USC Gould Transfer LL.M. Students to the J.D. Program
Policies, Guidelines & Graduation Requirements

Eligibility and Admission

LL.M.-J.D. Transfer Eligibility

Students enrolled in an LL.M. program or who have completed an LL.M. degree at a U.S. ABA-accredited law school may apply to our J.D. Program as Transfer LL.M. students during the transfer application period. Applicants must be in good academic standing, without record of any academic policy violations.

Students who successfully transfer and complete the J.D. program will earn an LL.M. degree and a J.D. degree.

Applying to the Program

The admissions process is very selective. The applicant’s LL.M. and LL.B. grades and LL.M. class standing will be considered.

Applicants are required to provide the following materials:

✓ Personal Statement

Please include your personal, academic and professional background and your reasons for seeking a Juris Doctor degree. Limit to no more than three pages.

✓ Resume/CV

Please list any distinctions, honors, awards, publications, and activities on your résumé, but please do not submit copies of these award documents as attachments with your application.

✓ LL.M. Program Director Evaluation

Non-USC students must print the evaluation form and have the Director of your current LLM program complete the form and either upload it directly into LSAC or submit it by email to llm@law.usc.edu or by mail to: Graduate & International Programs, USC Gould Law School, 699 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90089. This form is available on the application on LSAC and through our LL.M. Transfer website at: http://gould.usc.edu/how/gip/transfer/appinfo.cfm. USC students are not required to complete this form.

✓ Post-Graduation Plans Statement

Please submit a 1-2 page statement that discusses your career goals and plans following graduation at USC Gould. You should include any offers of employment you have received and/or accepted and whether you plan to leave the U.S. following graduation. If your studies
are being sponsored by your current employer and/or you will be required to return to your current employer, please note that in your statement.

✓ **Optional Supplemental Statements**

Applicants may submit a 1-2 page optional supplemental statement on each of the following subjects:
- If you believe you were raised in an economically disadvantaged household please explain in a separate addendum.
- If you believe your performance in your LL.M. program does not accurately represent your past performance or future promise, please explain in a separate addendum.

✓ **Transcripts and Degree Verification**

Students who previously submitted their transcripts and degree verification through LSAC for their LL.M. program need not submit new documents. However, all students must obtain an official, sealed transcript from their undergraduate institution if they are admitted to the J.D. program, as we are unable to use the LSAC versions.

✓ **Official LL.M. Transcript**

Our office will provide the J.D. Admissions office with the unofficial transcript for USC students, and will send an official transcript when available. Non-USC students should contact their school’s registrar office.

✓ **Letters of Recommendation**

Non-USC students must submit two letters of recommendation, one of which must be completed by a professor of your LL.M. program (either full-time or part-time/adjunct is acceptable). Our office does not provide students with sample letters of recommendation. Please note that there is no specific format for a letter of recommendation. However, the letter should include the context by which the recommender knows you, positive qualities about you, and whether the recommender believes that you will succeed in the J.D. program.

✓ **TOEFL and IELTS Exams**

If you have taken the TOEFL or IELTS exams, you are required to report your scores to USC, which you may do through the LSAC application. Permanent residents of the United States and naturalized U.S. citizens are waived of the TOEFL or IELTS requirement.

If you have not taken either the TOEFL or IELTS exam and would like to request a Waiver, please submit your request as an attachment with your online application.
Financial Support Documentation

If admitted to the J.D. program, you will be required to provide financial support documents that show available funds of at least USD $81,854.00. U.S. citizens and permanent residents may be eligible for financial aid, and may work with our financial aid advisor.

LSAT Scores

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is not required. However, if an applicant has taken the LSAT exam, the LSAT score must be disclosed on the application form. Applicants are not encouraged to take the LSAT unless applying to other J.D. programs that require it.

Application Process

Application instructions and materials, including the application form, will be distributed from the Graduate & International Programs office. Although the Graduate & International Programs office coordinates the application materials, our office is not responsible for making the admissions decisions. Complete application forms and supporting documents must be submitted to the Graduate & International Programs office each spring by the designated deadline. **No materials should be submitted to the J.D. Admissions office.** Admitted students must enroll beginning in the fall and may not defer enrollment.

Credit for courses outside the Law School

Students enrolled in the program will be treated as Transfer LL.M. students to USC Gould. As Transfer LL.M. students, non-law courses and courses taken outside of USC Gould cannot be taken for J.D. credit. In addition, students cannot enroll in USC Gould dual degree programs, such as the J.D./M.B.A. dual degree program.

Certificate Programs

Transfer LL.M. students may enroll in the law school’s certificate programs (Business Law, Entertainment Law, Entrepreneurship and Technology or ADR Law), as long as they have not already completed that particular certificate program during their LL.M. studies. Students who have completed some of the certificate program courses, but did not earn the certificate during their LL.M. studies, may apply relevant courses toward the completion of the certificate during their J.D. studies. Students should note that certificate requirements are different for LL.M. students and J.D. students, which are detailed on the MyLaw Portal website.

Considerations while pursuing your LLM Degree, prior to applying to the LLM-JD transfer program

Students who are planning to apply to the LL.M.-J.D. Transfer Program at USC Gould should be advised that USC imposes a limit on the number of CR/D/F units that you may elect during your LL.M. program.

- Students may elect up to 20% of their total units to be graded on a CR/D/F or CR/NC basis.
  - For example, a student enrolled in 25 units during his or her LL.M. program can choose up to 5 units to be graded on a CR/D/F or CR/NC basis.
• The limit does not include courses that are only graded on a CR/D/F or CR/NC basis.
  o For example, if Legal Writing is graded only CR/D/F or CR/NC, those credits would not
count toward your 20% maximum.
• Students who attend LL.M. programs that do not provide numerical grades are exempt from this
requirement.
• For students who have graduated their LL.M. program prior to 2016 and do not satisfy this
requirement, please contact us to see whether you are eligible to apply.

Students admitted under our program may begin their J.D. studies only in the fall semester of the year
of their admission.

THE JD PROGRAM AT USC GOULD

Unit Requirements for the JD Program

Unit Minimum
Transfer LL.M. students must complete a minimum of 88 total units in law courses at USC Gould to
satisfy the J.D. degree. At least 35 of the total 88 units must be in upper-division numerically graded
courses.

Transfer Credit
USC Gould will grant each student up to 30 units in advanced standing credit toward the 88 unit
minimum for law classes taken toward the completion of USC Gould’s LL.M. degree. Any LL.M. transfer
credit will not count toward the required 35 units of upper-division numerically graded courses.

Note that, in accordance with ABA rules, advanced standing credit will not be granted for the following
courses: Introduction to the U.S. Legal System, Topics in American Law, LLM Legal Research, LLM Legal
Writing A and LLM Legal Writing B.

Students admitted to the J.D. Program must submit their complete, official USC Gould LL.M. transcripts
to the Law School Registrar for advanced standing credit review and will be notified of the units that will
be awarded toward their J.D. degree requirements. Students will have received passing grades in each
course considered for advanced standing credit. To obtain the J.D. degree from USC Gould, students
must then enroll in the units necessary to meet the J.D. graduation requirements as described herein.

Additional Course Requirements
In addition to the minimum unit requirements, students must complete the USC Gould course
requirements, the Practical Skills course requirement, and the Upper-Division Writing requirement,
described in further detail below.

Length of Program
Most students will complete the LLM-JD transfer program in 5 or more semesters.
The CR/D/F Grading Option

Understanding CR/D/F
Most courses at the Law School are graded numerically. Courses which are not graded numerically are graded on a CR/D/F basis; there is no “Pass/Fail” option. Some courses are graded exclusively on a CR/D/F basis; and some courses are offered to be taken on either basis at the student's option.

Grades under the CR/D/F option will be entered as CR (passing and satisfactory), 2.0 or D (passing but not satisfactory), or 1.9 or F (failing). Faculty may assign the grade of "D" to a student who does unsatisfactory work in the course or who does not complete the requirements of the course. Visiting students may not select the CR/D/F option.

Maximum CR/D/F Units
After completing the first year curriculum, a student may take a total of up to eight (8) units on the optional CR/D/F basis from among courses otherwise graded in the normal manner but for which the instructor has authorized this option. (Please review the course description to determine whether your course may be taken CR/D/F.) No more than four (4) such optional CR/D/F units may be taken in one semester. Courses offered exclusively on a CR/D/F basis do not count against the four and eight unit limits on optional CR/D/F grading.

Please note that courses taken as CR/D/F in the LL.M. program count towards your 8 unit maximum for the J.D. program.

Selecting CR/D/F
During the drop/add period (first two weeks of class), students may elect CR/D/F grading. To select the CR/D/F grading option, a student must complete the appropriate form in Room 104. As with all important documents, students should keep a copy of the form. The CR/D/F grading options cannot be elected via the Online Registration System.

Changing grading after Add/Drop
From the end of drop/add until the end of the seventh week of the semester, a student needs the instructor's approval to change the grading option. The petition to change grading to or from the optional CR/D/F must also be approved to ensure that it complies with unit requirements. In a course in which a graded mid-term exam is offered, petitions must be submitted prior to the mid-term. After the seventh week, permission to change the grading option will be granted only in exceptional cases, with approval of both the instructor and Dean of Students upon petition of the student setting forth the exigent circumstances that warrant CR/D/F grading.Exceptions to this deadline are rare.

Taking a CR/D/F Exam
Students are instructed at the time of the exam to mark on the front of the exam if they are registered for the course on a CR/D/F basis. These exam scores are not included with the numerically graded exams when the grades are normalized.
**J.D. Course Requirements**

Students will be required to complete the following first year courses during their second and third years at USC Gould. The only course listed below that **must** be taken in the second year of study is the two-semester Legal Research, Writing and Advocacy course.

- Constitutional Law (4 units)
- Contracts (4 units)
- Criminal Law (3 units)
- Procedure (4 units)
- Property (4 units)
- Torts (4 units)

**Legal Research, Writing and Advocacy (LRWA) (3 units in fall & 2 units in spring)**

For USC LL.M.s:

*If you did not take LLM Legal Writing:* Students are required to enroll in two semesters of LRWA during the first year of their J.D. studies on a numerically graded basis.

*If you took LLM Legal Writing A:* Students are required to enroll in two semesters of LRWA during the first year of their J.D. studies. The fall semester will be graded on a CR/D/F basis, and the spring semester will be graded on a numerical basis.

*If you took LLM Legal Writing A and B:* Students are **not** required to enroll in LRWA. However, students choosing to enroll in LRWA must take it in the first year, and will be graded on a CR/D/F basis.

**Legal Profession** (3 units)

Students who have completed LL.M. Legal Profession during their LL.M. studies will be waived from taking this required J.D course.

**Law, Language and Ethics**

Transfer LL.M. students are not required to enroll in Law, Language and Ethics.

The first-year courses listed above must be taken on a numerically graded basis. These first-year courses will not count toward the J.D. 35 upper-division, numerically graded unit requirement.

Students will take their remaining courses from amongst USC Gould’s upper-division course offerings. Note that Transfer LL.M. students who have taken Reviewing & Negotiating Business Contracts during their LL.M. studies should not enroll in nor will they receive credit for Contract Drafting and Negotiation during their J.D. studies.
The Practical Skills Course Requirement

All students must successfully complete at least one upper-division course providing instruction in professional skills generally regarded as necessary for the effective and responsible participation in the legal profession.

Students are not required to complete the course for a numerical grade. Specific courses that will satisfy the requirement will be identified in the materials made available to students prior to registration.

The following types of courses meet this requirement:

- Trial and appellate advocacy courses (e.g. Pretrial Advocacy, Trial Advocacy)
- Courses in alternative methods of dispute resolution (e.g. Negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolution, Topics in Alternative Dispute Resolution)
- Courses involving counseling, interviewing, negotiating, problem solving and factual investigation (e.g. Client Interviewing and Counseling, Counseling the Startup Company, International Arbitration, International Negotiation, Persuasion)
- Courses involving the drafting of legal documents (e.g. Contract Drafting and Negotiation)
- The Hale Moot Court Honors Program and Jessup Moot Court.
- Faculty-supervised clinical courses.

Adjunct faculty members and Lecturers in Law may teach courses taken to satisfy the skills course requirement. It is possible to take one course that satisfies both the skills course requirement and the upper-division writing requirement.

Upper Division Writing Requirement Rules

The ABA Standards require all students to complete one rigorous writing project after the first-year.

A student must prepare an original paper or legal brief under the supervision of a member of the law school faculty. The paper must reflect research, analysis, and writing sufficient in scope and quality in the opinion of the supervising faculty member to justify the award of a passing grade for at least two numerically-graded units of credit. Papers that will satisfy the requirement have been drafted, critiqued by the supervising faculty member, and then rewritten.

To satisfy the requirement the work must be the product of individual effort. However, with the approval of the supervising faculty member a jointly authored product produced for a clinical class may satisfy the requirement provided that the separately identifiable contribution of each student would otherwise meet the standards for completion of the writing requirement.
Courses taken outside USC Gould may not satisfy the writing requirement. Students enrolled in a Study Abroad program may not use papers written for credit at the foreign institution to satisfy the requirement.

Students may complete the Upper-Division Writing Requirement in a variety of ways: as a note for an honors journal, as a directed research project, as a term paper, as a brief for Moot Court, or as a brief for a clinical course. These options are discussed in greater detail below.

**Writing a note as a member of an Honors Journal**

Students receive one CR/D/F unit each semester for their staff work as members of one of the three honors journals. In addition, journal members will write notes that may satisfy their upper-division writing requirements. A journal member may write a note in one of four ways:

**In the context of a Fall semester seminar:** A student may write his or her note while enrolled in a seminar with a significant writing component during the fall semester. These seminars will be identified as such in the registration materials available to students prior to registration. A student may satisfy the Upper-Division Writing Requirement by writing a journal note in the context of a fall seminar.

- A student completing his or her note in the context of a fall writing seminar will receive three units of numerically-graded and normalized credit during the fall semester, and one unit of numerically-graded and normalized credit during the spring semester.
- Grades for the Fall will be based primarily on a paper (or note draft), but could also be based on other criteria set by the instructor including class participation, presentations or short papers. Faculty may set any deadline they deem appropriate for the paper on which the fall grade will be awarded as long as that deadline is no later than the final day published in the Academic Calendar for submission of papers.
- Grades for the Spring will be based on final note drafts due by the submission deadlines set by the journals.
- Students who enroll in a Fall seminar but later decide not to write a journal note on that topic may petition to switch to the regular section of that seminar until the 12th week of classes.

**In the context of a Spring semester seminar:** A student may write his or her note while enrolled in a seminar with a significant writing component during the spring semester. These seminars will be identified as such in the registration materials available to students prior to registration. A student may satisfy the Upper-Division Writing Requirement by writing a journal note in the context of a spring seminar.

- A student completing his or her note in the context of a spring writing seminar will receive four units of numerically-graded and normalized credit for the spring semester.
- A student writing in the context of a spring semester is expected to submit a final draft of his or her paper by the deadline set by the relevant journal. The student may continue to revise the
paper up until the deadline set by the instructor. This deadline must be no later than the final day published in the Academic Calendar for submission of papers.

- Grades will be based on the draft submitted by the journal’s submission deadline and the later revised draft (as well as any other relevant criteria set by the instructor including participation, presentations and/or short papers).

- Students working in the context of a spring seminar are expected to consult with the faculty member teaching the seminar in the fall semester, and begin planning the note. Students will not receive any credit for the fall semester, however. Students who complete substantial independent work in this regard will receive registration priority for the spring seminar.

**In the context of the Writing for Publication Seminar:** The Writing for Publication seminar is a two-semester course worth two numerically-graded normalized units in the Fall and two additional numerically-graded and normalized units in the Spring for a total of four units. A student may satisfy the Upper-Division Writing Requirement by writing a journal note in the context of the Writing for Publication Seminar.

- These seminars will provide a forum for students who wish to produce a paper for academic publication to receive guidance and feedback.

- Each section of this class will have a maximum of 20 students, but 3/4 of the seats in the class will be reserved for second-year students.

- If the instructor of the Writing for Publication seminar is not an expert in the subject matter about which a student is writing his or her note, the student will select a note advisor that the instructor and student will consult during the writing process. The Writing for Publication instructor will retain final authority to grade the student’s work.

**As independent study with a faculty member:** A student may write a journal note outside of the context of a seminar, yet under the direct supervision of a member of the full-time faculty. Students opting to write under these conditions will receive three units of CR/D/F credit. In addition, the paper produced will not satisfy the Upper-Division Writing Requirement.

**As a numerically-graded directed research project:** Any upper-division student may enroll in one CR/D/F unit of Directed Research under the supervision of a full-time or adjunct faculty member. This work will not satisfy the Upper-Division Writing Requirement.

- With the permission of the Dean responsible for academic matters, a third-year or LL.M student may enroll in up to four units of Directed Research for a numerical grade. Second-year students are not permitted to enroll in numerically-graded directed research projects. Interested students must submit a petition directly to the Dean prior to the end of the Add//Drop deadline published in the Academic Calendar. The following types of requests will be approved:
  - The student has a paper idea of sufficient quality that it could become a published article.
• The student would like to do a course of directed readings on an important topic not covered by the regular curriculum.

• Students completing the writing requirement with numerically-graded directed research are expected to produce 10 written pages per unit of directed research. Because these types of enrollments will be very rare, these grades will not be subject to the normalization policies.

**As a term paper for a seminar:** Students who are not members of one of the three honors journals are free to enroll in fall or spring writing seminars and the Writing for Publication seminar described above.

• Students who are not members of journals may enroll in the Writing for Publication Seminar for two numerically-graded and normalized units in the fall and two such units in the spring, identical to students who are members of journals.

• Students who are not members of journals must adhere to the unit values of the fall and spring semester writing seminars as they appear in the registration materials. This may differ from the number of units that journal students are able to receive for writing their notes in the context of a seminar.

• Students must submit the Upper Division Writing Requirement form to the Registrar to receive credit for the writing requirement. The form must be signed by the instructor of the course and the student must submit the form to the Registrar once a substantial portion of the course requirements are completed. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is delivered to the Registrar. Copies of this form are available in Room 104.

**As a brief for the Moot Court program:** Second-year students enrolled in the Hale Moot Court Honors Program are required to prepare a brief during the fall semester of the competition. This grade for this brief will be normalized in accordance with the grading rules applicable to classes with substantial writing components.

**As a brief for a faculty-supervised clinical course:** A brief for a clinical course may satisfy the writing requirement even if the course is not taken for a numerical grade.

• Students must submit the Upper Division Writing Requirement form to the Registrar to receive credit for the writing requirement. The form must be signed by the instructor of the course and the student must submit the form to the Registrar once a substantial portion of the course requirements are completed. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is delivered to the Registrar. Copies of this form are available in Room 104.

A student who has questions about whether a particular project may satisfy the requirement should contact the Registrar.
Legal Writing Fellows Program

Due to the fact that Transfer LL.M. students cannot make a two-year commitment following the completion of the required two-semesters of the Legal Research, Writing and Advocacy course, they are generally ineligible for consideration in the Legal Writing Fellows Program.

THE J.D. HONORS PROGRAMS

Honors Programs

The Law School hosts three journals: The Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal (ILJ), The Southern California Law Review (Law Review), and The Review of Law and Social Justice (RLSJ). The Law School also hosts one in-house Moot Court competition: The Hale Moot Court Honors Program. Each of these programs is considered an "Honors Program." Students who are selected may only participate in one honors program. Transfer LL.M. students are not eligible to become board members for any of the honors programs.

Applying to an Honors Program Transfer LL.M. students must complete two semesters of Legal Research, Writing & Advocacy prior to applying to an Honors Program. Please note that J.D. transfer students (not including Transfer LL.M. students) have the opportunity to write-on to a journal upon arrival to USC Gould as they will have completed Legal Research Writing & Advocacy in the first year of their J.D. studies at the school from which they are transferring, prior to their enrollment at our law school.

Application to the Honors Programs is determined by a “Write-On” or paper that students complete with a closed universe set of facts. The Write-On occurs at the end of the spring semester once students have completed their Legal Research Writing & Advocacy course.

Hale Moot Court Honors Program

The Hale Moot Court Honors Program, in existence since 1948, provides students with an opportunity to develop and refine their oral and written appellate advocacy skills. The selection process is based on the strength of each student’s oral and written work in the first-year moot court program. Students selected to participate write an appellate brief, attend an oral advocacy clinic, participate in numerous practice rounds, and present their arguments before judging panels composed of practicing attorneys from the local bar, state and federal judges, and faculty members. Participants are also required to judge the qualifying rounds for first year students during the spring semester. In March of each year, the Hale Moot Court competition culminates with oral argument finals which are judged by a particularly distinguished panel, often including federal judges. Successful participants of the Hale Moot Court competition may represent the Law School in national and state competitions in their third year.

The Moot Court program relies on full participation for all members for its continued success. Therefore, a student who enrolls in the program and later withdraws will receive a failing grade of “1.9”. The Program is administered by third-year students selected from participants in the preceding year’s program.
• Second-year law students selected for Moot Court will be registered in Hale Moot Court Brief (2 units) in the Fall. The law school will enroll you in these units after you accept your offer to join.

• Second-year law students will be registered in Hale Moot Court Oral Advocacy (1 unit) in the Spring. The law school will enroll you in this unit also.

• Third year students on the Moot Court Editorial Board must register in the Fall and/or Spring for Moot Court Supervision (3 units).

• In the Spring, third year students on the Moot Court national team must register for Advanced Moot Court Briefs and Advanced Moot Court Oral Arguments to reflect their participation in the Moot Court National Competition.

Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal

The Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal’s (“ILJ”) precursor was established in 1978 to reflect the Law School’s commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to legal scholarship. The numerous interdisciplinary institutes connected with the law school (e.g. the Center for the Study of Law and Politics, the Center for Communication Law and Policy, and the Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics) reflect this commitment. Consistent with the Law School’s interdisciplinary approach to the study of law, ILJ publishes three issues each academic year with articles and student notes. These issues reflect the relationship between law and various other disciplines including the social and physical sciences, philosophy, economics, business, and the arts.

The unique range of subjects addressed in each issue of ILJ exposes staff members to timely and interesting interdisciplinary scholarship while allowing students to refine their legal writing and editing skills. Students with interests outside the law may wish to incorporate those interests into their notes, making the research and writing process more enjoyable.

• Second-year law students selected for ILJ will be registered in: Staff (1 unit) in the Fall. The law school will enroll you in this unit after you accept your offer to join. Second-year students will also be registered in an additional unit of Staff in the Spring. The law school will enroll you in this unit after your Spring registration appointment time.

• Effective Fall 2012, second-year students will be able to earn up to four units for writing their journal notes. These units will be in addition to the Staff units that second-year students earn. Please see the description of journal notes listed in Section 3.5.1 of this Handbook for more information.

• Third-year law students must register for Editing (3 units) in the fall and spring for a total of 6 units. The law school will not enroll you in these units, you must register yourself via the Online Registration System.

Southern California Law Review

The Southern California Law Review, in existence since 1927, publishes one volume produced as six separate issues between November and September. Each issue normally contains several articles written by outside contributors, in addition to notes written by Southern California Law Review staff.
members. The Law Review strives to publish articles on a wide range of topics and to serve all segments of the legal community. In addition, most years the Law Review hosts a symposium in order to explore timely or controversial areas of law.

The Law Review has three main goals: first, to publish articles and notes of high caliber that advance legal scholarship and thereby aid in the resolution of contemporary legal problems; second, through the process of legal scholarship, to foster a sense of intellectual community and professional camaraderie among members of the Law Review and the faculty of the Law School; and third, to train students in the methods of legal analysis and writing.

- Second-year law students selected for Law Review will be registered in: Staff (1 unit) in the Fall. The law school will enroll you in this unit after you accept your offer to join. Second-year students will also be registered in an additional unit of Staff in the Spring. The law school will enroll you in this unit after your Spring registration appointment time.

- Effective Fall 2012, second-year students will be able to earn up to four units for writing their journal notes. These units will be in addition to the Staff units that second-year students earn. Please see the description of journal notes listed in Section 3.5.1 of this Handbook for more information.

- Third-year law students must register for Editing (3 units) in the fall and spring for a total of 6 units. The law school will not enroll you in these units, you must register yourself via the Online Registration System.

Southern California Review of Law & Social Justice

The Southern California Review of Law and Social Justice (RLSJ) promotes the discussion and examination of issues lying at the intersection of social justice and the law. RLSJ publishes legal narratives and analyses of case law and legislation that address the law's interaction with historically underrepresented groups and highlight the law's potential as an instrument of positive social change. These narratives and analyses borrow from the perspectives of a wide range of disciplines. The goal of RLSJ is to influence the development of the law in ways that encourage full and equal participation of all people in politics and society.

RLSJ was established in 1990 as the Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies. It initially provided a forum for the discussion and publication of feminist jurisprudence, but in the Spring of 2005 began the process of expanding its scope to encompass broader issues of social justice and equality.

RLSJ provides the benefit of journal experience to staff members and editors, including improved research, writing, and editing skills. Additionally, staff members who write outstanding notes may have the opportunity to be published in the journal.

- Second-year law students selected for RLSJ will be registered in: Staff (1 unit) in the Fall. The law school will enroll you in this unit after you accept your offer to join. Second-year students will also be registered in an additional unit of Staff in the Spring. The law school will enroll you in this unit after your Spring registration appointment time.
- Effective Fall 2012, second-year students will be able to earn up to four units for writing their journal notes. These units will be in addition to the Staff units that second-year students earn. Please see the description of journal notes listed in Section 3.5.1 of this Handbook for more information.

- Third-year law students must register for Editing (3 units) in the fall and spring for a total of 6 units. The law school will not enroll you in these units, you must register yourself via the Online Registration System.

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND DISQUALIFICATION**

**Additional Graduation Requirements for Students Whose Year-End Cumulative GPA is Below 3.0**

Any student whose year-end cumulative grade point average (GPA) is **below 3.0 but is at or above 2.7** after the first and/or second year is in good academic standing but must complete additional requirements to graduate. These requirements are described in detail below. The purpose of these requirements is to help the student focus on academic improvement and Bar passage.

For purposes of these requirements, a student’s **year-end** cumulative GPA governs, and not the cumulative GPA as of the middle of an academic year.

**Bar-Related Course Work:**
A student whose year-end GPA is below 3.0 after the first year must successfully complete the following Bar-related courses for a standard numerical grade before graduation:

- Business Organizations
- Community Property
- Criminal Procedure
- Evidence
- First Amendment
- Gifts, Wills & Trusts
- Remedies

The student is not permitted to select the CR/D/F grading option for any of these Bar-related courses. A student may elect to take the remaining Bar-related courses (Sales, Secured Transactions, and Partnerships & LLCs) and may select the CR/D/F grading option for those Bar-related courses only.

This requirement applies to all students whose first-year cumulative GPA is below 3.0, regardless of whether the student's second-year cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above. In other words, a student whose second-year cumulative GPA rises above 3.0 is still required to successfully complete the seven (7) Bar-related courses listed above for a standard numerical grade before graduation.

**Students with a GPA below 3.00 for the first time after the second year:** These students must successfully complete the following Bar-related courses for a standard numerical grade before graduation:
• Business Organizations
• Criminal Procedure
• Evidence
• Community Property or Gifts Wills & Trusts (although it is strongly recommended that the student take both courses)
• First Amendment or Remedies (although it is strongly recommended that the student take both courses)

Additionally, these students must enroll in the Early Bar Preparation program offered in the spring of the third year. This program is designed to introduce students to the logistical and substantive components of the California Bar examination. The student must attend all sessions and complete all course assignments in order to fully satisfy this requirement.

Course load maximum: A student whose year-end cumulative GPA is below 3.0 is not permitted to enroll in more than fifteen (15) units during each semester of the following year.

Externship units: Students who earn externship units during the summer must comply with these additional registration limitations:

• Students will receive credit during the fall semester for externship units earned in the summer if they register for those units in the fall.

• Summer externship credits cannot be applied to any semester other than the fall semester immediately following the summer in which the credits were earned.

• Students who want to receive fall credit for summer externship units may exceed the normal limit of fifteen (15) total units, up to a maximum of seventeen (17) total units, including externship units. For example, a student who earned four (4) externship units in the summer and who will be applying those units to the fall semester may register for up to thirteen (13) additional units of law coursework in the fall. This will bring the student's total units for the fall semester to seventeen (17).

CR/D/F Maximum: A student whose year-end cumulative GPA is below 3.0 is not permitted to enroll in more than six (6) total CR/D/F units each semester during the following year. This limit of six (6) total units restricts enrollment in any type of CR/D/F units, including courses that are graded CR/D/F, units earned during summer externships, faculty-supervised clinical courses, and courses that are part of the Academic Support Program. The limit on CR/D/F units is in addition to the general law school policies governing CR/D/F units, including the general policy that a student may not take more than a total of 8 CR/D/F units in upper-division courses for which numerical grading is available and may not take more than 4 of those 8 in any one semester.

Courses outside the law school: A student whose year-end cumulative GPA is below 3.0 is not permitted to enroll in classes outside USC Gould School or to enroll in a dual degree program during the following year. The student is also not permitted to audit classes in or outside the law school. This requirement applies to electives offered outside of the law school as part of the Entertainment Law Certificate or Business Law Certificate.
Required Participation in the Academic Support Program and Counseling:
A student whose year-end cumulative GPA is below 3.0 is required to participate in the Academic Support Program. The required participation includes: (a) a curricular component (enrollment in specific coursework); and (b) a co-curricular component (counseling and assistance regarding approaches to improving academic performance).

Curricular Requirements:
Evidence (fall semester) and Legal Analysis of Evidence (fall semester)

Co-Curricular Requirements:
A student whose year-end cumulative GPA is below 3.0 is required to conduct the following meetings:

- Two (2) counseling sessions with the Academic Support staff during each semester of the following year. The purpose of these sessions is to help the student with study and exam-taking skills. In some instances, the Academic Support staff may require additional meetings, which will be tutoring sessions tailored to address the student’s specific needs. A member of the Academic Support staff will contact the student early in the fall semester to discuss this requirement.

- Meeting with the Director of Academic Support or the Academic Support Counselor before registration to ensure that the student’s schedule complies with the enrollment policies. A student who is unable to meet in person with the Director of Academic Support or the Academic Support Counselor must make alternative arrangements to confer, either by telephone or other means. A student who ignores this obligation may lose his or her priority at registration.

- Meeting with the Career Services staff to determine the most appropriate ways to approach job-search activities given the student’s performance, career interests and need to devote significant time to improving his or her academic performance.

Limitations on Involvement in Co-Curricular and Non-Law Academic Activities: The intent of the following policies is to focus students on academics. To that end, the following rules apply to students participating in activities that require significant extra-curricular or co-curricular time commitments. The following limitations apply:

- **Honors programs:** A student whose year-end cumulative GPA is below 3.0 is prohibited from participating in an honors program (journal or moot court) during the following year unless the student confers with the Director of Academic Support or the Academic Support Counselor before agreeing to participate in the honors program, and submits a timely petition for an exception to this policy.

- **Leadership positions:** The student is strongly advised against holding a leadership position in any student organization or other extra-curricular activity without speaking with the Director of Academic Support or the Academic Support Counselor before taking on these added responsibilities.

- **Part-time employment:** The student is strongly advised against holding part-time employment during the academic year without speaking with the Director of Academic Support or the Academic Support Counselor before taking on these added responsibilities.
The Petition Process

A student who seeks an exception to an Additional Graduation Requirement must file a timely petition with Dean Robert Saltzman in Room 104. Dean Saltzman will review and accept or reject these petitions.

**Deadline:** All petitions must be submitted no later than the "Petition Deadline" noted in the Academic Calendar. It is a violation of law school academic policies for a student to ignore an Additional Graduation Requirement without first receiving approval of a petition for an exception to the requirement. Such violations jeopardize the law school's ability to certify the student for admission to the Bar. It is strongly recommended, therefore, that students file petitions at the beginning of the semester and not wait until the deadline.

**Applicability to policies:** The petition rules apply differently to three categories of policies:

- Policies for which petitions are required, and will usually be submitted and reviewed according to the procedure described above;
- Policies for which petitions are required, and may be submitted only if the student has a compelling or extraordinary reason for requesting an exception; and
- Policies for which petitions are not required.

**Category (1):** Students must submit a timely petition complying with the petition rules described in Section A, above, for exceptions to the following Additional Graduation Requirements. These petitions will be reviewed and approved or denied on a case-by-case basis in light of the student's individual academic situation:

- Completion of the seven (7) previously listed Bar-related courses for a numeric grade before graduation
- Completion of the Early Bar Preparation program in the spring semester of the student's third year
- Maximum enrollment in fifteen (15) units each semester
- Maximum enrollment in six (6) CR/D/F units each semester
- Enrollment in classes outside of USC Gould School, including dual degree programs
- Auditing classes in or outside of USC Gould School
- Participation in Honors Programs for students with GPAs at or above 2.8

**Category (2):** Exceptions to the following Additional Graduation Requirements will be granted only in unusual situations. Most requests for exceptions to these requirements will be denied. A student should
submit a petition for an exception to one of these requirements only if the student faces an unusual and extraordinary hardship or circumstance:

Required participation in the Academic Support Program, including enrolling in Evidence and Legal Analysis of Evidence; conferring with the Director of Academic Support or the Academic Support Counselor before registration each semester; and attending at least two (2) academic counseling sessions with Academic Support staff per semester

Prohibited participation in Honors Programs for students with GPAs below 2.8

Category (3): Petitions are not required for participation in holding leadership positions in any student organization or holding part-time employment. Students are strongly discouraged from participating in these activities and are encouraged to discuss involvement in these activities with the Academic Support staff.

Academic Disqualification

Automatic Disqualification: A student whose cumulative grade point average is at or below 2.6 at the end of the academic year is automatically academically disqualified.

An academically disqualified student is withdrawn from enrollment and is no longer eligible to take courses toward the J.D.

Presumptive Disqualification: A student whose cumulative grade point average is between 2.61 and 2.69 at the end of the academic year is presumptively academically disqualified, subject to immediate reconsideration by the dean of USC Gould or the dean’s designee.

In reviewing a presumptive disqualification, the dean or the designee may consider a written explanation by the student regarding problems that caused his or her grades to be low, and reasons to believe these problems have been resolved. The dean may choose to consult with appropriate members of the faculty and staff in making his or her decision.

Based on this information, the dean may decide:

- To reinstate the student in the program with a condition of completing the Additional Graduation Requirements set forth in Section 6.11
- To require that the student take a one year leave of absence to resolve the difficulties that caused the disqualification with a condition that the student complete the Additional Graduation Requirements upon his or her return to the law school
- To declare the student academically disqualified. In case of this last outcome, the student will be treated in the same way as if the student were automatically academically disqualified.
**Petition for Reinstatement after Academic Disqualification:** A student who is academically disqualified may petition to the Board of Review for reinstatement. Regardless of when the student petitions for reinstatement, the student is normally ineligible to continue his or her enrollment in the academic year immediately following the year in which the student was academically disqualified.

A student who wishes to petition for reinstatement must submit the petition no later than six (6) months after receiving official notice of his or her academic disqualification. A student petitioning for reinstatement bears a burden of showing a reasonable likelihood of academic success. If the Board grants the student's petition for reinstatement, the Board may require the student to repeat some courses, and to comply with all policies for students whose year-end cumulative GPA is below a 3.0 (see Section 6.11). The Board may place other restrictions on the student's enrollment.

A student who wishes to petition for reinstatement should file a petition that addresses three issues:

- Factors the student believes explain his or her poor academic performance;
- Changes the student has made that will lead to improvement in his or her academic performance; and
- How the activities the student has pursued during the intervening months relate to the student's preparation for returning to law school.

The petition should include all material relevant to the Board's decision. The student may appear personally at the Board hearing to respond to questions from the Board.

A vote by the Board to readmit a disqualified student is a final decision. A student may appeal a negative vote by the Board to the full law school faculty if either:

- The Board's vote on the petition was equally divided among the voting members; or
- At least four full-time faculty members move to put the matter on the faculty agenda, and state that they believe the student's request for reinstatement may have merit under the criteria for reinstatement decisions as described in this Section. For purposes of this provision: (a) “full-time faculty members” are all persons, other than student representatives, who have the right to vote on general matters at faculty meetings; and (b) of the four faculty members, at least one is a member of the Board and at least two have taught the petitioning student in a class.

**Academic Disqualification at the End of the Second or Third Year**

A student whose cumulative grade point average is below 2.7 at the end of the second year is academically disqualified and is ineligible to graduate, unless the student is reinstated (by petition as discussed above) and then raises his or her subsequent cumulative year-end grade point average to a level of at least 2.7.

A student whose cumulative grade point average is below 2.7 at the end of the third year is academically disqualified and is ineligible to graduate.

Students with questions about academic disqualification should contact the Dean of Students.
**Grades & Award of J.D. Degree**

The USC Gould J.D. degree will be awarded to students who meet the requirements described herein and on the basis of the grades achieved by the student during their course of study at USC. Students must carefully monitor their schedules throughout their J.D. studies to ensure that they are meeting these requirements.

On the USC Gould Record of Performance (RAP), the law school’s version of an unofficial transcript, the GPA will be calculated with only the grades earned in the J.D. program. However, on the official university transcript, the GPA will be calculated from a combination of the LL.M. and J.D. grades.

Additionally, Additional Graduation Requirements for Students Whose Year-End Cumulative GPA is Below 3.0, Academic Disqualification, and Top 10% decisions will be based on the GPA earned by students during the J.D. portion of their studies and not on the work taken during their LL.M. studies.

Coursework must be completed during the fall and spring semesters only. Credit toward Directed Research classes taken during the summer semester will only be granted if the class is taken to satisfy a CPT requirement.

Transfer LL.M. students will strive to complete all of their required coursework toward the J.D. degree within six semesters at USC Gould (two semesters of LL.M. studies and four semesters of J.D. studies). If necessary, they may return to USC for a seventh semester to complete their J.D. degree requirements.

**J.D. Career Services and OPT**

**Career Services**

*On-Campus Interview Program (OCI):* Transfer LL.M. students may participate in the On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program hosted by the USC Gould Career Services Office (CSO). CSO will provide information to Transfer LL.M. students about applying for OCI soon after their acceptance into the J.D. program.

OCI usually takes place during the first few weeks of each August, so Transfer LL.M. students interested in applying for OCI should plan to remain in or return to Los Angeles by then. Please note, since Transfer LL.M. admission is offered into the mid to late summer, students will be required to apply to OCI within a short window of time. The Graduate & International Programs and the Career Services offices will assist students in preparing their resumes and understanding the application instructions.

**Work Authorization**

*Optional Practical Training:* Transfer LL.M. applicants should apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) if they plan to remain in the U.S. between their LL.M. graduation and admittance to the J.D. program, or if they intend to remain in the U.S. if they are not admitted to the J.D. program. OPT will be cancelled and unaffected should students gain admittance to the J.D. program. Students will be eligible for one year of OPT after the LL.M. program OR the J.D. program, not both.
A new I-20 visa document will be issued for the J.D. program. A new visa is not necessary unless a student leaves the U.S. and the visa in his or her passport is expired. With the new J.D. I-20, students may remain in the U.S. during the summer between the LL.M. and the J.D. program as continuing students.

Curricular Practical Training: Transfer LL.M. students who will study on an F-1 student visa during the J.D. program must closely follow employment authorization rules related to their F-1 status. SEVIS rules require that students in F-1 status secure a work permit in order to work off-campus in the U.S. To secure the work permit, students in F-1 status must enroll in Curricular Practical Training (CPT), which is offered through the university’s Office of International Services.

As a part of CPT, and in order to be eligible to apply for permission to work, F-1 status students must be registered for a particular class which requires work off-campus or for a directed research unit under a supervising professor. While other schools on campus enroll their students in the university’s GRSC-596 internship course, the law school follows different procedures, so international J.D. students should NOT enroll themselves in any other course to satisfy CPT requirements.

Students who wish to apply for CPT must have been in F-1 student status for at least one academic year and must have properly maintained F-1 status each semester. Students must re-enroll for a new course to satisfy CPT requirements EACH semester/summer in which they intend to work. SEVIS limits work hours to 20 hours per week during fall and spring semesters and 40 hours per week during the summer. CPT does not interfere with students’ eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT) after graduation unless they have done a total of 12 months full-time CPT during their degree program. In this case, they would lose the option to do OPT. Amounts under the 12 months full-time do not cancel any portion of OPT.

The G&IP office works with the law school’s registrar to set up a special Directed Research section for international JD students who choose to accept a work offer. Participating students should note that the associated tuition and fees of any Directed Research classes is the responsibility of the student. The G&IP office assigns an adjunct faculty member to oversee all international J.D. Directed Research units, and enrolls each student in 1-unit of Directed Research during the semester. As a part of the Directed Research course, each student is required to submit a written project in connection with their work, which will then be graded on a CR/D/F basis. Students are required to contact the assigned faculty member directly for approval of a project topic – they may submit a written piece from their work, a reflection on what they learned during the work, or a project of similar nature.

Transfer LL.M. students who wish to work during the semester or summer must complete the law school’s CPT procedure, which will be announced via email to every international J.D. student each semester.

Please refer to the USC Office of International Service’s website for more information on the CPT application conditions and requirements: [www.usc.edu/student-affairs/OIS/Service/career/cpt.html](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/OIS/Service/career/cpt.html)

OPT after the J.D. Program: Transfer LL.M. students may be eligible for the one-year OPT visa extension if they are studying on an F-1 visa during the J.D. program. Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a benefit given to F-1 students who have completed a degree in the United States. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity to gain employment experience in a student’s field of study. OPT is approved by
the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and is applied for through the USC Office of International Services.

F-1 students have the opportunity to be granted one initial 12-month period per degree level. For example, one OPT period for a master’s degree, plus one for a doctoral degree. However, a student who earns two master’s degrees will only be given one period of OPT. Graduates who work on OPT are limited to 90 days of unemployment during their 12-month OPT period.

Please refer to the USC Office of International Service’s website for more information on the OPT rules and regulations: http://sait.usc.edu/ois/intl-students/f-1-employment/12-month-opt.aspx

OTHER INFORMATION

USC Publications

J.D. Student Handbook: The Student Handbook contains material relevant to the everyday life of students attending the USC Gould School of Law. This includes graduation requirements, enrollment options and the academic and non-academic policies which govern the activities of students at the Law School.

As noted above, some policies apply differently to Transfer LL.M. students. Students who do not review this Handbook carefully may be unaware of policies of particular interest or relevance to them. Each student is expected to be familiar with all of the information in this Handbook.

University Publications: Students are also strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with two publications of the main University:

-SCampus is the Student Guidebook for the main University. It includes a great deal of information about campus resources as well as the University’s rules and regulations. It is available online at http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/

- The USC Catalogue is the document of authority for all students, and is not superseded by this Handbook or publications produced by other academic units. The USC Catalogue is available online at http://catalogue.usc.edu/

USC Rules and Regulations

Students in attendance at USC Gould’s J.D. Program must abide by all the rules and regulations of USC. Please refer to SCampus as noted above.