Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet

Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term

Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Juris Doctorate Degree</th>
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<td>Department</td>
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<td>College</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Daniel Hamilton</td>
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<td>Assessment Coordinator</td>
<td>Rachel Anderson</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>2/05/18</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they 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 was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

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.
William S. Boyd School of Law
2017 Academic Assessment Report – Juris Doctorate Degree

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete a Juris Doctor program at the William S. Boyd School of Law will be able to demonstrate.

1. Legal and Law Related Knowledge – Knowledge of specific areas of substantive law, legal theory, or legal procedure
2. Analysis and Decision-Making – Understand and develop solutions to legal problems
3. Policy Evaluation – Draw connections between specific legal issues and policy contexts or values
4. Professional identity – Responsibilities of lawyers to their profession and society
5. Writing – Written professional communication for a variety of professional purposes
6. Oral Communication – Using oral communication for a variety of professional purposes
7. Information Gathering and Processing – Obtaining and assessing information about facts, law, procedure, and people
8. Interpersonal Perspectives – Emotionally intelligent engagement, team building, collaboration, cooperation, and leadership
9. Client and Practice Management – Skills required to ethically and effectively manage ethical, professional, and business aspects of the legal profession

To provide transparency and increase students' awareness of learning outcomes, course-level learning outcomes are included in the syllabus for each course. Data on learning outcomes is collected at the beginning and end of each semester.

ASSESSMENT

The law school's curricular design incorporates formative and summative assessment of all of the Juris Doctor learning outcomes throughout the curriculum and in individual classes on an ongoing basis. Formative assessment is used in the form of in-class discussions, exercises, response papers, in-class presentations, and mid-term exams in individual classes. Summative assessment in the form of final exams, scholarly papers, legal briefs in individual courses.
Curricular Requirements

In addition to ongoing formative and summative assessment of the law school's learning outcomes throughout the curriculum, the law school requires students to fulfill certain requirements, each of which assesses multiple learning outcomes and together assess all of the law school's learning outcomes. In the first year of law school, the law school curriculum requires that students complete eight foundational courses: civil procedure, contracts, constitutional law, criminal law, property, torts, and two courses in legal writing. The curriculum also requires that upper-level students complete an additional course in constitutional law, courses in professional responsibility and evidence, a third semester of legal writing, and a capstone writing requirement prior to graduation. Together the required courses assess all of the law school's learning outcomes, including the development of extensive knowledge of law and the legal profession.

Elective Courses

In addition to assessment in the required first-year and upper-level courses, the law school's learning outcomes are assessed in elective courses via formative assessment in the form of in-class discussions, exercises, response papers, in-class presentations, and mid-term exams, and summative assessment in the form of final exams, scholarly papers, legal briefs in individual courses. Elective courses take many forms, including traditional lecture and seminar classes, legal clinics, trial advocacy, externships, law review, and competitions. Together the elective courses assess all of the law school's learning outcomes, including the development of extensive knowledge of law and the legal profession, activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise, and student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and appropriate high-level professional practice.

Course-Level Learning Outcomes

The law school collects data on course-level learning outcomes at the beginning of each semester and student achievement of those course-level learning outcomes at the end of each semester.

Course Concentrations

The law school curriculum also assesses student achievement of the law school's learning outcomes via course concentrations (dispute resolution; intellectual property; workplace law; and health law), which require completion of certain requirements to be recognized as completing a course concentration.

Law School Student Survey Engagement

The law school uses the Law School Student Survey Engagement (LSSSE) to assess student acquisition of a broad legal education. The LSSSE Survey is used widely in
legal education and is administered annually “to measure the effects of legal education on law students” at the law school level.

Bar Examination

The law school also assesses student achievement of the law school’s learning outcomes by looking at the success of students taking the bar examination, which is the state level examination required to acquire a license to practice law in a jurisdiction.

Performance on the Nevada Bar Examination

The Nevada bar examination cut score is still among the highest in the nation, even after the cut score was lowered in July 2017. While there was an uptick in bar pass rates across the country last year, maintaining a high cut score means that fewer graduates will pass the examination in Nevada. Nevada assigns the lowest percentage weight (33%) to the Multistate Bar Examination of all state jurisdictions. However, the essay scores are scaled to the MBE scores so that a weak group performance on the MBE depresses the essay scores and the pass rates for the state regardless of how well applicants perform on the scope and depth of the essay subject matter.

The commission for bar examination reform reported in the last assessment report continues its work and Dean Daniel Hamilton is still serving on the commission. Boyd School of Law continues to provide a series of bar examination workshops free of charge for all graduating students and alumni. These sessions are part of an integrated program to best prepare graduates for the bar exam. Additionally, faculty and staff mentor students studying for the exam to keep them on track for success. Several committees have formed in the last year and are collecting information and conducting analysis to see if there is curricular decision-making that will help students reach the program’s learning outcomes and pass bar examinations at higher rates.

Performance on the Nevada Bar Examination assesses legal knowledge, analysis and decision making, and legal writing outcomes. Eighty-one percent of first-time takers from the Boyd Law School passed the July 2017 exam compared to the 76% pass rate for all first-time takers.

Feedback from Members of the Legal Profession

The law school also assesses student achievement of the law school’s learning outcomes via feedback from alums, attorneys, judges, and other members of the legal profession.
WHAT WAS LEARNED

In the past year, we learned that the students could benefit from deeper immersion in the substantive area of evidence and greater skills specific to taking the bar examination.

HOW WE RESPONDED

This year the law school added evidence to the list of required courses. After trying a more informal mentoring program, the law school added a course specifically dedicated to developing the skills used on the bar examination.