

Juris Doctor

Law Programs

The First-Year Curriculum

From your first day at KU Law, you'll be engaged in broad considerations of the role of law in society and specific training in legal research, writing and advocacy.

All first-year students take Lawyering Skills, a course that focuses on the skills and values of the legal profession. Faculty members with extensive legal experience meet with students in a traditional classroom setting and in small groups. By the end of your first year, you will have prepared a brief and argued a summary judgment motion.

The program includes a core curriculum of doctrinal classes. You'll learn Contracts, Constitutional Law, Property and other key subjects.

You'll also take one of your other required first-year courses in a small section of about 25 students. These small class sizes provide an informal learning atmosphere and encourage in-depth discussions and critical analysis.

Upper-Level Courses

A wide variety of courses are available to upper-level students, covering a broad range of practice areas from environmental law to international trade law. Many are seminars, simulation courses, or clinics. For curriculum guides to Business and Commercial Law; Civil Litigation; Constitutional Law; Criminal Law; Environmental, Energy and Natural Resources Law; General Practice; Intellectual Property Law; International and Comparative Law; Litigation; Media, Law, and Technology; Public Law; Tax Law; and Tribal Law, visit the Areas of Study (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/areas/>) section of the law school's website.

Within the context of their particular interests and career goals, the law school strongly encourages students to consider certain principles when selecting upper-class courses.

- First, students should develop core knowledge and essential skills during the second year by taking menu-required courses to lay the foundations for taking advanced courses in the third year.
- Second, given the importance of statutory law and regulatory systems to the modern legal system, students should take courses that focus on complex codes (including statutes, treaties or regulations) and familiarize them with administrative and regulatory systems, also preferably during the second year.
- Third, to provide perspective on the legal system and to be prepared to practice in the modern global environment, before graduation students should take at least one class that concerns a legal system other than the federal or state system in the United States.

To implement these principles, the law school encourages students to talk individually with their faculty advisors about particular courses.

Clinics and Field Placements

The KU law school was a pioneer in clinical legal education and today offers many clinics and field placements that expose students to the tasks and challenges faced by lawyers in practice. All law students have a chance to participate in at least one of the school's experiential learning opportunities. Acting under faculty supervision, students learn substantive

law, develop legal skills and learn professional values in actual practice settings.

- The **Criminal Prosecution Field Placement Program** gives students an opportunity to work with prosecutors in Kansas state district attorneys' offices as well as the office of the U.S. Attorney. They participate in nearly all phases of the criminal process, including trial work.
- In the **Elder Law Field Placement Program**, students work under the supervision of attorneys from Kansas Legal Services. Students assist seniors with a variety of legal issues, including income maintenance, access to health care, housing and consumer protection.
- The **Field Placement Program** provides students an opportunity to perform legal work under the supervision of a practicing attorney at approved governmental agencies, as well as nonprofit legal services organizations and nonprofit public national and international organizations.
- Students in the **Judicial Field Placement Program** serve as interns for state and federal trial judges. Under the supervision of a judge, law clerk or staff attorney, interns perform research, draft documents and observe courtroom proceedings to expand their knowledge of how our court systems operate.
- Students in the **Legal Aid Clinic** represent low-income clients under the careful guidance and thoughtful teaching of supervising attorneys. The clinic's caseload is divided into four general areas: a criminal practice for juveniles charged with crimes in Douglas County District Court; a criminal practice for adults charged with crimes and municipal violations in Lawrence Municipal Court; a civil practice to provide legal assistance for individuals seeking name and gender marker changes through the Douglas County District Court; and a civil practice that may focus on school discipline, mental health, race and educational equity, and other emerging matters.
- In the **Medical-Legal Partnership Field Placement Program**, the School of Law collaborates with two separate health systems — The University of Kansas Health System at KU Medical Center in Kansas City, and LMH Health in Lawrence. Cases may include health law, family law, housing law, elder law, public benefits law, disability law, and immigration law. Students enroll through the Field Placement Program.
- In the **Paul E. Wilson Project for Innocence and Post-Conviction Remedies**, students counsel and represent state and federal prisoners in appellate and post-conviction litigation in state and federal courts.
- In the **Tribal Judicial Support Clinic**, students provide research assistance in an array of projects ranging from tribal code development to drafting memoranda and orders.

International Study

The law school 2 formal study abroad (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/global-programs/study-abroad/>) programs for its students. They include:

1. A summer program in Limerick and Dublin, Ireland, in collaboration with the University of Limerick; and
2. A summer program in Istanbul, Turkey, in collaboration with Bahcesehir University.

In addition, KU law students can spend a semester taking law classes in Scotland at the University of Aberdeen or in Italy at the University of Trento through KU Law's exchange programs. KU history and law faculty members collaborate to sponsor a summer program in

Cambridge, England, focusing on legal history. This program is open to undergraduates and to entering law students before they begin their studies in the fall term of their first year. KU law students also may choose from numerous other ABA-approved summer study abroad programs.

Certificates

Certificate Programs

The law school offers eight certificate programs (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/certificates/>):

1. Advocacy Skills
2. Business and Commercial Law
3. Environmental and Natural Resources Law
4. International Trade and Finance
5. Media, Law, and Technology
6. Social Justice
7. Tax Law
8. Tribal Lawyer

Each allows students to focus on an area of law and develop expertise in it. The requirements for each program are in the Certificates (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/certificates/>) section of the law school's website. Students who intend to pursue a certificate program should complete the Declaration Form (https://kusurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_29o4EizEB6qoNWm/). The form deadline for your intention to pursue a certificate is **November 1st of your 3L year**, though you may certainly do so at an earlier point. If you fail to meet the requirements of the certificate by the time you graduate, you will not earn the certificate.

Advocacy Skills Certificate

Students who want to hone their skills in trial settings can complete the Advocacy Skills Certificate. You'll get a solid grounding in all aspects of litigation while gaining hands-on experience through a related clinic or field placement.

Business and Commercial Law Certificate

The Business and Commercial Law Certificate allows students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to begin a successful career as a business lawyer. The certificate offers a solid grounding in the basic principles of business and commercial law.

Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Law Certificate

The Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Law Certificate exposes students to the basics of a constantly changing area of practice. At the end of the program, students can address related issues wherever they arise.

International Trade and Finance Certificate

The International Trade and Finance Certificate permits KU Law students to specialize their studies in the areas of international trade, international business and international finance.

Media, Law, and Technology Certificate

The Media, Law and Technology Certificate focuses on legislative challenges, judicial decision-making and administrative policy in an era

increasingly shaped by information technology, global networks and the media.

Social Justice Certificate

The Social Justice Certificate allows students to deepen their knowledge and expand expertise in areas that intersect with social justice. Through courses and hands-on work, the certificate prepares students for a career that aligns with their values.

Tax Law Certificate

Students who complete the Tax Law Certificate are ready to meet the growing demand for attorneys with tax expertise. Courses cover the basic principles of taxation and finer points of tax law and practice, allowing students to develop the skills needed to build successful careers.

Tribal Lawyer Certificate

The Tribal Lawyer Certificate program is designed to ensure that law students aspiring to a career representing Indian nations have the skills necessary to appreciate and strengthen the unique nature of Indigenous tribal legal systems.

Joint Degree Programs

The law school offers 10 joint degree (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/degrees/joint-degrees/>) programs:

1. Business
2. East Asian Languages and Cultures
3. Economics
4. Health Services Administration
5. Indigenous Studies
6. Journalism
7. Philosophy
8. Political Science
9. Public Administration
10. Social Welfare

KU Law offers 10 joint degree programs that allow students to simultaneously pursue a Juris Doctor and an additional graduate degree. The programs allow students to complete two degrees in less time than it would take to work toward the degrees separately.

The law school is an integral part of the University of Kansas, the state's flagship research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU). That connection makes possible joint degree programs with a wide range of other professional schools and departments at KU.

Students must apply separately to the law school and the companion graduate program.

For more information on the joint degree programs and the requirements for each program, see the Joint Degrees (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/degrees/joint-degrees/>) section of the law school's website.

J.D. Degree Requirements

The degree Juris Doctor (J.D.) is conferred on candidates who have

- Completed a minimum of 90 credit hours;
- Achieved a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 (C);

- Taken and completed all required courses;
- Satisfied the “in residence” requirement;
- Satisfied the writing-intensive course requirements;
- Satisfied the experiential course requirements; and
- Completed all requirements within 5 years of initial enrollment (see Withdrawal and Readmission Following Withdrawal (<https://catalog.ku.edu/law/#regulationstext>) in the Regulations section of the law school's website).

Credit-Hour Requirement

Each student must complete a minimum of 90 credit hours. Coursework in areas other than law is subject to the limitation described under Coursework Outside the School of Law (<https://law.ku.edu/node/230/#outside-coursework>).

Classroom Instruction and Direct Faculty Supervision Requirement

Students must earn a minimum of 64 credit hours in courses that require attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction. Such courses include traditional courses requiring classroom attendance and other courses directly supervised by faculty, including live client clinics, simulation courses, independent research, and courses offered by the Law School in approved study abroad programs. Courses that do not qualify for the 64-credit-hour minimum include field placements, the law review or law journal, moot court and other competitions, and courses offered by other university departments or by foreign universities.

Grade-Point Average Requirement

During the semester in which the student attains 90 credit hours, he or she must have achieved a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 (C) in all law school work. Grades for courses taken in areas other than law are not computed in the School of Law cumulative grade-point average.

Required Courses

To qualify for the J.D. degree, a student must have completed satisfactorily the following:

- All first-year courses listed below
- Three menu courses from the following list:

Code	Title	Hours
Menu Courses (three required)		
LAW 892	Business Organizations	
LAW 881	Conflict of Laws *	
LAW 878	Criminal Procedure: Investigation	
LAW 908	Evidence	
LAW 909	Family Law	
LAW 845	Jurisdiction	
LAW 873	Commercial Law: Secured Transactions *	
LAW 996	Trusts and Estates *	

**Starting July 2026, these subjects will no longer be tested as foundational concepts and principles on the NextGen or Uniform Bar Examinations.*

Code	Title	Hours
Required by the time the student finishes 60 hours of law school credit.		
LAW 972	Professional Responsibility	

Upper-level required courses should be taken in the second year of law school. Waiting to take these courses until the third year may cause class conflicts between these required courses and courses traditionally taken by third-year law students.

First-Year Courses

Required First-Year Courses

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 804	Civil Procedure	4
LAW 809	Contracts	4
LAW 814	Criminal Law	4
LAW 806	Introduction to Constitutional Law	4
LAW 820	Lawyering Skills I	2
LAW 821	Lawyering Skills II	3
LAW 826	Property	4
LAW 831	Torts I	4
Total Hours		29

“In Residence” Requirement

The 90 credit hours required for the J.D. degree must be earned during a course of study in residence at the School of Law extending over a period of not less than 24 months. For more details, see Maximum and Minimum Load in the Regulations section.

Upper-Level Writing-Intensive Course Requirements

Each student must satisfy the Professional Writing-Intensive course requirement by successfully completing at least two professional writing courses that require students to submit a written work product directed to the lawyer's professional role. Such writing includes, but is not limited to, document drafting, written advocacy, correspondence, memoranda, judicial and quasi-judicial opinions, legislation, regulations, and policy analysis.

All written work must be of at least C quality to satisfy the Professional Writing-Intensive requirement.

Each student must satisfy the third required writing course by either taking a third professional writing-intensive course, or by meeting the Scholarly Writing-Intensive course requirement by successfully completing a course that satisfies the Scholarly requirement.

Professional Writing-Intensive Courses

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 856	Advanced Legal Research	
LAW 807	Appellate Advocacy	
LAW 881	Conflict of Laws (Non Writing Spring 2025)	
LAW 869	Contract Drafting *	
LAW 877	Corporate Governance	

LAW 838	Criminal Practice in Kansas *
LAW 828	Deals *
LAW 963	Energy Law and Policy
LAW 907	Estate Planning: Practice
LAW 914	Federal Indian Law
LAW 922	Higher Education and the Law Seminar
LAW 829	International Business Law Drafting
LAW 827	International Law and Literature
LAW 840	Kansas Supreme Court Research Practicum *
LAW 982	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Seminar
LAW 954	Legislation and Statutory Interpretation
LAW 957	Life of a Startup *
LAW 979	Patent Practice *
LAW 973	Practice of Privacy Law
LAW 970	Pretrial Advocacy *
LAW 895	Project for Innocence and Post-Conviction Remedies *
LAW 976	Public Policy Practicum *
LAW 985	Real Estate Finance
LAW 994	Special Topics: _____ (Freedom of Expression, Social Justice Lawyering)
LAW 948	Transactional Law Competition *
LAW 848	Writing for Law Practice

*Courses that can be counted as Professional Writing or Experiential Course credits, not both.

Scholarly Writing-Intensive Courses

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 864	Advanced International Trade Law	
LAW 871	Capital Punishment	
LAW 879	Comparative Law	
LAW 891	Elections and Campaign Finance	
LAW 904	Environmental Law Seminar	
LAW 876	Feminist Jurisprudence	
LAW 824	Global Challenges in Law, Agriculture, Development, and Ecology	
LAW 924	Independent Research (2 credits)	
LAW 934	Jurisprudence	
LAW 940	Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy I (2 semesters)	
LAW 937	Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy II (2 semesters)	
LAW 950	Law Review (2 semesters)	
LAW 805	Mass Incarceration	
LAW 980	Sex Crimes	
LAW 994	Special Topics: _____ (Fair Housing, Race & the Law, 8th Amendment)	
LAW 995	Water Law	

Experiential Skills Requirements

Students must satisfy the experiential course requirement by successfully completing courses from the following list that total at least 6 credit hours.

Below is a list of courses commonly offered for Experiential credit.

To satisfy the experiential skills requirement, the student must obtain a grade of C or better in graded courses and a grade of CR in courses graded Credit/No Credit.

- Note that not all of these courses are offered every year. Whether they are offered for Experiential, Professional Writing, or Scholarly Writing credit in a given semester is subject to change.
- Additional courses in these categories, beyond those listed below, may also be offered. Students are advised to review what is listed on the website prior to the start of the semester on the degree requirements page. (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/degrees/jd-program/requirements/>)
- While simulation courses will satisfy the experiential coursework graduation requirement, students are not limited to taking 16 credit hours, such as with clinic and field placement courses.

Experiential Courses

Code	Title	Hours
Clinics:		
LAW 952	Legal Aid Clinic	
LAW 895	Project for Innocence and Post-Conviction Remedies *	
LAW 998	Tribal Judicial Support Clinic	
Field Placements:		
LAW 890	Criminal Prosecution Field Placement Program	
LAW 901	Elder Law Field Placement Program	
LAW 894	Field Placement Program	
LAW 933	Judicial Field Placement Program	
LAW 936	Medical-Legal Partnership Field Placement	
LAW 825	Sixth Semester in Washington D.C. Field Placement	
Simulation Courses for Experiential Credit:		
LAW 857	Advanced Litigation	
LAW 860	Alternative Dispute Resolution	
LAW 868	Business Planning Seminar	
LAW 869	Contract Drafting *	
LAW 838	Criminal Practice in Kansas *	
LAW 828	Deals *	
LAW 859	Deposition Skills Workshop	
LAW 835	Due Diligence in Business Transactions	
LAW 959	First Amendment Advocacy	
LAW 927	Jury Selection	
LAW 840	Kansas Supreme Court Research Practicum *	
LAW 955	Legislative Simulation and Study	
LAW 957	Life of a Startup *	
LAW 800	Mediation and Negotiation Workshop	
LAW 801	Mediation Skills Intensive	
LAW 979	Patent Practice *	
LAW 970	Pretrial Advocacy *	

LAW 976	Public Policy Practicum *
LAW 948	Transactional Law Competition *
LAW 992	Trial Advocacy

***Courses that can be counted as Professional Writing or Experiential Course credits, not both.**

To satisfy the experiential course requirements, the student must obtain a grade of C or better in graded courses and a grade of CR in courses graded Credit-No Credit.

The law school website includes an updated list of all of the courses that satisfy the experiential skills requirement (<http://law.ku.edu/requiredcourses/>).

Course Work Outside the School of Law

A student who is not enrolled in a joint degree program may take up to 6 hours of graduate-level courses outside the School of Law for credit toward a law degree, provided the associate dean for academic affairs approves the course work in advance as relevant to the student's education as a lawyer. A student seeking credit toward a law degree for more than 6 hours of courses outside the School of Law must petition the academic affairs committee for approval. In such instances, the entire group of courses from outside the School of Law must be relevant to the student's education as a lawyer. A student must receive a grade of B or better to receive J.D. credit for any such graduate-level nonlaw courses. However, grades for such courses are not computed in the School of Law cumulative grade-point average.

A student in good standing may, with the advance approval of the associate dean for academic affairs, take law courses at another law school accredited by the American Bar Association. If the student successfully completes such courses, not more than 30 credit hours will be transferred and counted toward the 90 credit hours required for the J.D. Time spent at another institution will count as study in residence for the purpose of the "in residence" requirement, but grades in courses taken at the other institution will not be computed in the KU law school cumulative grade-point average.

A student at another law school accredited by the American Bar Association may apply for admission with advanced standing. If admitted, such a student may transfer not more than 30 credit hours of law course work completed successfully at the other law school toward the 90 credit hours required for the J.D. degree. Grades for course work completed at the other law school are not computed in the KU law school cumulative grade-point average.

For purposes of the two preceding paragraphs, a grade of C (or equivalent) or better is necessary in each course for which transfer credit is sought. In no event may a student count more than 30 credit hours earned at other law schools toward the 90 hours required for the J.D. degree.

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Acquire Knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law.
- Develop legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, professional skills, and written and oral communication in the legal context.

- Exercise proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system.