

Rigorous Writing Requirement

(as amended October 8, 2009)

(as amended December 3, 2011 by silence per Wendy Parmet's email dated 11/27/11.)

(as amended January 25, 2021)

Each candidate for the degree of Juris Doctor shall, in their second or third year of study, submit to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs a copy of a piece of writing completed by the student and certified, as described below, as satisfying the "rigorous writing experience" requirement of A.B.A. Standard 303 (a)(2).

A. Standards

To be certified as a piece of rigorous writing, a student work product will ordinarily be:

1. a well written, carefully edited piece, which has been revised at least once;
2. reflecting relevant legal research, drafting, and/or analytic engagement with legal and/or scholarly text;
3. thoroughly and accurately documented; and
4. a minimum of 15 pages (3,750 words) in length. Students may satisfy this requirement with a portfolio of pieces (two to three) from a single course or co-op.

B. Certification

In order to satisfy this requirement, the piece of writing must be certified in one of the two following ways:

1. Course or Clinic Certification

a. A student who produces a piece of writing as part of a course, seminar, clinic, independent study, moot court, or similar experience may ask the professor teaching the course or clinic, or supervising the independent study or moot court, to certify that the student's writing is a competent piece of rigorous writing that meets the requirements of ABA Standard 303(a)(2).

b. To submit the piece of writing for certification, the student must complete the online [Writing Requirement Completion Form](#) available from Academic and Student Affairs and attach a copy of the writing for faculty approval.

2. Certification through Co-op

- a. A student who produces a piece of writing on co-op may ask their co-op supervisor or the attorney for whom the writing was produced to certify that the writing may be submitted to the school in fulfillment of the rigorous writing requirement without breaching any rules of confidentiality or inappropriately divulging attorney work product; that the writing was prepared by the student at the supervisor's request and was responsive to the assignment given; and that the writing was revised at least once in response to feedback.
- b. To submit the piece of writing for certification, the student must complete the online [Writing Requirement Completion Form](#) available from Academic and Student Affairs and attach a copy of the writing for supervisor approval.
- c. All writings originating from co-op and submitted in satisfaction of this requirement shall be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Faculty Review Committee by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs once certified by the co-op supervisor. After reviewing the writing submitted, the Committee, through one of its members, will communicate its decision both to the student and to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. That decision may be as follows:
- the writing is accepted as complying with A.B.A. Standard 303(a)(2);
 - the writing is not accepted, and the student is required to submit a revised writing or a different writing with a new certification in order to achieve compliance with Standard 303(a)(2); or,
 - the certification is accepted, but the writing requires amendment and improvement in ways and in accordance with a deadline (normally within one month) that will be specified by the Committee as it returns the paper to the student for revision.
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C. Appeals

A student who is informed by the Faculty Review Committee that their co-op produced writing does not satisfy the requirements set forth herein may appeal such decision to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. This appeal shall be on a form prepared by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs and shall be delivered to the Associate Dean no later than sixty calendar days prior to the student's intended graduation date. The decision of the Associate Dean either affirming or reversing the decision of the Committee shall be final.

D. Co-Authored Work

Co-authored work will be accepted in satisfaction of this requirement if the student submitting the work can identify a portion of the writing as solely or primarily their work, and if this portion standing alone would qualify as a piece of rigorous writing under the standards in Section A, above.

E. Submission Process and Timeline

The submission of a certified piece of rigorous writing is a requirement for graduation. A student must submit a [Writing Requirement Completion Form](#) to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs upon completion of a writing that the student believes meets the standard. Students who complete a writing before the beginning

of their intended final semester must submit that writing through the Writing Requirement Completion Form no later than the first day of their intended final semester. For example, students who believe they have completed the rigorous writing requirement and who intend to graduate in May must submit the Writing Requirement Completion Form and the completed writing no later than the first day of the spring semester. In the Writing Requirement Completion Form, the student must indicate whether the writing was (1) completed under the supervision of a faculty member, or (2) completed during co-op.

If the student has completed a writing under the supervision of a faculty member, the form will be sent to the faculty member for certification and to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

If the student has completed a writing while on co-op, the form will be sent to the listed co-op supervisor for certification and to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The Office of Academic and Student Affairs will forward the certified paper to the Chair of the Faculty Review Committee for review and approval. If the Faculty Review Committee returns the paper to the student for revision, the Committee will specify a deadline for completion of revisions (ordinarily, one month from the date the revision was requested). The student must submit any required revisions in accordance with the deadline.

In some circumstances, students whose intended final term is an academic semester may not be able to complete the rigorous writing requirement before the term begins. If a student's intended final semester is an academic semester, and at the beginning of that intended final semester they have not yet completed a writing meeting the rigorous writing standard, the student must complete a rigorous writing under the supervision of a faculty member. The student must submit a [Writing Requirement Plan Form](#) identifying the supervising faculty member no later than the Add Deadline of that semester. This form will be sent to the faculty supervisor for approval and to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The student then must submit the completed writing through the Writing Requirement Form no later than the last day of the exam period during the student's intended final semester. The form will be sent to the faculty member for certification and to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

F. Applicability

All students in the Class of 2005, and all students in subsequent classes, will be required to have a certified piece of rigorous writing on file with the Office of Academic and Student Affairs before they can be awarded a Juris Doctor degree. As amended in October 2009 these provisions apply to students in the Class of 2011 and subsequent classes.
