3-Year Academic Assessment Plan Cover Sheet

Assessment plans are due February 16, 2015
Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Law JD</th>
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<td>Department</td>
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<td>College</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>3/29/15</td>
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Contact Person for This Plan

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Please address the following items:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Plans must include a curriculum map showing which courses will address which learning outcomes. Examples can be found here: http://provost.unlv.edu/Assessment/map.html
- Which learning outcomes will be assessed in each cycle year (i.e., assessment timeline)?
- How will the learning outcomes be assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What is your plan for sharing the assessment results and acting on them (i.e., closing the loop)?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.
Student Learning Outcomes

1. Problem Solving – identifying and diagnosing a problem, generating alternative solutions and strategies, developing a plan of action, implementing the plan, and keeping the planning process open to new information and ideas.

2. Legal Analysis and Reasoning – identifying legal issues, formulating legal theories, elaborating and enhancing the theories, and evaluating and criticizing the theories.

3. Legal Research – working knowledge of the nature of legal rules and legal institutions, the fundamental tools of legal research, and the process of devising and implementing a coherent and effective research design.

4. Factual Investigation – familiarity with the skills, concepts, and processes involved in determining whether factual investigation is needed, planning an investigation, implementing an investigative strategy, organizing information in an accessible form, deciding whether to conclude the investigation, and evaluating the information that has been gathered.

5. Communication – communication designed to advocate or persuade; to advise or inform; to elicit information; and to establish legal obligations or effectuate legal transactions.

6. Counseling – familiarity with the skills, concepts, and processes involved in establishing a proper counseling relationship with a client, gathering information relevant to the decision to be made by the client, analyzing the decision to be made by the client, counseling the client about the decision, and implementing the client’s decision.

7. Negotiation – familiarity with the skills, concepts, and processes involved in preparing for a negotiation, conducting a negotiation, counseling a client about the terms obtained from the other side in a negotiation, and implementing the client’s decision.

8. Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedures - understanding of the potential functions and consequences of these courses of action in relation to the client’s situation and objectives; working knowledge of the fundamentals of trial-court litigation, appellate litigation, advocacy in administrative and executive forums, and alternative dispute resolution.

9. Organization and Management of Legal Work – familiarity with the skills, concepts, and processes required for efficient management, including appropriate
allocation of time, effort and resources; timely performance and completion of work; cooperation among co-workers; and orderly administration of the office

10. Recognizing and Resolving Ethical Dilemmas – familiarity with the skills, concepts, and processes necessary to recognize and resolve ethical dilemmas

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The law school curriculum requires students to complete eight foundational courses in the first year: Property, Torts, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law, Contracts, Constitutional Law, and two courses in Legal Writing. The courses in the first year curriculum assess each of the student learning outcomes in part, and successful completion of the first year courses is one indicator of successful attainment of these outcomes.

The law school’s elective courses and graduation requirements assess these learning outcomes with more precision and more rigor in the students’ second and third years. These elective courses are designed to provide students with both breadth and depth. Some students may choose to master a specific topic by taking a number of courses in one area. For example, a student may take multiple courses in environmental law, health law, business law, or litigation. Other students may take a variety of courses in different areas or complementary areas to prepare themselves for a more generalized practice. For example, a student might take health law, immigration law, and gaming law in preparation for a career in regulatory compliance. The upper level curriculum supports both curricular pathways, and the electives as a whole focus on learning outcomes one through five (though some touch on outcomes six through ten). The law school has adopted four graduation requirements that focus more directly on learning outcomes six through ten: (1) a professional skills requirement, (2) a capstone writing requirement, (3) a third legal writing course, and (4) a professional responsibility course. Last, we measure learning outcomes through performance on the Nevada bar examination.

(1) Professional Skills Requirement

Our Professional Skills Requirement assesses the Counseling, Negotiation, Litigation and Advanced Dispute Resolution, Organization and Management of Legal Work, and Ethics student outcomes.

All students must complete a professional skills course or courses, amounting to a minimum of two credit hours, before graduation. Courses should engage each student in skills performances that are assessed by the professor. Categories of courses include:

1. Any clinic
2. Any externship
3. Trial advocacy
4. Pre-trial advocacy
5. Mediation and Negotiation
6. Community Law (service learning core course)

(2) Capstone Writing Requirement

The Capstone Writing Requirement assesses the Legal Research and Written Communication learning outcomes.

The Capstone Writing Requirement can be satisfied by any analytical, intellectually rigorous law-related writing project that requires research, drafting, and revision. Examples of projects that could satisfy the Capstone Writing Requirement include: a critical analysis of legal work, a practice manual, a scholarly paper (including a journal note), a policy paper, or a substantial legislative drafting project. A project that satisfies the requirement must be supervised and approved by a full-time member of the Boyd School of Law faculty (including joint appointees) or, in the case of journal notes, must adhere to the journal’s supervision requirements.

The precise standards for each project (including length, number of drafts, single or multiple pieces, individual or group project) shall be determined by the faculty supervisor. In the case of a scholarly paper, the minimum level of rigor required is that normally associated with a paper of approximately 25 double-spaced pages exclusive of notes. In the case of another kind of project, the level of rigor should be roughly comparable to that standard. The faculty supervisor has the discretion to impose more rigorous standards for any project. The faculty supervisor may also require the student to submit a report from a plagiarism prevention service. Students are strongly encouraged to satisfy the Capstone Writing Requirement through enrollment in a seminar or other course that includes a writing component.

(3) Legal writing course

Each student must complete a third legal writing course, Lawyering Process 3, after the first year. Though the substantive coverage of each course varies from securities law to advanced advocacy to rhetoric and persuasion, the course provides another opportunity for students to master legal communication and research learning outcomes.

(4) Professional responsibility course

A required course in professional responsibility assesses the ethics student learning outcome.

(5) Performance on the Nevada Bar Examination
Performance on the Nevada Bar Examination assesses Problem Solving, Legal Analysis and Reasoning, Written Communication.

Closing the Loop

The law school tracks bar exam performance each year and our office of Academic Success analyzes the results and reports to faculty.

Our faculty Curriculum and Academic Standards committees periodically update the law school’s courses and academic policies in light of accreditation requirements, suggestions from faculty and students, and suggestions from the Vice Dean.

The Academic Success program meets regularly with students, informally and formally, to conduct both bar preparation and academic workshops. Student participation and performance in these workshops also help to inform curricular and academic policy decisions.

Going Forward

Our accrediting agency, the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, recently amended its Standards for Approval of accreditation. The Boyd School of Law, and law schools across the nation, are now adopting polices and procedures to adapt to the following amendments involving assessment and student learning outcomes:

Student Learning Outcomes are now adopted within the ABA Standards:

- Introduced student learning outcomes as output measures for the program of legal education, along with related Standards pertaining to the assessment of student learning, and the evaluation of the academic program, learning outcomes, and assessment methods.

- Standard 301(b): added a new requirement that schools must establish and publish each of the learning outcomes it seeks for its graduating students and for its program of legal education.

- Standard 314: added a new requirement that schools must apply both formative and summative assessment methods across the curriculum to provide meaningful feedback to students.
Office of Academic Assessment

- Standard 315: added a requirement that schools conduct ongoing evaluation of the program of legal education, learning outcomes, and assessment methods.