



Boston University School of Law

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

This policy defines satisfactory academic progress for all Boston University School of Law students, including financial aid recipients, in the Juris Doctor (JD) program.

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the School of Law Registrar and, under certain circumstances, the Academic Standards Committee determines whether or not a student is maintaining satisfactory academic progress toward the achievement of their JD degree. The School of Law evaluates the satisfactory academic progress of each JD student on an annual basis.

The Academic Standards Committee is comprised of a faculty chairperson and two other faculty members. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs are ex-officio members of the Committee.

Federal regulations require that schools establish satisfactory academic progress standards. To be eligible to receive any type of financial assistance, including federal loans, all students at Boston University must meet all applicable academic criteria for their program. The Law Financial Aid Office does not impose any academic progress criteria beyond the regulations and policies established by the School of Law. In order to retain their financial aid, students are required to comply with all academic requirements for their degree program as stated in the Academic and Disciplinary Regulations for the School of Law. Students who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress must be informed of their status and may be placed on financial aid probation and dismissed for academic deficiency. The standards of satisfactory progress measure a student's performance which includes completion of required credits and coursework, the minimum required grade point average and the maximum time frame for completion of the degree.

Completion of Required Credits and Grade Point Average

All JD students must fulfill the following requirements:

- Complete at least two years of this study in residence at Boston University School of Law unless otherwise permitted by the Dean.
- Satisfy the upper-class writing requirement, the professional responsibility requirement, and the professional skills requirement. Beginning with the class of 2019, no single course can be used to fulfill more than one of these degree requirements and the professional skills requirement will consist of a minimum of 6 credits of experiential courses.
- Earn at least 84 passing credits (Class of 2016) or 85 passing credits (Class of 2017 and thereafter).
- Earn a final average of at least 2.3.
- Complete Business Fundamentals (effective for the Class of 2017 and thereafter)
- Complete the Lawyering Lab (effective for the Class of 2017 and thereafter)

- Complete the JD program in no more than five years from its commencement (including leaves of absence), and take at least 10 credits in each of at least four semesters.
- Remedial courses are not applicable at BU School of Law.

Regular attendance is expected in all courses and seminars for which a student is registered. A student who, without permission from the Dean or the Dean's designate, has not attended any of his or her classes in a four-week period will be administratively dropped from the School.

All First Year students must fulfill the following requirements:

- Pass all first-year courses, the first-year seminar, and the first-year moot court program. Effective for the Class of 2017 and thereafter, the First Year program includes the Lawyering Lab.
- Earn an average above 2.0 in the completed first-year program.
- Fail no more than six first-year credits.
- Retake any part of the first year program that the student fails during the subsequent academic year.

Students who earn a GPA of less than 2.0, fail more than 6 credits, or fail a retaken part of the first-year program will be dropped from the School and must petition for reinstatement under Article X of the Academic and Disciplinary Regulations.

All Second and Third Year students must fulfill the following requirements:

- Fail not more than five credits in courses and seminars taken during the second and third years.
- Register for at least 26 credits in any year, and no fewer than 12 credits or more than 17 credits in any semester, except as otherwise permitted by the Dean or the Dean's designate.
- Earn an average of at least 2.0 in second-year courses and seminars and earn a cumulative average, at the end of the second year, of at least 2.3
- In the second or third year, all students must pass one of the following: (1) a course in professional responsibility offered to JD students generally, (2) a course in professional responsibility offered in conjunction with the School's civil or criminal clinics, or (3) the School's legal externship program. Unless the Faculty directs otherwise, a student who fails a course or program listed above, but who is nonetheless in good standing, must take or retake a professional responsibility course offered to JD students generally at BU Law.

Students who fail to complete the above requirements will be dropped from the School and must petition for reinstatement under Article X of the Academic and Disciplinary Regulations.

Any student who, at the end of the third year, has failed to satisfy the requirements for the JD degree must petition the Academic Standards Committee with a specific proposal for completing outstanding requirements. The Committee will report the matter to the Faculty with a recommendation. Upon receipt of the Committee's report and recommendation, the Faculty may direct either that the students be dropped from the School or, where appropriate, that the student complete specified work to satisfy degree requirements.

Maximum Time Frame

Based on an evaluation of best practices by the School of Law faculty and administration, students must complete the JD program in no more than five years from its commencement (including any leaves of absence).

Notification of Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students who have not met the standards for satisfactory academic progress will receive written notification from the Law School Registrar's Office with copies to the Law Financial Aid Office and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Documentation of decisions concerning a student's status of satisfactory academic progress, probation, dismissal, appeal, reinstatement, or re-establishment of satisfactory academic progress shall be transmitted to the student and maintained in the student's academic file of the Law Registrar's Office.

Probation

Students who fail to meet academic progress criteria may be placed on financial aid probation for one payment period. Failure to improve one's academic standing by the end of the probationary period will result in the loss of financial assistance until the student has regained satisfactory standing.

The mere passage of time will not normally allow a student to regain financial aid eligibility. A student who is dropped for academic deficiency must petition the Academic Standards Committee for reinstatement, and the student must be reinstated to regain eligibility.

Students placed on financial aid probation may appeal that decision by providing a documented change in their academic record that enables them to meet the academic criteria for satisfactory academic progress or documented extenuating circumstances.

Appeals will be reviewed by the Law Financial Aid Office, the Law Registrar's Office, the Associate Dean of Students, and the Academic Standards Committee, as appropriate. All appeals may not be reviewed by all parties, but only those individuals necessary to confirm a student's satisfactory academic progress.

Appealing a Determination of Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

A student dropped from the School may petition the Academic Standards Committee for reinstatement.

- **Reinstatement of first- or second-year students dropped for academic deficiency.** First- or second-year students dropped for academic deficiency ordinarily will not be reinstated unless the Academic Standards Committee is satisfied that the deficiency resulted from serious illness or other compelling cause beyond the student's control.
- **Conditions of reinstatement for first- or second-year students.** First- or second-year students who are reinstated must retake any required courses they have failed. The Academic Standards Committee may place any other conditions on reinstatement that it deems appropriate.

- **Reinstatement of third-year students.** Students dropped from the School during the third year may be reinstated only by the Faculty. Petitions and supporting materials should be directed to the Academic Standards Committee. The Committee will report the matter to the Faculty. The Faculty may attach any conditions to reinstatement that it deems appropriate.

Withdrawal and Leaves of Absence

Under ordinary circumstances, a student who takes a leave of absence will not jeopardize their financial aid eligibility. Students who are facing personal difficulties may benefit from a leave of absence if remaining enrolled would harm their academic standing.

- **Withdrawal in good standing.** Withdrawal in good standing becomes effective only upon submission of an official withdrawal form to the Registrar, whatever the reason for withdrawal, and whether or not the student seeks leave to return. No student may withdraw in good standing until all obligations to the University have been paid.
- **Leaves of absence.** A student seeking a temporary interruption of study may request a leave of absence. In addition to any special conditions imposed, the following rules apply to all leaves.
 - *Length.* Leaves ordinarily will not be granted for periods longer than one academic year.
 - *Extension.* A student seeking to extend a leave must petition the Academic Standards Committee before the leave has expired.
 - *Return.* A student returning from a leave must inform the Registrar by the date specified in the letter approving the leave. A student failing to give such notice may not return for that semester without the Academic Standards Committee's permission.
- **Students who withdrew without leave to return or whose leave has expired.** Such students must petition the Academic Standards Committee for readmission to the School.

JD/MD in Law and Medicine

The JD/MD program requires that students complete degree requirements according to a schedule that does not apply to other dual degree programs, but is necessary to allow a student to satisfy the academic requirements of both degree programs within six years.

During the first three years, students are completing the first three years of the MD curriculum. Their academic progress is evaluated by the School of Medicine according to their policies for the first three years. For the fourth and fifth years, students enroll in courses within the School of Law. Over this period, students must fulfill the academic requirements expected of all JD students and will be evaluated by the School of Law.

During the sixth year, the student will spend one semester at the School of Law and one semester at the School of Medicine. While each school will continue to evaluate the student's academic progress toward the individual degrees, communication between the schools regarding the student's progress may be necessary.