

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

## *A Guide for Students Entering Their Second Year*

This guide is intended to give students who are entering their second year at Chicago-Kent the basic information they need in order to start planning the rest of their law school studies. If you have any questions about the matters discussed here, or any other academic matters, contact Dean Nagel by email (mnagel1@kentlaw.iit.edu) or stop by her office (320C).

### **FULL-TIME STUDENTS**

**Credits required to graduate:** All students must complete 87 credits in order to graduate. At least 64 of these credit hours must be in courses that require attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction. Clinical coursework counts toward the 64-credit requirement, but externships, extracurricular activities (including credits earned for participation in a law journal, moot court competitions, trial advocacy competitions, or as a Teaching Assistant), and courses taken in another academic unit (e.g., the Stuart School of Business) do not count toward the 64 credits.

**Required doctrinal courses:** You must take Constitutional Law in the Fall of your second year; there are several sections offered (you are not assigned to a specific section). If you did not take Legislation in Spring of your first year, then you must take it in the Fall of your second year (either the day or the evening section). In addition, you must take Professional Responsibility prior to graduation, but when you take it is up to you.

**Required Legal Writing courses:** There are three remaining Legal Writing requirements after the first year: Legal Writing 3, Legal Writing 4, and a seminar. You must take Legal Writing 3 and Legal Writing 4 in your second year. Most full-time students will take Legal Writing 3 in the Fall, and Legal Writing 4 in the Spring, but there are some exceptions. (*Note:* Legal Writing 3 is not a prerequisite for Legal Writing 4.) Certain activities qualify students to opt out of taking a regular Legal Writing 4 class (they will take a Legal Writing 4 Equivalency class instead). ***For detailed information about these classes, including Legal Writing 4 Equivalency, see the separate section on Legal Writing later in this guide.***

For the seminar requirement, you must have completed both 54 credit hours and Legal Writing 4 prior to taking a seminar in order for the seminar to count for the seminar graduation requirement. (You may take a seminar prior to that point, but you would have to take another one later, after satisfying the 54 credit hour and Legal Writing 4 prerequisites.) You may also satisfy the seminar requirement through Independent Research; see Dean Nagel for details if you are interested in pursuing this option. (*Note:* Even when done for seminar credit, Independent Research is worth only one credit, and is graded only pass/fail.)

**Experiential course requirement:** Students must complete a total of six credits from an [approved list of experiential courses](#). Most students will already satisfy four of these credits through the required sequence of Legal Writing 3 and Legal Writing 4. However, students who opt for the Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class (see below) should consult the list of approved courses to determine whether the qualifying activity counts toward the experiential requirement. Law Review does not count toward the requirement.

**Bar Exam Strategies:** Students who are in the bottom 25% of their class at the end of their second year are required to take Bar Exam Strategies in their final semester. Other students in their final year may take it if they wish, but are not required to do so. Students in the bottom 25% of their class may petition Prof. Crist (ecrist@kentlaw.iit.edu) for an exemption from taking the class.

**Minimum and maximum credits:** In your second year, you must take at least 12 credits each semester, and no more than 16 credits. In your final year, you can take as few as 10 credits each semester; the maximum remains 16 credits.

There is one exception to the maximum credit limitation: students selected for the Chicago-Kent Law Review or Moot Court Honor Society, and who wish to register for Law Review or Moot Court credit, may take 17 credits (contact Dean Nagel if this applies to you; we will have to manually increase your maximum credits in the system).

Credit hours for intersession classes (including Intensive Trial Advocacy 1) do *not* count as part of your regular semester course load for purposes of the maximum credit hour limitations, but we have to manually adjust your credits in the system to account for this. If taking an intersession course will put you over the maximum credit limit for your division, please contact Dean Nagel prior to registering so that your maximum hour limit can be adjusted in the system.

**Registration and Add/Drop:** There is an initial registration period for each semester, during which students may register for any course without regard for enrollment limits. We then close the registration system for a period of time to determine what classes are oversubscribed, and apply registration priorities to determine who will be allowed to remain in those classes. (Generally speaking, the closer you are to graduation, the higher your registration priority is.) In other words, the initial registration period is *not* conducted on a first-come, first served basis. As long as you register during the designated period, you will have an equal chance of being admitted to a class as other students within your registration priority group.

When the add/drop period opens, you need to check the registration system in order to see what classes you were admitted into. Once add/drop opens, you may add open classes without special permission through the end of the first week of classes; during the second week, however, you may add an open course only with permission of the instructor. You may not add a course after the second week of the semester.

You may withdraw from any course – except a required course, a clinical course, Law Review, Moot Court, or Intensive Trial Advocacy – at any time prior to the date of the final exam or final paper. There is no tuition penalty if you drop a course during the first two weeks of classes. You will *not* receive a tuition refund, however, if you drop a course after the second week of classes. You may withdraw from a clinical course at any time prior to the end of the eighth week of classes during a regular semester and prior to the end of the fourth week of classes during a Summer session.

**Registering for courses not in your division:** You must take at least half of your credit hours each semester in the division (day or evening) in which you are enrolled. Courses offered only at 4:00 p.m. are considered both day *and* evening courses for purposes of this rule.

**Intensive Trial Advocacy 1:** We offer two sessions each year of this course, which is a one-week intensive version of the regular Trial Advocacy 1 class. Registration for the August session takes place as part of Fall registration; registration for the January session takes place as part of Spring registration. *Note:* You must have completed Evidence in order to take Trial Advocacy 1 (either the regular or intensive version).

**Pass/fail limitations:** There are two different types of pass/fail limitations: one for classes “elected” pass/fail; and one for clinical classes.

*Pass/fail election:* Students may elect up to 6 credits pass/fail during their entire time at Chicago-Kent. This pass/fail election applies to upper-level elective courses that normally are letter-graded; classes that are *only* offered pass/fail do not count toward this 6 credit limit. The following classes may *not* be elected pass/fail: (1) required courses, including Professional Responsibility; (2) seminars, whether or not being taken to fulfill the graduation seminar requirement; (3) courses that have been designated by instructors as ineligible for the pass/fail election (these courses are indicated on each semester’s schedule of classes); (4) courses that are graded *only* on a pass/fail basis (as noted above), such as clinical courses, Moot Court, and Law Review; (5) LL.M. courses; (6) Trial Advocacy and Appellate Advocacy courses; and (7) courses taken to fulfill the requirements of any certificate program. Registration for pass/fail opens shortly before the start of each semester (keep your eye on Dean Nagel’s section of the *Record*). A student taking a course on a pass/fail basis must earn at least a C to receive a P (Pass). If you pass the course but fail to earn at least a C, you will receive a grade of LP (Low Pass).

*Clinic limitation:* You may receive no more than 24 credit hours toward graduation for clinical courses and externships combined.

**Work limitation:** An upper-level student, whether full-time or part-time, may not be employed for more than 20 hours per week during any semester in which the student is taking 14 or more credits.

## **PART-TIME STUDENTS**

**Credits required to graduate:** All students must complete 87 credits in order to graduate. All students must complete 87 credits in order to graduate. At least 64 of these credit hours must be in courses that require attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction. Clinical coursework counts toward the 64-credit requirement, but externships, extracurricular activities (including credits earned for participation in a law journal, moot court competitions, trial advocacy competitions, or as a Teaching Assistant), and courses taken in another academic unit (e.g., the Stuart School of Business) do not count toward the 64 credits.

**Required doctrinal courses (evening students):** You must take Civil Procedure, Legislation, and Professional Development and Identity in the Fall of your second year, and Constitutional Law in Spring of your second year. In addition, you must take Professional Responsibility prior to graduation, but when you take it is up to you.

**Required doctrinal courses (part-time day students):** You must take Contracts and Constitutional Law in Fall of your second year, and Legislation in Spring of your second year. In addition, you must take Professional Responsibility prior to graduation, but when you take it is up to you.

**Required Legal Writing courses:** There are three remaining Legal Writing requirements after the first year: Legal Writing 3, Legal Writing 4, and a seminar. You are required to take Legal Writing 3 and Legal Writing 4 during your second and third years. Legal Writing 3 is *not* a prerequisite for taking Legal Writing 4; part-time students may take them in either order. Certain activities qualify students to opt out of taking a regular Legal Writing 4 class (they will take a Legal Writing 4 Equivalency class instead). ***For detailed information about these classes, including Legal Writing 4 Equivalency, see the separate section on Legal Writing later in this guide.***

For the seminar requirement, you must have completed both 54 credit hours and Legal Writing 4 prior to taking a seminar in order for the seminar to count for the seminar graduation requirement. (You may take a seminar prior to that point, but you would have to take another one later, after satisfying the 54 credit hour and Legal Writing 4 prerequisites.) You may also satisfy the seminar requirement through Independent Research; see Dean Nagel for details if you are interested in pursuing this option. (*Note:* Even when done for seminar credit, Independent Research is worth only one credit, and is graded only pass/fail.)

**Experiential course requirement:** Students who began in Summer 2016 or later must complete a total of six credits from an [approved list of experiential courses](#). Most students will already satisfy four of these credits through the required sequence of Legal Writing 3 and Legal Writing 4. However, students who opt for the Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class (see below) should consult the list of approved courses to determine whether the qualifying activity counts toward the experiential requirement. Law Review does not count toward the requirement.

**Bar Exam Strategies:** Students who are in the bottom 25% of their class at the end of their second year are required to take Bar Exam Strategies in their final semester. Other students in their final year may take it if they wish, but are not required to do so. Students in the bottom 25% of their class may petition Prof. Crist (ecrist@kentlaw.iit.edu) for an exemption from taking the class.

**Minimum and Maximum Credits:** After your first year, you must take at least 8 credits each semester, and no more than 13 credits.

Credit hours for intersession classes (including Intensive Trial Advocacy 1) do *not* count as part of your regular semester course load for purposes of the maximum credit hour limitations, but we have to manually adjust your credits in the system to account for this. If taking an intersession course will put you over the maximum credit limit for your division, please contact Dean Nagel prior to registering so that your maximum hour limit can be adjusted in the system.

**Registration and Add/Drop:** There is an initial registration period for each semester, during which students may register for any course without regard for enrollment limits. We then close the registration system for a period of time to determine what classes are oversubscribed, and apply registration priorities to determine who will be allowed to remain in those classes. (Generally speaking, the closer you are to graduation, the higher your registration priority is.) In other words, the initial registration period is *not* conducted on a first-come, first served basis. As long as you register during the designated period, you will have an equal chance of being admitted to a class as other students within your registration priority group.

When the add/drop period opens, you need to check the registration system in order to see what classes you were admitted into. Once add/drop opens, you may add open classes without special permission through the end of the first week of classes; during the second week, however, you may add an open course only with permission of the instructor. You may not add a course after the second week of the semester.

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*Clinic limitation:* You may receive no more than 24 credit hours toward graduation for clinical courses and externships combined.

**Work Limitation:** An upper-level student, whether full-time or part-time, may not be employed for more than 20 hours per week during any semester in which the student is taking 14 or more credits.

## UPPER-LEVEL LEGAL WRITING REQUIREMENTS

Congratulations on mastering the basics of legal research, analysis, and discourse during your first year of law school! Now let's talk about the future, and the remainder of the legal research and writing requirements to graduate. And don't forget the other opportunities available!

**Legal Writing 3:** Full-time students must take Legal Writing 3 in the Fall of their second year, unless they qualify to take a Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class (described below) in the Fall, in which case you may defer Legal Writing 3 to the Spring. Part-time students may take Legal Writing 3 at any point during their second or third years. (*Note:* Legal Writing 3 is *not* a prerequisite for taking Legal Writing 4; part-time students may take them in either order.) Legal Writing 3 is a one-credit class, designed to introduce you to representing clients in a non-litigation setting, and to negotiating and drafting simple contractual agreements.

**Legal Writing 4:** Full-time students must take Legal Writing 4 in the Spring of their second year, unless they qualify for a Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class (described below). Part-time students may take Legal Writing 4 (or an Equivalency Class, if they qualify) at any point during their second or third years. Legal Writing 4 is a three-credit class designed to provide advanced research training, as well as to permit you to work with a lawyer who works in the particular area in which you choose a Legal Writing 4 section. There are Legal Writing 4 sections offered in Labor/Employment, Intellectual Property, Environmental Law, Civil Litigation, Estates and Trusts, and a variety of other subject areas.

**Legal Writing 4 Equivalency:** You may (but are not required to) register for a Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class in the Fall, in lieu of taking a regular Legal Writing 4 class in the Spring, if any of the following apply to you for the Fall semester: you are invited onto Law Review; you take Appellate Advocacy in the Fall as part of the Moot Court Honor Society program; you take Pretrial Litigation or Criminal Litigation 1 in the Fall; or you do a Judicial Externship in the Fall (or you did one in the summer term). If you take a Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class in the Fall, we recommend that you consider deferring Legal Writing 3 to the Spring semester.

In addition to the Fall sections of Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class, there is also one section offered in the Spring semester. Students who do a Judicial Externship in the Spring, or who take Criminal Litigation 2 in the Spring, are permitted to take the Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class in the Spring semester.

The Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class is designed to provide you with the advanced research training that you would otherwise receive in Legal Writing 4; the writing component of the qualifying activity (such as Law Review) will satisfy the rigorous writing experience you would otherwise receive in Legal Writing 4. The class meets only once in person (the rest of the course is conducted online) and carries no credit hours, and costs you no tuition. If you receive a "Pass"

for the course, as well as successfully complete the associated activity (Law Review, Appellate Advocacy, etc.), then you have satisfied the Legal Writing 4 requirement.

Please note that you are not required to take the Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class even if you participate in one of the qualifying courses our activities; you are always welcome to take a regular section of Legal Writing 4. But also note that you are required to take the Legal Writing 4 Equivalency Class during the semester in which you do the qualifying activity (with the sole exception of a summer Judicial Externship).

**Seminar Requirement:** Seminars are offered both Fall and Spring semesters; all students must take a seminar in order to graduate. You must have completed both 54 credit hours and Legal Writing 4 prior to taking a seminar in order for the seminar to count for the seminar graduation requirement. (You may take a seminar prior to that point, but you would have to take another one later, after satisfying the 54 credit hour and Legal Writing 4 prerequisites.) You may also satisfy the seminar requirement through Independent Research; see Dean Nagel for details if you are interested in pursuing this option. (*Note:* Even when done for seminar credit, Independent Research is worth only one credit, and is graded only pass/fail.)

### **Other Writing Opportunities:**

There are a variety of writing competitions you should consider if you are interested in a particular area of law; most of the competitions will accept (some actually prefer) a piece you have written for an advanced writing course or seminar. Writing competitions are published in the *Record*, but there are other competitions you may find on your own depending on your interests. Most of the competitions carry a cash prize; some include publication of the winning piece(s); and all look great on a resume.

There are a variety of publication opportunities open to students. Many bar journals and newsletters will accept submissions from students. Additionally, the Seventh Circuit Review Honors Seminar is offered every Fall here at Chicago-Kent. The papers you write for the seminar become part of our electronically published journal, the *Seventh Circuit Review*. Requirements for eligibility for the course can be found in the J.D. course descriptions.

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