Juris Doctor, J.D.

The Juris Doctor (J.D.) is a professional degree awarded by the College of Law. The University of Iowa College of Law is approved by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association.

The first year of the J.D. program offers the personal connection and attention students need to develop a strong intellectual foundation for legal thinking and writing. The College of Law has one of the lowest student-faculty ratios of any law school. Professors have an open-door policy, and they serve as models for the kind of highly collaborative, rigorously professional behavior that prepares students to serve as counselor to their clients. Students get intensive, individualized instruction from legal writing faculty; the College of Law is one of the few law schools in the nation with a full-time faculty dedicated solely to a student’s growth as a legal writer.

In the second and third years, students focus on the areas of law that most interest them, drawing from a rich menu of mainstream, specialized, and clinical courses. A wide array of opportunities provides experiential learning: moot court competitions, the Field Placement and the Clinical Law programs that allow students to take the lead with real clients, or allowing students to write for one of the four student-run scholarly journals. The Field Placement program, in particular, provides a wide range of placements for students still in law school. Students have worked in U.S. District Courts, legal aid centers, federal public defenders’ offices, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around the world. Students also may add distinction to their résumés by participating in study abroad or exchange programs.

Details about applications and admission to the program are available on the College of Law website.

Cocurricular Programs

Students enrich their course of study by participating in the college’s cocurricular programs, which include Moot Court, the Trial Advocacy Program, and four student-produced journals.

Moot Court

In the Moot Court appellate advocacy programs, students draft appellate briefs, build expertise with citation form, develop research skills, and strengthen their persuasive abilities through oral arguments.

Trial Advocacy

The Trial Advocacy Program is a student-run, faculty-supervised program in which students develop and refine skills used to prepare and try civil and criminal cases. The heart of the program is LAW:9060 Trial Advocacy, a 2 s.h. course taught by law school faculty, federal and state judges, and experienced trial attorneys. Students are on their feet during most class sessions, practicing the arts of jury selection, opening statement, direct and cross examination, introduction of exhibits, use of expert testimony, and closing argument. The course culminates with a full-scale trial—from the filing of pretrial motions to the rendering of a jury verdict—conducted by student co-counsel before a visiting judge and a jury of laypersons.

The Stephenson Competition is named after Judge Roy L. Stephenson, a U.S. District Court and Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals judge and a 1940 graduate of the College of Law.

Students who demonstrate superior ability in advocacy skills during the trial advocacy courses participate in a series of mock trials judged by local members of the bench and bar. Individuals selected from the competition represent the University of Iowa in the national trial competition.

Iowa Law Review

Since its inception in 1915, the Iowa Law Review has served as a scholarly legal journal, noting and analyzing developments in the law and suggesting future paths for the law to follow. Students have managed the review since 1935, editing and publishing articles by professors and students. To learn more, visit the Iowa Law Review website.

Journal of Corporation Law

The Journal of Corporation Law is the nation’s oldest and most cited student-published legal periodical specializing in corporate law. The journal’s scope includes antitrust, intellectual property, labor law, securities, taxation, employment discrimination, insurance, products liability, and regulated industries, as well as traditional corporate topics. Selected articles submitted by practitioners and academics are published in each of four annual issues. See the Journal of Corporation Law website.

Journal of Gender, Race & Justice

The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice pushes the boundaries of legal scholarship and theory in its focus on social justice issues. The journal hosts a symposium at the College of Law every other year, bringing together nationally renowned legal scholars and practitioners to discuss the relationships among the law and race, gender, sex, sexual identity, economic class, ability, and other identity characteristics. The journal publishes an annual volume of legal works that includes symposium papers, papers from conferences outside the college, and articles written by Iowa law students. To learn more, visit the Journal of Gender, Race & Justice website.

Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems

Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems (TLCP) addresses issues and problems that transcend traditional political boundaries, that are of interest to the international and comparative law community, and that are not commonly found in other journals and reviews. One issue takes the form of a symposium addressing specific topics; this issue has a guest editor who is a legal scholar noted for work on the symposium topic. The second issue is submission based. Every other year the journal organizes and sponsors a symposium on a contemporary international issue; past topics include climate change, the European Union’s sovereign debt crisis, and war crimes. For more information, visit the Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems website.

Requirements

To be eligible for a J.D. degree, a student must:

• meet the credit hour requirements;
• meet the length of study requirements;
• achieve a cumulative g.p.a. of at least 2.1;
• take and complete all required courses;
• satisfy the writing requirements; and
• satisfy the experiential course requirement.
First-Year Curriculum

The first-year curriculum emphasizes development of analytical skills, a sense of the role of legal institutions in society, and essential writing skills. Each course in the first-year curriculum shares these emphases and conveys substantive knowledge about a particular area of the law.

First-year students take the following courses.

**Fall Semester**
- LAW:8017 Contracts 4
- LAW:8026 Introduction to Law and Legal Reasoning 1
- LAW:8032 Legal Analysis Writing and Research I 2
- LAW:8037 Property 4
- LAW:8046 Torts 4

**Spring Semester**
- LAW:8006 Civil Procedure 4
- LAW:8010 Constitutional Law I 3
- LAW:8022 Criminal Law 3
- LAW:8033 Legal Analysis Writing and Research II 2
- Elective 3

The two-semester sequence LAW:8032 and LAW:8033, called Legal Analysis Writing and Research (LAWR), is designed to equip students with effective skills in legal analysis, writing and oral communication (oral advocacy), and research.

Second- and Third-Year Curriculum

Second- and third-year courses cover the range of specialties within the legal profession, allowing students to explore and follow their professional interests in a particular career specialization, to write for one of the school's four student-run scholarly journals, to pursue joint degrees in law-related graduate programs, or to simply obtain the widest possible exposure to the legal landscape.

All second- and third-year students must complete the following work.

- LAW:8280 Constitutional Law II 3
- One course on legal ethics
- Experiential course requirement
- Four writing units beyond the writing requirements of the first year

Joint J.D./Graduate Degrees

The College of Law and the Graduate College offer several joint degree programs in which students work toward the J.D. degree and a graduate degree concurrently. Students in joint J.D./graduate degree programs pay tuition at the College of Law rate if the tuition is higher for the J.D. program than for the graduate program. An exception is made for students who are not enrolled in College of Law courses or in other courses that will be applied to the J.D. degree during a fall or spring semester or a summer session. Joint J.D./graduate degree students are charged tuition at the College of Law rate for at least six semesters.