its graduates, and the effectiveness of the law school’s academic support program.

Interpretation 501-2
Sound admissions policies and practices may include consideration of admission test scores, undergraduate course of study and grade point average, extracurricular activities, work experience, performance in other graduate or professional programs, relevant demonstrated skills, and obstacles overcome.

Standard 502. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

(a) A law school shall require for admission to its J.D. degree program a bachelor’s degree that has been awarded by an institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), a law school may also admit to its J.D. degree program:

1) an applicant who has completed three-fourths of the credits leading to a bachelor's degree as part of a bachelor's degree/J.D. degree program if the institution is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; and

2) a graduate of an institution outside the United States if the law school assures that the quality of the program of legal education of that institution is equivalent to that of institutions accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
(c) In an extraordinary case, a law school may admit to its J.D. degree program an applicant who does not satisfy the requirements of subsections (a) or (b) if the applicant’s experience, ability, and other qualifications clearly demonstrate an aptitude for the study of law. For every such admission, a statement of the considerations that led to the decision shall be placed in the admittee’s file.

(d) Within a reasonable time after a student registers, a law school shall have on file the student’s official transcripts verifying all academic credits undertaken and degree(s) conferred.

**Interpretation 502-1**
Official transcript means: 1) a paper or electronic transcript certified by the issuing institution and delivered directly to the law school; or 2) a paper or electronic transcript verified by a third-party credential assembly service and delivered directly to the law school. With respect to electronic copies, it is sufficient for transcripts to be maintained at the law school or off-site by a third-party provider as long as the law school has access to the documents on demand.

**Interpretation 502-2**
The official transcripts for any student admitted as a transfer student shall include verification of any academic credits undertaken at any other law school attended.

**Standard 503. ADMISSION TEST**
A law school shall require each applicant for admission as a first-year J.D. degree student to take a valid and reliable admission test to assist the school and the applicant in assessing the applicant’s capability of satisfactorily completing the school’s program of legal education. In making admissions decisions, a law school shall use the test results in a manner that is consistent with the current guidelines regarding proper use of the test results provided by the agency that developed the test.

**Interpretation 503-1**
A law school that uses an admission test other than the Law School Admission Test sponsored by the Law School Admission Council shall demonstrate that such other test is a valid and reliable test to assist the school in assessing an applicant’s capability to satisfactorily complete the school’s program of legal education.

**Interpretation 503-2**
This Standard does not prescribe the particular weight that a law school should give to an applicant’s admission test score in deciding whether to admit or deny admission to the applicant.

**Interpretation 503-3**
(a) It is not a violation of this Standard for a law school to admit no more than 10% of an entering class without requiring the LSAT from:
   (1) Students in an undergraduate program of the same institution as the J.D. program; and/or
   (2) Students seeking the J.D. degree in combination with a degree in a different discipline.
(b) Applicants admitted under subsection (a) must meet the following conditions:
(1) Scored at or above the 85th percentile on the ACT or SAT for purposes of subsection (a)(1), or for purposes of subsection (a)(2), scored at or above the 85th percentile on the GRE or GMAT; and
(2) Ranked in the top 10% of their undergraduate class through six semesters of academic work, or achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above through six semesters of academic work.

Standard 504. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE BAR

(a) A law school shall include the following statement in its application for admission and on its website:
In addition to a bar examination, there are character, fitness, and other qualifications for admission to the bar in every U.S. jurisdiction. Applicants are encouraged to determine the requirements for any jurisdiction in which they intend to seek admission by contacting the jurisdiction. Addresses for all relevant agencies are available through the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

(b) The law school shall, as soon after matriculation as is practicable, take additional steps to apprise entering students of the importance of determining the applicable character, fitness, and other requirements for admission to the bar in each jurisdiction in which they intend to seek admission to the bar.

Standard 505. GRANTING OF J.D. DEGREE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LAW STUDY

(a) A law school may admit a student and grant credit for courses completed at another law school approved by the Council if the courses were undertaken as a J.D. degree student.

(b) A law school may admit a student and grant credit for courses completed at a law school in the United States that is not approved by the Council if graduates of the law school are permitted to sit for the bar examination in the jurisdiction in which the school is located, provided that:

(1) the courses were undertaken as a J.D. degree student; and

(2) the law school would have granted credit toward satisfaction of J.D. degree requirements if earned at the admitting school.

(c) A law school may admit a student and grant credit for courses completed at a law school outside the United States if the admitting law school would have granted credit towards satisfaction of J.D. degree requirements if earned at the admitting school.

(d) A law school may grant credit toward a J.D. degree to a graduate of a law school in a country outside the United States for credit hours earned in an LL.M. or other post-J.D. program it offers if:
(1) that study led to successful completion of a J.D. degree course or courses while the student was enrolled in a post-J.D. degree law program; and

(2) the law school has a grading system for LL.M. students in J.D. courses that is comparable to the grading system for J.D. degree students in the course.

(e) A law school that grants credit as provided in Standard 505(a) through (d) may award a J.D. degree to a student who successfully completes a course of study that satisfies the requirements of Standard 311 and that meets all of the school’s requirements for the awarding of the J.D. degree.

(f) Credit hours granted pursuant to subsection (b) through (d) shall not, individually or in combination, exceed one-third of the total required by the admitting school for its J.D. degree.

Standard 506. ENROLLMENT OF NON-DEGREE CANDIDATES

Without requiring compliance with its admission standards and procedures, a law school may enroll individuals in a limited number of courses, as auditors, non-degree candidates, or candidates for a degree other than a law degree, only if such enrollment does not interfere with the ability of the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards and to carry out its program of legal education.

Standard 507. STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

A law school shall demonstrate reasonable steps to minimize student loan defaults, including provision of debt counseling at the inception of a student’s loan obligations and again before graduation.

Interpretation 507-1
The student loan default rates of a law school’s graduates, including any results of financial or compliance audits and reviews, are relevant in assessing the extent to which a law school complies with this Standard.

Interpretation 507-2
For a law school not affiliated with a university, the school’s student loan cohort default rate is sufficient if it is not greater than 10% for any of the three most recently published annual cohort default rates.

Failure to comply with Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, or having a student loan cohort default rate greater than the rate permitted by Title IV is cause for review of a law school’s compliance with the Standards. A school shall demonstrate that it has resolved all areas of deficiency identified in financial or compliance audits, program reviews, or other information provided by the United States Department of Education.
Interpretation 507-3
A law school has complied with this Standard if the university of which the law school is a part takes the steps described in this Standard.

Standard 508. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

A law school shall provide all its students, regardless of enrollment or scheduling option, with basic student services, including maintenance of accurate student records, academic advising and counseling, financial aid and debt counseling, and career counseling to assist students in making sound career choices and obtaining employment. If a law school does not provide these student services directly, it shall demonstrate that its students have reasonable access to such services from the university of which it is a part or from other sources.

Standard 509. REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

(a) All information that a law school reports, publicizes, or distributes shall be complete, accurate and not misleading to a reasonable law school student or applicant. A law school shall use due diligence in obtaining and verifying such information. Violations of these obligations may result in sanctions under Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools.

(b) A law school shall publicly disclose on its website, in the form and manner and for the time frame designated by the Council, the following information:

1. admissions data;
2. tuition and fees, living costs, and financial aid;
3. conditional scholarships;
4. enrollment data, including academic, transfer, and other attrition;
5. numbers of full-time and part-time faculty, professional librarians, and administrators;
6. class sizes for first-year and upper-class courses; number of seminar, clinical and co-curricular offerings;
7. employment outcomes; and
8. bar passage data.

(c) A law school shall publicly disclose on its website, in a readable and comprehensive manner, the following information on a current basis:
(1) refund policies;

(2) curricular offerings, academic calendar, and academic requirements; and

(3) policies regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education. The law school's transfer of credit policies must include, at a minimum:

(i) A statement of the criteria established by the law school regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution; and

(ii) A list of institutions, if any, with which the law school has established an articulation agreement.

(d) A law school shall distribute the data required under Standard 509(b)(3) to all applicants being offered conditional scholarships at the time the scholarship offer is extended.

(e) If a law school makes a public disclosure of its status as a law school approved by the Council, it shall do so accurately and shall include the name and contact information of the Council.

Interpretation 509-1
Current curricular offerings, for the purposes of Standard 509(c), are only those courses offered in the current and past two academic years.

Interpretation 509-2
A law school may publicize or distribute information in addition to that required by this Standard, including, without limitation, the employment outcomes of its graduates, so long as such information complies with the requirements of subsection (a).

Interpretation 509-3
A conditional scholarship is any financial aid award, the retention of which is dependent upon the student maintaining a minimum grade point average or class standing, other than that ordinarily required to remain in good academic standing.

Interpretation 509-4
Articulation Agreement means a formal written agreement between a law school and another accredited university or institution providing for the transfer of defined academic credits between the parties to the agreement.

Standard 510. STUDENT COMPLAINTS IMPLICATING COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS

(a) A law school shall establish, publish, and comply with policies for addressing student complaints.
(b) A law school shall maintain a record of student complaints submitted during the most recent accreditation period. The record shall include the resolution of the complaints.

**Interpretation 510-1**
A “complaint” is a communication in writing that seeks to bring to the attention of the law school a significant problem that directly implicates the school’s compliance with the Standards.

**Interpretation 510-2**
A law school’s policies on student complaints must address, at a minimum, procedures for filing and addressing complaints, appeal rights, if any, and timelines.
Chapter 6 - LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Standard 601. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) A law school shall maintain a law library that:

(1) provides support through expertise, resources, and services adequate to enable the
law school to carry out its program of legal education, accomplish its mission, and
support scholarship and research;

(2) develops and maintains a direct, informed, and responsive relationship with the
faculty, students, and administration of the law school;

(3) working with the dean and faculty, engages in a regular planning and assessment
process, including written assessment of the effectiveness of the library in achieving
its mission and realizing its established goals; and

(4) remains informed on and implements, as appropriate, technological and other
developments affecting the library’s support for the law school’s program of legal
education.

(b) A law school shall provide on a consistent basis sufficient financial resources to the law
library to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities of support to the law school and realize
its established goals.

Standard 602. ADMINISTRATION

(a) A law school shall have sufficient administrative autonomy to direct the growth and
development of the law library and to control the use of its resources.

(b) The director of the law library and the dean, in consultation with the faculty, shall
determine library policy.

(c) The director of the law library and the dean are responsible for the selection and
retention of personnel, the provision of library services, and collection development and
maintenance.

(d) The budget for the law library shall be determined as part of, and administered in the
same manner as, the law school budget.

Interpretation 602-1
This Standard envisions law library participation in university library decisions that may affect
the law library. While it is preferred that the law school administer the law library, a law library
may be administered as part of a university library system if the dean, the director of the law
library, and the faculty of the law school are responsible for the determination of basic law
library policies, priorities, and funding requests.
Standard 603. DIRECTOR OF THE LAW LIBRARY

(a) A law school shall have a full-time director of the law library whose principal responsibilities are managing the law library and providing information resources in appropriate formats to faculty and students.

(b) The selection and retention of the director of the law library shall be determined by the law school.

(c) A director of a law library shall have appropriate academic qualifications and shall have knowledge of and experience in law library administration sufficient to support the program of legal education and to enable the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards.

(d) Except in extraordinary circumstances, a law library director shall hold a law faculty appointment with security of faculty position.

Interpretation 603-1
Having a director of a law library with a law degree and a degree in library or information science is an effective method of assuring that the individual has appropriate qualifications and knowledge of and experience in library administration sufficient to support the program of legal education and to enable the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards. A law school not having a director with these credentials bears the burden of demonstrating that it is in compliance with Standard 603(c).

Standard 604. PERSONNEL

The law library shall have a staff sufficient in expertise and number to provide the appropriate library and information resources services to the school.

Interpretation 604-1
Factors relevant to the number and expertise of librarians and information resource staff needed to meet this Standard include the number of faculty and students, research programs of faculty and students, whether there is a dual division program in the school, any graduate programs of the school, size and growth rate of the collection, range of services offered by the staff, formal teaching assignments of staff members, and responsibilities for providing information resource services.

Standard 605. SERVICES

A law library shall provide the appropriate range and depth of reference, instructional, bibliographic, and other services to meet the needs of the law school’s teaching, scholarship, research, and service programs.
**Interpretation 605-1**
Factors relevant to determining whether services are appropriate under Standard 605 include the extent to which services enhance the research and bibliographic and information literacy skills of students, provide access (such as indexing, cataloging, and development of search terms and methodologies) to the library’s collection and other information resources, offer interlibrary loan and other forms of document delivery, produce library publications and manage the library’s web site, and create other services to enable the law school to carry out its program of legal education and accomplish its mission.

**Standard 606. COLLECTION**

(a) The law library shall provide a core collection of essential materials through ownership or reliable access. The choice of format and of ownership in the library or a particular means of reliable access for any type of material in the collection, including the core collection, shall effectively support the law school’s curricular, scholarly, and service programs and objectives, and the role of the library in preparing students for effective, ethical, and responsible participation in the legal profession.

(b) A law library core collection shall include the following:
   (1) all reported federal court decisions and reported decisions of the highest appellate court of each state and U.S. territory;
   
   (2) all federal codes and session laws, and at least one current annotated code for each state and U.S. territory;
   
   (3) all current published treaties and international agreements of the United States;
   
   (4) all current published regulations (codified and uncodified) of the federal government and the codified regulations of the state or U.S. territory in which the law school is located;
   
   (5) those federal and state administrative decisions appropriate to the programs of the law school;
   
   (6) U.S. Congressional materials appropriate to the programs of the law school;
   
   (7) significant secondary works necessary to support the programs of the law school; and
   
   (8) those tools necessary to identify primary and secondary legal information and update primary legal information.

(c) In addition to the core collection of essential materials, a law library shall also provide a collection that, through ownership or reliable access,
(1) meets the research needs of the law school’s students, satisfies the demands of the law school curriculum, and facilitates the education of its students;

(2) supports the teaching, scholarship, research, and service interests of the faculty;

(3) serves the law school’s special teaching, scholarship, research, and service objectives; and

(4) is complete, current, and in sufficient quantity or with sufficient continuing access to meet faculty and student needs.

(d) The law library shall formulate and periodically update a written plan for development of the collection.

(e) The law library shall provide suitable space and adequate equipment to access and use all information in whatever formats are represented in the collection.

Interpretation 606-1
The appropriate mixture of collection formats depends on the needs of the library and the law school. A collection that consists of a single format may violate Standard 606.

Interpretation 606-2
Reliable access to information resources may be provided through:

(a) databases to which the library or the parent institution subscribe or own and are likely to continue to subscribe and provide access;

(b) authenticated and credible databases that are available to the public at no charge and are likely to continue to be available to the public at no charge; or

(c) participation in a formal resource-sharing arrangement through which materials are made available, via electronic or physical delivery, to users within a reasonable time.

Interpretation 606-3
Off-site storage for non-essential material does not violate the Standards so long as the material is organized and readily accessible in a timely manner.

Interpretation 606-4
Cooperative agreements may be considered when determining whether faculty and students have efficient and effective access to the resources necessary to enable the law school to carry out its program of legal education and accomplish its mission. Standard 606 is not satisfied solely by arranging for students and faculty to have access to other law libraries within the region.
Chapter 7 - FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

Standard 701. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

(a) A law school shall have facilities, equipment, technology, and technology support that enable it to operate in compliance with the Standards and carry out its program of legal education.

(b) A law school is not in compliance with the Standards if its facilities, equipment, technology, or technology support have a negative and material effect on the school's ability to operate in compliance with the Standards; or to carry out its program of legal education.

Interpretation 701-1
In determining whether technology and technology support comply with this Standard, among the factors to be considered are:

(1) the hardware and software resources and infrastructure available to support the teaching, scholarship, research, service, and administrative needs of students, faculty, and staff of the law school;

(2) staff support and space for staff operations; and

(3) the law school's financial resources and overall ability to maintain and, as appropriate, adopt new technology.

Standard 702. FACILITIES

(a) A law school's facilities shall include:

(1) suitable class and seminar rooms in sufficient number to permit reasonable scheduling of all classes, skills offerings, and seminars;

(2) a law library that is suitable and sufficient in size, location, and design in relation to the law school’s programs and enrollment to accommodate the needs of the law school’s students and faculty and the law library’s services, collections, staff, operations, and equipment;

(3) suitable and sufficient space for staff providing support services, including student support services, to the program of legal education;

(4) office space for full-time faculty members that is suitable and sufficient for faculty research, class preparation, and faculty-student conferences; and suitable and sufficient space for part-time faculty members to conduct faculty-student conferences;
(5) facilities and equipment that meet all applicable health and safety codes;

(6) suitable and sufficient space for equipment and records;

(7) suitable and sufficient space appropriate for conducting any in-house clinical programs in a manner that assures competent and ethical representation of clients and meaningful instruction and supervision of students, including confidential space for (i) client interviewing, (ii) working on and discussing client cases, and (iii) security for client files;

(8) suitable and sufficient space for its students and faculty for quiet study and research; and

(9) suitable and sufficient space for group study and other forms of collaborative work.

(b) A law school shall provide reasonable access and accommodations to persons with disabilities, consistent with applicable law.

Interpretation 702-1
If all or part of the facilities are leased or financed, determining whether the law school is in compliance with the Standards includes a determination of the law school’s right to occupy and continue to occupy the premises, including its financial and overall ability to comply with the lease or financing terms; the duration, lease renewal terms, and conditions; and termination or foreclosure provisions.

Interpretation 702-2
A law school’s facilities should be under the exclusive control and reserved for the exclusive use of the law school. If the facilities are not under the exclusive control of the law school or are not reserved for its exclusive use, the arrangements must permit proper scheduling of all law classes and other law school activities.

Interpretation 702-3
In determining whether class and seminar rooms comply with this Standard, among the factors to be considered are: acoustics, sight lines, seating, lighting, temperature, ventilation, and available educational technology.