



COVID-19 PLANNING GUIDE AND FAQs

Updated April 27, 2020

ACADEMICS:

-GRADING-

Question: The Law School has gone to a Credit/No Credit system for the spring semester. What does this mean?

Answer: Simply put, a student will receive credit for a course if they receive a grade higher than F. In both scenarios, the credit/no credit determination will not impact a student's GPA. The Law Faculty made this consensus decision in order to minimize harm to all students during this crisis.

Question: Is there a grading curve? Does this mean that faculty will be forced to fail a certain number of students in each class?

Answer: No and no. The mandatory curve has been suspended for the spring semester in an effort to be as supportive as possible given the difficulties students are facing due to the remote learning environment. Faculty members will only assign "No Credit" designations to students earning the equivalent of a grade of F in the class.

Question: What happens if I receive a "No Credit" designation for a class?

Answer: If you receive "No Credit" for a class your GPA will not be impacted. A "NC" will appear on your transcript. If the class was a required course, you will need to take it again in a future semester. No credits are earned with a grade of "NC".

Question: How will the law school determine which students need to take Rules and Reasoning given the Credit/No Credit system?

Answer: In the past, first-year students were required to take Rules and Reasoning if they finished their first year with a GPA below 2.8. This year, to ensure the disrupted semester will not have a long-term impact on students' skills, the law school has broadened the GPA requirement so that any student at or below a 3.0 GPA will be required to take the course.

Question: How will Moot Court and Journal selection be decided without spring semester grades?

Answer: Moot Court, Law Review, and Law Journal have all been advised to take fall semester grades into account, while also emphasizing performance by individual students through the application process. This means that in certain circumstances, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may waive the GPA requirement for good cause.

Question: What about the upper-level writing requirement and experiential requirement? Will a grade of CR be satisfactory?



Answer: Yes. A grade of CR in the appropriate courses will satisfy the upper-level writing requirement and experiential requirement.

-DISMISSELS-

Question: Typically, first-year students would be considered for academic dismissal at the end of the spring semester if full-time, and at the end of the fall 2020 semester if part-time. What happens now?

Answer: Full-time students will be considered for academic dismissal at the end of the fall 2020 semester. Part-time students will be considered for academic dismissal with GPAs below 1.50 at the end of the fall 2020 semester and under 2.00 at end of the spring 2021 semester.

In addition, students will be required to meet with the Academic Standards Subcommittee before the beginning of the fall 2020 semester to discuss their risk of academic dismissal if: 1) they had GPAs below 2.0 at the end of the fall, 2019 semester; or 2) had GPAs below 2.25 at the end of the fall, 2019 semester and received one or more grades of NC in spring 2020.

Question: What about the mandatory repeat policy for required courses?

Answer: Students who receive a grade of NC in a required course this semester will have to repeat the course. For students who are *currently* repeating a required course, a grade of CR will satisfy the repeat obligation. Those who receive a grade of NC will have to repeat the course again. Previous grades received, as well as the CR/NC designation will both appear on the transcript. Receiving CR for a course will exclude the previous grade (below C-) from the GPA calculation (though there will be no repeat grade to average). Receiving a grade of NC, however, will mean that the previous grade will remain and will be averaged when the student repeats the class again.

-EXAMS-

Question: What will the exam process look like for the spring semester?

Answer: All exams will be administered online this spring. Faculty members were given the option of a 24, 48, or 72-hour TWEN take-home exam, or a timed ExamSoft remote exam. You should receive information from each of your professors regarding the type of exam you will have for your class, the length of time to take it, and the format (e.g. open source).

Question: I have a timed ExamSoft exam and my notes are on my computer. Will I be able to access them electronically?

Answer: It depends on what your professor decides on the setting for the exam. Faculty have three options: secure (this is the setting used previously when exams were on campus), non-secure, blocked internet (this setting allows access to your hard drive, but blocks internet access), non-secure (this setting allows full access to your computer and the internet). If you have questions, you may contact your professor to find out the setting they selected before the exam period begins.

Question: Does the Honor Code still apply to exams in the virtual environment?

Answer: Yes! Just like for in-person testing, students are bound by the Honor Code in the virtual environment. Students also have an affirmative duty to report the actions of others, such as cheating,



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plagiarism, collaboration, falsification or any other violation of the Honor Code. Alleged violations should be brought to the attention of the Assistant Dean of Students, Paul Manrique at pmanrique@ubalt.edu.

-LOGISTICS-

Question: Do I still have to attend class?

Answer: Yes. Faculty members have been instructed that they are still required to take attendance and track student participation, however, the law school will not issue any FA's (Failure due to Attendance) this spring given the unique and often unexpected challenges that students are facing at this time.

Question: What is happening with summer classes?

Answer: All summer classes are currently scheduled to be held online. The grading system will return to normal, i.e., letter grades and a mandatory grading curve.

Question: When will we be able to return to the law school and resume in-person classes?

Answer: The law school takes its directives related to reopening the building and resuming classes from the University System of Maryland. We are closely monitoring the decisions made by USM and any changes to the current status will be shared with all students and the university community by President Schmoke. We will also continue to do our best to share as much information as we have with law students through email, social media, and Virtual Town Hall meetings.

Question: Can I get back into the law school to pick up materials from my locker?

Answer: Yes. Access to the law school is restricted and must be arranged by contacting Katie Shifflett, Coordinator of Student Affairs at kshifflett@ubalt.edu, who will then coordinate with UBPD and try to arrange a time for you to get into the building. Access and hours are not guaranteed as staffing and availability of entry are limited during the shutdown.

TUITION AND FEES:

Question: Will we receive tuition and fee reimbursements from the law school for the spring or summer?

Answer: The law school is doing its best to advocate on behalf of law students, but the University, not the law school, makes determinations for the entire UB community, and the University receives its directives from the University System of Maryland. President Schmoke sent an email to all students on April 7th about fee reimbursement, stating that UB is following USM guidance to refund partial fees for this semester which should happen sometime on or after April 24th. He asked students to contact the University's Office of the Bursar with any questions regarding the refund they are due.

https://www.ubalt.edu/finance.../covid_fee_adjustment.cfm

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Question: I'm struggling financially due to the COVID-19 shutdown. Is there anything the law school can do to help me?



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Answer: Yes! The law school has established an emergency grant for students called the Hardship Urgent Grant (HUG). Students may apply for a one-time grant of \$500 to assist with exigent circumstances due to the pandemic. Grants do not need to be repaid and will be awarded until the fund has been depleted. Information about the application can be found [here](#) and the priority deadline is Wednesday, April 29.

BAR EXAM:

Question: When will the next 2020 Maryland bar exam be administered?

Answer: The Maryland State Board of Law Examiners (“MD SBLE”) will decide by May 22nd if the next 2020 bar exam will be on July 28-29th at the Baltimore Convention Center as originally scheduled or on September 9-10th at a location(s) to be determined.

<https://www.mdcourts.gov/ble>

Question: When is the application deadline for the next 2020 Maryland bar exam?

Answer: The application deadline remains the same at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20, 2020. Applicants are to complete all parts of the character questionnaire and intent to take the bar exam in the eBar online interface AND print out both parts with proper payment (by check or money order) and mail to the MD SBLE to be received by the deadline. Applicants are encouraged to use a traceable method of mailing.

Question: What if I can't obtain all of my documents (e.g., driving records, college transcripts) for my bar application?

Answer: Applicants to Maryland are required to attach (or send separately to the MD SBLE) certain documents to the bar application. If these attachments cannot be obtained due to COVID-19 closures, applicants are to indicate that they made a good faith effort to obtain the documents and should be aware of their continuing duty to update their application. This means that once an entity, currently unable to send required information, is able to do so again, the applicant must supplement their bar application.

Question: Where can I find information on jurisdictions other than Maryland?

Answer: Applicants are encouraged to contact Prof. Bordelon (gbordelon@ubalt.edu) for all admissions questions. Alternatively, the website of the National Conference of Bar Examiners (www.ncbex.org) has a page devoted to jurisdictions' bar decisions related to COVID-19:

<http://www.ncbex.org/ncbe-covid-19-updates/>

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

Question: I have a summer law clerk or post-graduate job, but I haven't heard anything from my employer. Do I still have the job? When will I know?

Answer: Given all the uncertainties presented by COVID-19, it is likely that your employer may not yet know whether they have a job for you, at least not with any certainty. Until the courts reopen in June,



many legal employers simply don't know whether they will have enough work for you to do. They also don't know whether they will have to continue teleworking. Until you hear otherwise, just assume that your employer will make all efforts to bring you on, but possibly with a delayed start date.

Question: I lost my summer legal job. What do I do now?

Answer: Many law students will be in a similar situation this summer, so you will not be at any competitive disadvantage. Do keep in touch with them as they could hire you back in the late summer or fall. When the courts reopen in June, some law firms and judges will need help to work through the backlogged cases. Keep monitoring the job board on Symplicity.

Question: Will the on-campus interviewing (OCI) program with the business law firms go forward?

Answer: Yes, but it will be held in January or February of 2021. This fall, the LCDO will offer programs to help you prepare, including a mock interview program. Aim to participate in both journal and moot court to build your resume and skills.

Question: I am about to graduate, but don't have a post-graduate job. How do I look for a job when we are in the midst of a public health and economic crisis?

Answer: Focus most of your time and energy this summer on preparing for the bar exam. Apply for current openings on Symplicity that don't require bar admission, including post-graduate judicial clerkships, see (<https://mdcourts.gov/careers/otherjobs>), as well as law clerk positions with firms and nonprofits. Contact the LCDO for help in putting together a job search plan.

COMMENCEMENT:

Question: What is the plan for Commencement for graduating students?

Answer: Given the shutdown, the 2020 spring Commencement ceremony originally scheduled for Monday, May 18th, has been cancelled. We are committed to hosting an in-person, live graduation event to honor our Class of 2020 students once we are permitted to do so. Although finalized plans will be announced as soon as available, this ceremony will most likely occur at the conclusion of the fall semester in December in order to accommodate both the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 graduates.

Question: How will graduating "with honors" be determined?

Answer: For those graduating in May 2020, honors will be assessed based upon student GPAs through the Fall 2019 semester.