

Faculty Advising
Quick Reference Guide
2022-2023

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¹ *Please note:* Nothing in this Guide is meant to suggest that faculty advisors must claim expertise in any or all the topics contained within. It is only intended to help advisors address common student questions and concerns and highlight existing resources. In many if not most instances, this Guide recommends that faculty advisors refer students to other persons, services, and resources to obtain the information or assistance they seek.

A. Advising Role and Responsibilities (Suggested Framework)

General objective: Support student success

1. Reinforce student agency over learning and professional development
2. Support learning and professional development
3. Model professional behavior and lawyering skills
4. Encourage help-seeking behaviors
5. Support student belonging*

The above is going to look different for everyone.

*Query: *Why do we care about students' sense of belonging?*

If for no other reason, we care about belonging because it improves students' overall educational experience.

- From [Berkeley](#)'s *Greater Good* magazine: Few factors in education have a greater impact on a student's educational experience than a caring relationship with faculty.
- From THE SLOW PROFESSOR (Maggie Berg & Barbara K. Seeber, 2016): Community – “intangible and fluid” though it might be – is one of the most profound incubators of student well-being, intellectual development, and sense of resiliency and hope. (See Ch. 4)
- From [Inside Higher Ed](#): When students from historically excluded or minoritized populations do not feel a strong sense of belonging on campus, it impacts how they integrate, perform and persist.

What behaviors support belonging? (From [Berkeley](#) and [MIT](#))

- Normalize challenges to belonging
 - Sharing a personal experience of a time we felt we didn't belong can be reassuring to students
 - We still want to remain mindful of the ways our advisees' experience differs from ours.
- Send simple check-in messages
- Remember and correctly pronounce students' names
- Provide timely and actionable feedback
 - Even critical feedback can promote belonging, so long as we affirm that we believe advisees can meet high standards and overcome obstacles
- Endorse hard work and effort over “brilliance,” “natural” talents, and grades
 - Promotes a growth mindset
- Consider broader social and cultural constructs inside and outside the classroom (e.g., race and gender constructs)
 - Validate students' experiences of these constructs
 - Consider whether our practices inadvertently exclude, isolate, or marginalize certain students and student populations

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B. Resources for Faculty Advisors

1. This Quick Reference Guide (with links to relevant pages on the law school's website)
2. Periodic reminders for advisee outreach and sample messages
3. Copies of PIF worksheets/checklists will be provided to advisors
4. Individual follow-up with students
5. Academic Success Program offerings

If you need anything else or have questions, concerns, or other feedback, please reach out to Professor Janice Craft.

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C. How to Access GradTracker

GradTracker is a very useful tool. You can use GradTracker to check your advisees' progress toward graduation requirements, view their enrollment history, and view their grades and GPA.

Students also have access to GradTracker.

General information about GradTracker can be found here:

<https://registrar.richmond.edu/registration/gradtracker/index.html>

Steps to access GradTracker:

There are at least a couple ways to access GradTracker. This is the simplest method I've seen:

1. Sign into Bannerweb
2. Click on the Faculty Services tab
3. Click on Advising Student Profile
4. Enter student name and select View Profile
5. On the Student Profile page that pops up, you'll see a link to GradTracker on left side of screen. Click it, and the student's GradTracker page should pop right up.

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D. How to Seek Reimbursement for Advisees' Meals

Law faculty advisors are allotted \$20 per advisee per year (note that it is per year, and not per semester).

Anyone that incurs these expenses can give their receipts to their AA for reimbursement.

Advisors will need to note that it is for an advisee meal and also list the names of the advisees in attendance.

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E. Link to Academic Regulations and Guide to 1L Year

The likelihood is high that the following two online resources contain the answers to any question a student (first-year students in particular) might pose.

Academic Regulations: <https://lawcatalog.richmond.edu/academic/index.html>

- Here, students can find answers to questions ranging from employment while attending law school to grade appeals, the Honor Code, Order of the Coif, exams, auditing courses, and withdrawal.

Guide to the First Year: https://law.richmond.edu/docs/first_year_guide.pdf

- This annually-updated resource contains information about attendance, how to prepare for class, study guides, academic success, financial planning, extracurriculars, and grading policies, among many other topics.

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A. Graduation requirements At-a-Glance

Total credits required to graduate:

- 87 credits
- Minimum each semester: 9
- Maximum each semester: 17

Trial advocacy (2cr) (Must complete this course in the Fall of 2L year)

- Graded P/F (Honors Pass is also available)
- Most if not all sections are taught in the evenings by our adjunct faculty

Upper-level writing requirement (ULWR) (2 or more credits)

- The ULWR refers to a paper that is written as part of an independent study or course of at least two credits, designated as ULWR on BannerWeb
 - The paper must constitute a major part of the assessment in course
 - More information about independent studies appears [below](#)
- The paper must be at least 5,000 words in length, not including citations

Professional Responsibility (Typically offered for 2 credits)

- Some students choose to enroll in a PR course during their 2L year because the Third-Year Practice Certificate requires that students have taken PR (along with Evidence, Criminal Law, and Civil Procedure). More information about the Third-Year Practice Certificate appears [below](#).
- Professional Responsibility is not required for students to sit for the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) but students often try to coordinate their MPRE test date so it occurs contemporaneously or just after they complete the Professional Responsibility course.
 - More information about the MPRE appears [below](#) (Section O).

Experiential credits (6 experiential credits are required to graduate)

- Experiential courses include externships, clinics, clinical placements, and simulation courses; BannerWeb designates the latter three course types with the labels LWXC, LWXP, and LWXS, respectively.
- Note: Students may count no more than 12 total credits from clinics (designated LWXC in Bannerweb) and externships (designated LWXP in Bannerweb) combined in calculating the 87 credits required for graduation.
 - The only exception is for students who have participated in the D.C. Externship; for these students, the limit is 19, not 12.

Writing in Practice (WIP) (Typically offered for 2 credits)

- Designated WIP on Bannerweb
- Students can find a list of WIP courses here:
<https://law.richmond.edu/academics/curriculum/index.html> (scroll down the page)

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A(i). Independent Study to satisfy ULWR

A student can register for an Independent Study in lieu of a course designated ULWR to satisfy the ULWR graduation requirement

- Independent Studies are a good fit for any student who is interested in writing on a topic that would not fit within a seminar and is well-organized and motivated
- Students must **apply** to enroll in an Independent Study.
 - Students are required to state why they need an Independent Study and cannot enroll in a seminar course
- Detailed information about Independent Studies, including a **step-by-step guide on how to enroll in an independent study**, can be found here:
https://law.richmond.edu/academics/curriculum/independent_study.html

Note: **To satisfy ULWR, a student must enroll in an Independent Study for 2 or 3 credits.**

- Generally speaking, each credit requires 2,500 words of work product, not including footnotes. Thus, a 2-credit Independent Study will generally require a 5,000-word paper and a 3-credit Independent Study will generally require a 7,500-word paper, not including footnotes.

Note: In calculating the 87 credits required for graduation, students may not count more than three credits from Independent Study

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B. Registering for Courses and Course Selection (Emphasis here on registration for the 2L year)

Please note these existing resources:

- The Dean's Office sends detailed instructions to students on how to register for courses.
- In March 2022, the law school hosted a **Course Registration Fair** to aid students with course registration.
 - The fair was a huge success and we will likely offer a similar opportunity to connect with students in the spring of 2023.
- The **law school's website**, repeatedly referenced below, offers a multitude of information and assistance with course registration.
- Students can seek advice from **Peer Mentors** and **Student Section Leaders**.

General guidance:

- **Some students choose to enroll in fewer credits (12-14 credits) in the fall of their 2L year** because they have new commitments that didn't exist during the 1L fall (*e.g.*, journal obligations, interviewing for summer employment, Moot Court, TAB, etc.)
- Our **website** offers tips on how to choose courses:
https://law.richmond.edu/academics/curriculum/choosing_courses/index.html
 - Notes special considerations for 2Ls, bar exam, and career considerations, etc.
- Guide to **choosing courses based on subject-matter interest** (*e.g.*, "Here are courses you should consider if you're interested in [environmental law, civil litigation, criminal law, etc.]"): https://law.richmond.edu/academics/curriculum/choosing_courses/planning/index.html
- General information on law school curriculum here:
<https://law.richmond.edu/academics/curriculum/index.html>
 - Lists generally available courses and describes some graduation requirements
- **Step-by-step instructions** on registering for courses:
<https://law.richmond.edu/academics/schedules/index.html>
 - As noted above, the Dean's Office sends detailed information to students about this process

Is your advisee interested in:

- pursuing a **dual degree**? Info here: <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/degrees/jd/dual-degrees.html>
- earning a **certificate of concentration** for Family Law and/or IP Law? Info here: <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/degrees/jd/certificates.html>.

What's a "**bar prep**" course and what courses might be particularly **helpful for the bar exam**, especially for at-risk students?

- Please see below (Section O) for a [list of subjects tested on the Multistate Bar Exam](#) and a [list of subjects tested on the essay portion of the Virginia Bar Exam](#)
- In the **2L year**, Prof. Emmy Reeve's **Agency and Partnership** course is a great bar prep course for all students, but especially at-risk students.
 - Prof. Reeves offers students *a lot* of individualized support and feedback
 - The Dean's Office will likely contact you if one or more of your advisees might benefit from the Agency and Partnership course

- In the **3L year**, Prof. Emmy Reeve's **Core Legal Concepts** and **Selected Topics in Virginia Law** serve as great bar prep courses, especially for at-risk students.
 - CLC works nicely as a prep course for any bar exam; STVL is geared toward students taking the Virginia bar exam.
 - The Dean's Office will likely contact you if one or more of your advisees might benefit from the CLC or STVL course
- Prof. Reeves also offers a **no-credit Supplemental Bar Study course for 3Ls**.

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B(i). How can a student enroll in an Independent Study?

See Section A(i), [above](#).

B(ii). How can a student serve as a Research Assistant?

A research assistant performs legal research, analysis and writing for a professor related to the professor's scholarly or pedagogical work. A student may choose to receive academic credit or pay for working as a research assistant.

Note: A student can earn as many research assistant credits as they like during their law school career, but may use **no more than 4 credits toward their 87-credit degree requirement**.

All questions and answers related to serving as a research assistant can be found on our website: https://law.richmond.edu/academics/curriculum/research_assistant.html.

B(iii). What is a Third-Year Practice Certificate and what does a student need to do to obtain one?

A Third-Year Practice Certificate allows a student to appear in court under the supervision of a licensed attorney. More details on the Third-Year Practice Certificate can be found here:

<https://law.richmond.edu/students/certificate.html>. So long as a student satisfies all requirements, they can begin using their Third-Year Practice Certificate **the summer between the 2L and 3L year**.

Students **must take the following courses** to obtain their Third-Year Practice Certificate and appear before a Virginia state court: criminal law, a procedure course, evidence, and professional responsibility. Students satisfy the first two requirements by taking criminal law and civil procedure in their first year. Students can satisfy the evidence and PR requirement in their second year. Students must have successfully completed four semesters of law school totaling at least 56 credit hours to obtain their certificate.

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C. Externships, Clinics, Clinical Practicums, and Study Abroad

Externships and clinics count toward the 6 experiential hours required for graduation (see [above](#), “Graduation Requirements At-a-Glance”).

Note: Students may count no more than 12 total credits from clinics (designated LWXC in Bannerweb) and externships (designated LWXP in Bannerweb) combined in calculating the 87 credits required for graduation. The only exception is for students who have participated in the Washington, DC externship; for these students, the limit is 19, not 12.

General information:

- The clinical and externship programs are open to second- and third-year students, although students must have their third-year practice certificates to appear in court.
- **Participation in clinical and externship programs requires application and approval by the Director of the specific clinic/externship.**
- The application process consists of (1) completing a basic online interest form, (2) submitting a resume, and (3) interviewing with the director of the clinic(s) or externship in which you wish to participate.
 - Some clinics require students to complete certain courses before enrolling in the clinic. Students should visit the individual clinic webpages to see specific requirements. Links to webpages appear below.
- The online application date will be announced after the Dean’s Office announces registration dates, and typically occurs three weeks before registration opens. If students have any other questions, they should email the program directors.
 - Remind students to keep an eye on their emails. The clinic and externship faculty host an information session prior to opening the application period. Emails about the information session and application period typically come from Anne Wroniewicz.

Clinic and externship webpages

- Externships (general information): <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/externships/index.html>
- Externships (FAQs): <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/externships/FAQ.html>
- In-house clinical programs (General information): <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/in-house/index.html>
 - **Children’s Defense Clinic** (Prof. Julie McConnell): <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/in-house/childrens-defense/index.html>
 - Institute for **Actual Innocence** (Prof. Mary Tate): <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/in-house/innocence/index.html>
 - **Intellectual Property** and Transactional Law Clinic (Prof. Ashley Dobbs): <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/in-house/ip-clinic/index.html>

Special externship opportunities

- **Washington, DC** externship
 - Webpage: <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/dc-externship.html>
 - Interested students should contact Prof. Ali Silva
- **London** externship

- Webpage: <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/externships/london/index.html>
- The London summer program is a pass/fail course and is offered for four academic credit hours. Students work forty hours a week, five days a week, at their assigned placements. Students must submit an application and meet with Prof. Ali Silva by the end of January *at the latest*. In 2022, students must submit an application and meet with Prof. Silva by January 25.

Clinical practicum courses

- Our **clinical practicum courses** allow students to complete projects to support the work of businesses, non-profits, government entities, and NGOs. Students earn experiential credits by enrolling in clinical practicum courses, but clinical practicum courses differ from our in-house clinical programs. Please note there is no application required to enroll in a practicum course. Practicum courses include:
 - Housing Law Practicum
 - International Business Practice
 - International Law Practicum
 - Public Policy Research and Drafting
 - The Prosecution Project
 - Immigration Rights Practicum
- More information about practicums can be found here: <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/clinics-skills/practicums.html>

Study Abroad

- **Cambridge** study abroad program
 - Webpage: https://law.richmond.edu/academics/study_abroad/cambridge.html
 - The application to enroll in the Cambridge study abroad program needs to be submitted no later than April 1, 2022. Cambridge program students may take up to four courses (six semester hours of credit).
 - Students who are interested in participating in the Cambridge program should contact Professor Clark Williams
- **Other study abroad** opportunities
 - Webpage: https://law.richmond.edu/academics/study_abroad/index.html
 - Students who are interested in participating in study abroad programs other than Cambridge should contact Professor Jack Preis

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D. Law Journals

Some first-year students choose to compete for membership on one of Richmond Law's **three journals**:

- University of Richmond Law Review
- Richmond Journal of Law and Technology (JOLT)
- Richmond Public Interest Law Review (PILR)

Law journals are student-run publications that publish articles by law professors, attorneys, and law students on a variety of general topics (or more specific topics if the journal is specialized).

Some judges look favorably on students who have participated and/or occupied leadership positions on a journal. Students who are **interested in learning more about judicial clerkships and journal membership** should speak to Associate Dean Janet Hutchinson in the Career Development Office, Professor Rachel Suddarth, or Professor Carl Tobias.

Students who are **interested in learning more about law journals, generally**, should attend information sessions co-hosted by our three journals. Students can also speak with peer mentors, section leaders, and upper-level students who are journal members. Additional information is available on our **website**: <https://law.richmond.edu/students/journals.html>.

Students who are **interested in competing for a spot on a law journal** will participate in the **Unified Journal Competition** after the exam period in the spring of their 1L year. The Unified Journal Competition Committee will send out informational emails in the spring, usually toward the end of March.

Note: **Membership on a law journal is time-consuming**. Students should seriously consider the time commitment when deciding whether to compete for a spot on a journal. Students should also consider whether their time and energy might be better spent on an activity that speaks more directly to their subject matter or employment interests – whether that's moot court, an externship, clinical experience, pro bono or volunteer work, or paid employment.

- **Law Review and JOLT require members to write a Comment or Casenote.**
 - Students must decide in the first two weeks of the 2L fall semester whether they will fulfill their writing requirement in the fall, over winter break, or spring.
 - Whatever students elect, they should factor it into their course selection and overall schedule.

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E. Student Organizations

Richmond Law boasts a variety of student organizations. Students can find a list of active organizations here: <https://law.richmond.edu/students/organizations.html>.

Students can contact Associate Dean Alex Sklut if they are interested in forming a new student organization.

E(i). Moot Court Board, Trial Advocacy Board, and Client Counseling and Negotiation Board

Members of the above-listed boards participate in a variety of intra- and inter-scholastic competitions. Descriptions of the three boards can be found on the general student organization webpage (see link above).

In addition, the CCNB website can be found here: <https://blog.richmond.edu/ccnb/>.

The Moot Court Board website is here: <https://blog.richmond.edu/mootcourt/>.

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F. Pro bono and Community Service Opportunities

Students who are interested in pro bono and community service should contact Prof. Tara Casey, Director of the Harry L. Carrico Center for Pro Bon & Public Service. Students can find more information on the following webpages.

A list of **pro bono programs** can be found here: <https://law.richmond.edu/public-service/pro-bono/programs.html>.

- Opportunities include but are not limited to:
 - Assistance to disabled veterans
 - Eviction diversion
 - No-fault divorce
 - Trans law collaborative
- Students who are interested in pursuing the **Pro Bono Certification Award**, which includes recognition in the graduation program of their graduating year, can find more information here: <https://law.richmond.edu/public-service/pro-bono/pro-bono-certification-form.html>.
 - Requirements for the certification award are stringent. Please be sure to carefully read the information that appears on the website, and contact Prof. Tara Casey with any questions.

In addition to our pro bono programs, **community service opportunities** are available to Richmond Law students starting on Day 1 – including a city-wide outreach effort that takes place during orientation week.

- More information about community service opportunities can be found here: <https://law.richmond.edu/public-service/opportunities.html>.
- Professor Tara Casey also sends regular email updates about service opportunities that arise during the academic year.

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G. How to Contextualize Grades

Please note these existing resources:

- **Prof. Margaret Ann Walker** and the **Dean's Office** offer advice to all students on how to contextualize their grades
 - The above parties host one-on-one meetings, send emails to the first-year class, and (in spring 2022) offered in-person advice at the 1L Class Meeting
- Students in **PIF** are introduced to a panoply of lawyering competencies and consider how to measure success in law school beyond grades and GPA
- The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (**CALI**) offers lessons on “How to Learn from Exams” and “Semester Self-Assessment & Reflection” to help students contextualize grades
 - All students are provided CALI credentials
 - After signing in, students should click on “1L Lessons,” then “Law School Success” to access the above-listed resources
- 1Ls are required to complete a metacognitive **self-assessment** exercise in the spring to help put their fall semester into perspective and prioritize smart learning strategies

Consider the following “soundbites” for advisees:

- You are not your grades.
 - Grades might reflect the work you put in, your study habits, your performance under timed conditions, or something else, but they don't reflect you or your worth as a person.
 - If your grades are “not great,” that doesn't mean *you* are not great.
 - Rather than focus on grades, focus on *process*. For example, do your study habits work for you, or is it time to try something different? If you experience test-taking anxiety, how can you address that so you can *more effectively demonstrate what you've learned* on an exam (not “so you can get a better grade on an exam”)?
- Grades may help open doors to clerkships, externships, first jobs, and so forth, but (1) they only cover the entry fee, and (2) for better or worse, grades diminish in perceived and actual significance as you progress in your career.
 - Crossing the threshold is one thing; your ability to do the work and display the competencies required of excellent lawyers is another. Your grades will not perform the work on your behalf.
- Focus less on improving your grades and more on improving your learning experience.
 - You're paying a lot of money to attend law school – you want to be able to demonstrate a variety of lawyering competencies by the time you graduate.
 - An “A” on your transcript doesn't mean very much if you don't have a solid grasp on the material and how you learn the material (*i.e.*, metacognition).

A note for advisors on GPA and the bar exam:

- To the extent we focus on grades, we do so because we want students to enjoy a productive learning experience (and lower grades might suggest the student is facing learning difficulties) and because **law school GPA (LGPA) is the most accurate predictor of whether a student will pass the bar exam** on the first attempt. Importantly, the second most-accurate predictor is the student's level of engagement in law school.

- Some students are overconfident that their LGPA reflects solid academic performance and may be shocked that a seemingly decent LGPA puts them at risk of not passing the bar exam on the first try. **Ranking bands will be provided after fall 2022 grades are released.**
- The following data from a recent AccessLex study (link [here](#)) illustrates the relationship between LGPA and bar exam passage:
 - Positive growth in LGPA between the end of the first semester and graduation is associated with greater odds of passing the bar exam, particularly among graduates who struggled early on.
 - Graduates with below average first-semester grades who increased their LGPA by 0.28 and 0.56 standardized grade point units increased their likelihood of passing the bar exam on the first try to 63 and 80 percent, respectively
 - Graduates with below average first-semester grades who experienced no LGPA growth had a 43 percent chance of passing the bar exam, compared to 63 and 80 percent among their peers who increased their LGPA
 - Graduates with below-average first-semester grades who experienced negative LGPA growth had only a 12 or 24 percent chance of passing the bar exam (for negative 0.56 and 0.28 standardized grade point units, respectively)
- In sum (AccessLex): “One of our most robust findings is that **improvement in LGPA between the end of the first semester and graduation was associated with increased odds of passing the bar exam**, even after controlling for other relevant factors (*e.g.*, entering admission credentials, bar exam jurisdiction) and after accounting for differences among schools, including grading policies.”

A note for advisors on grade distribution:

- We encourage all students to reflect on study, class prep, and exam-taking strategies, but it is particularly important for students in the lower tier to self-assess and adopt new learning practices and habits. In reviewing your advisee’s GPA, please bear in mind the ranking bands for their class. The bands will be provided after fall 2022 grades are released.

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H. Time Management Tips

Please note these existing resources:

- Students participate in a **mandatory session on time management** during orientation.
- **Prof. Margaret Ann Walker** offers an Academic Success Program (ASP) session on time management in the fall and spring of the 1L year
 - She addresses specific concerns related to balancing class preparation, legal writing assignments, outlining, and studying for exams. Prof. Walker also emphasizes the important connection between time management and stress management.
- **CALI** (The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction) boasts a variety of interactive lessons under the heading “Law School Success,” including a 20-minute lesson on time management
 - All students are provided CALI credentials
 - After signing in, students should click on “1L Lessons,” then “Law School Success” to access the time management lesson
- The **ABA for Law Students** offers this excellent resource (an article plus an embedded video): <https://abaforlawstudents.com/2021/06/30/time-management-guide-for-law-students/>

General guidance on effective time management

- Does your advisee struggle with staying focused or prioritizing competing responsibilities? [This article on proven time management tools and strategies](#) might be helpful them. It explores techniques like the Pomodoro Technique and the Eisenhower Matrix.
- Clichéd, but: **Treat law school like a full-time job (and then some)**
 - The ABA requires essentially 1 hour of classroom time and approximately 2 hours of out-of-class student work time per credit hour *over a 15-week semester*. Because ours is a 13-week semester, students can anticipate dedicating slightly more than 2 out-of-class hours per one in-class hour for their courses.
- Students should **calendar everything**, including:
 - Classes
 - Commute
 - Fixed obligations (*e.g.*, picking up a child from school, doctor appointments)
 - Meals
 - Sleep
 - Study
 - This scheduling block includes reading and briefing cases, other preparation for class, synthesizing materials from class, and eventually outlining and studying for exams
 - Self-care (*e.g.*, rest, exercise, time with loved ones, pleasure reading, hobbies, etc.)

In sum

- Even if students use the less-than-perfectly-precise “I need to dedicate twice as many hours outside of class as inside class for each credit hour” to build their schedule, they’ll be in decent shape. For doctrinal courses, any “unused hours” doubtless will go toward studying for the exam during reading week and, finally, sitting for the exam itself.

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I. How to Improve Study and Exam-Taking Skills

Please note these existing resources:

- The **Law Library** offers a plethora of study and exam-taking resources and Law Librarians are available to assist students in search of the study aid that's best for them.
 - See the “**Study and Exam Prep**” section of the “First Year of Law School” webpage: <https://law-richmond.libguides.com/1L/studyaids>.
 - See “**A Guide to Study Materials**”: <https://law-richmond.libguides.com/c.php?g=129577>.
 - Students can browse the left-hand menu to learn where to find study aids, how to access study aids, and **faculty suggestions for study aids**, among other topics.
 - See the Research Guides directory for links related to law school success and subject area and course guides: https://law-richmond.libguides.com/Muse_Guides_Directory.
 - The Law Library also boasts an **exam bank**, which students can access using their Richmond Law credentials: <https://law.richmond.edu/library/access-services.html#exam-file>.
 - Note that students need to be signed into the VPN if they attempt to access the exam bank off-campus.
 - The **Muse News Law Library Blog** provides up-to-date alerts to students on study and exam-taking resources, among other useful tools and guides
 - Webpage here: <https://blog.richmond.edu/lawlibrary/>
- Prof. Margaret Ann Walker provides individual and group **Academic Success Program (ASP) sessions** on how to outline, study, and otherwise prepare for exams, in addition to sessions on how to locate and effectively use outside resources, brief cases, and maintain an active learning posture during class.
- Students will complete a **self-assessment** at the beginning of spring 2023 to review their study and exam prep habits for the fall and create a plan for the spring semester.

General guidance

- The most important aspect of studying and otherwise preparing for exams is that students take an active role in their learning. This means **problem-solving, not passively reviewing their notes**. Students should:
 - Regularly synthesize information and connect and distinguish course concepts (*e.g.*, end of week, end of topic)
 - Periodically review and test their understanding of concepts covered earlier in the semester (*i.e.*, Spaced Repetition)
 - Students can learn how to access Spaced Repetition resources by viewing this video on the Law Library website: <https://law-richmond.libguides.com/c.php?g=1075110&p=7912166>.
 - Answer practice questions and then review sample answers to identify gaps
 - Take practice exams, identify areas of confusion, and visit professors during office hours to clarify
 - Complete formative assessments and carefully review faculty feedback

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J. How to Improve Legal Writing, Research, and Analysis

Please note these existing resources:

- Our expert Legal Analysis and Writing and Legal Research **faculty**, who provide ongoing, individualized feedback to students
- Many upper-level students improve their legal writing and analysis skills by enrolling in Prof. Emmy Reeve's **Agency and Partnership** course in the 2L year, and **Core Legal Concepts** or **Selected Topics in Virginia Law** in the 3L year
 - These courses are particularly helpful for students at risk of not passing the bar exam on the first try
- The **Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction** (CALI) offers a variety of lessons on legal writing and analysis.
 - All students are provided CALI credentials
 - After signing in, students should click on "1L Lessons," then "Law School Success," "Legal Writing," and/or the "Legal Research" tabs to locate resources
 - **Particularly helpful links** under "Law School Success" and "Legal Writing" headings include:
 - Issue Statements for Memos and Briefs
 - Issue Spotting
 - IRAC
 - Punctuation and Grammar Basics
 - Punctuation and Grammar Advanced
- Prof. Laura Webb created a **series of short videos** (some with additional materials and/or integrated quizzes) that cover areas including Concision, Strong Sentence Cores, Arrangement, Diction, and Punctuation (with a separate video just on commas)
 - Students can access these videos on the **Academic Success Program Blackboard site**
 - Once on the site, students can navigate to "Writing Resources"
 - The videos link to topics in Plain English for Lawyers (although students don't have to have the book to benefit from the videos)

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K. Summer Employment and Career Advice

When in doubt about summer employment or other career questions, refer students to the **Career Development Office**.

CDO website: <https://law.richmond.edu/career/>

- Through the “**Student Portal**,” which students can access using their Richmond Law credentials, students can locate a variety of resources, including on-demand video resources, information about various legal career paths, job application and cover letter tips and templates, suggested job search timelines, interview tips, information about clerkships, and information about the Summer Public Service Fellowship Program.

Each student is assigned a Career Development Advisor.

- First-year students are required to meet with their Career Development Advisor at least once during the fall and spring semesters.

Career development items of note:

- Students can serve as **paid research assistants** during the academic year and over the summer
- All students are **guaranteed funding** for one summer through our **Summer Public Service Fellowship Program**
- Job postings – including for 1Ls – are posted on **Symplicity** (which students can access by visiting the CDO website, above)
- Some first-year students gain summer employment by participating in the **Government and Public Interest Interview Program (GPIIP)**
 - The date of the spring 2023 GPIIP is TBD.
- The CDO is currently located in the Refectory, across the parking lot from the law school

K(i). Building a Professional Network

The **CDO** offers networking opportunities during the year, including at orientation, and the following networking resources on their website: <https://law.richmond.edu/career/alumni/networking.html>

The **Richmond Law and Business Forum** hosts networking events for students during the academic year: https://law.richmond.edu/academics/centers/law_and_business_forum/index.html

Various **student groups** offer networking opportunities

- Richmond Women’s Law in particular partners with the Metro Richmond Women’s Bar Association to connect members with attorney mentors

K(ii). How to Find an Attorney Mentor

Prof. Jessica Erikson offered a comprehensive summer series about mentorship on the Richmond Law and Business Forum **Instagram account**, **@richmondlawandbusinessforum**. Students simply need to scroll to posts dated June 2021.

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L. Health and Well-Being

We know the statistics: law students and lawyers experience mental illness, substance use disorders, and suicidal ideation at a higher rate than the general population. Untreated mental health and substance use disorders are incompatible with a fulfilling law school experience and sustainable legal career. It is paramount that we encourage students to take care of themselves, prioritize their health and well-being, and avail themselves of the myriad health and well-being resources available on our campus.

The **Law School website** links students to law student and lawyer-specific health and well-being resources: <https://law.richmond.edu/students/wellbeing.html>.

The **UR Well website** describes the university's myriad health and wellness offerings, available to all students: <https://urwell.richmond.edu/well-being-center/index.html>.

- Note that the **new Well-Being Center** is located diagonally from the law school, past Sarah Brunet Hall. Wellness Center offerings include but are not limited to:
 - Weinstein Recreation Center
 - Mind-Body Studio
 - Meditation Garden
 - Café

CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) describes its service and offerings on its website: <https://caps.richmond.edu/>.

- **Self-help** and other **online resources** can be found here: <https://caps.richmond.edu/resources/index.html>
- **Mary Anne Messer** is a CAPS counselor who dedicates Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons to meet with students in the law school. Students who are interested in receiving counseling services can fill out an online registration form [here](#).

The **Office of the Chaplaincy** offers opportunities for **spiritual well-being** and support, including but not limited to pastoral care, sacred spaces, and mindfulness practices

- More information can be found on the Chaplaincy website: <https://chaplaincy.richmond.edu/spiritual-well-being/index.html>

Students seeking a breath of fresh air to support their health and well-being can visit the **Gambles Mill Eco Corridor**: <https://sustainability.richmond.edu/campus/eco-corridor/index.html>.

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M. Campus Culture, Building Community, and Making Connections

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to building community on campus. Students who are struggling to feel a part of the campus community and successfully connect with classmates might benefit from joining a supportive **student affinity group** or meeting with a member of the **Faculty and Staff Diversity & Inclusion Committee**.

- A list of affinity groups and members of the D&I Committee can be found on our “Advancing Diversity & Inclusion at Richmond Law” webpage:
<https://law.richmond.edu/about/diversity/index.html>.

In some instances, students may not need resources so much as **they need the law school community to embrace difference and promote inclusion**. In other words, as advisors, we want to be careful that we don’t immediately characterize lack of belonging as a student’s personality issue. Instead, we might examine whether our existing practices and campus culture communicate to students that they do not belong and consider how we can change our practices to promote inclusion and belonging.

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N. Managing Finances

The financial realities of a legal education are important factors for students to plan for and manage.

Please note the following resources:

- **MAX by AccessLex**
 - MAX is a financial education program hosted online and made specifically for law students.
 - The programs include webinars, online lessons, and even one-on-one coaching **completely free of charge for all Richmond Law students.**
 - Topics range from basic information about student loans and budgeting to an introduction to investing.
 - Students may access MAX here: <https://www.accesslex.org/max-by-accesslex>
- **University of Richmond Financial Aid Office**
 - The financial aid office can assist students with any questions they have about student loan adjustments, repayment, installment plans, or other sources of aid like military benefits. Students can find contact information for the financial aid office here: <https://financialaid.richmond.edu/about/contactus.html>.

Summer term financial planning

- Unless a student enrolls in a credit-bearing activity for the summer term, they will not receive student loan funding for the summer.
 - Some, but not all, students engage in paid work opportunities over the summer and some students receive limited funding through our Summer Public Service Fellowship Program
 - Because they may not find paid work or work that qualifies for the public service fellowship, **students are well-advised to set some student loan funds aside from both Fall and Spring disbursements to cover living costs during the summer**

Bar exam financial planning

- Many graduates forego paid work the summer after graduation to study full-time for the bar exam
- Financial considerations for the “bar study summer” include
 - Living expenses
 - Costs associated with applying for admission to the bar
 - Currently in Virginia, graduates must pay \$575 to apply for admission to the bar and another \$575 to submit the accompanying character and fitness questionnaire
 - Costs associated with any bar prep program in which a student enrolls
 - More information [below](#) (Section O)
- Some private lenders offer loans to cover living expenses during the bar study summer
 - Students can contact the Financial Aid office for more information: <https://financialaid.richmond.edu/law/index.html>.

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O. Bar Exam and MPRE

Even first-year students may have questions about the bar exam, character and fitness questionnaires, and the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE). Please feel free to point them to the following resources.

Students are welcome to consult our **website** for information about the bar exam:

<https://law.richmond.edu/academics/success/bar.html>.

- The website includes a **link to a 15-page Bar Information Handbook**, prepared by Prof. Emmy Reeves: <https://law.richmond.edu/academics/PDF/bar-information-handbook.pdf>

Cliffs Notes version of the bar exam and MPRE

- Depending on jurisdiction, the bar exam **takes place over two or three days** in February and July
- Students must pay an application **fee** to be admitted to a state bar and a separate fee to submit responses to a required character and fitness questionnaire
- Some students enroll in **private bar preparation programs** that easily cost in excess of \$1,000
 - These programs provide condensed, intense instruction in the two months preceding the bar exam, *i.e.*, instruction begins immediately after graduation for students taking the July bar
- In all but two jurisdictions in the United States, students must receive a passing score on the **Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE)** to be admitted to a state bar
 - Many students choose to take the MPRE during law school
 - The MPRE is two-hour, 60-question multiple-choice examination that is administered three times per year – March, August, and November
 - Currently, the regular fee to take the MPRE is \$125 (late fee is \$220)

Private Bar Exam Preparation Programs include:

- **BarBri**
 - Website: <https://www.barbri.com/>
 - Programs start at \$1,999
- **Kaplan**
 - Website: <https://www.kaptest.com/bar-exam>
 - Programs start at \$2,199 (currently discounted to \$1,499)
- **Themis**
 - Website: <https://www.themisbar.com/pricing>
 - Cost: \$2,595

Most Richmond Law students will sit for the Virginia Bar Exam or the Uniform Bar Exam

- The **Uniform Bar Examination (UBE)**
 - The UBE is composed of three parts:
 - the Multistate Essay Examination (MEE),
 - Common set of six 30-minute essays (3 hours)
 - Subjects: The seven subjects tested on the MBE (below) plus Business Associations, Conflict of Laws, Family Law, UCC Art. 9 (Sec. Transactions), and Trust and Estates

- two Multistate Performance Test (MPT) tasks
 - Two 90-minute items (3 hours)
 - Content: a simulated case file presented in a realistic setting and calling for the test candidate to demonstrate fundamental lawyering skills regardless of the area of law in which the task arises.
 - the **Multistate Bar Examination (MBE)**
 - 200-question multiple choice exam (6 hours)
 - **Subjects:** Contracts, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law and Procedure, Evidence, Real Property, Torts, and Civil Procedure
- The UBE is uniformly administered, graded, and scored and results in a portable score that can be transferred to other UBE jurisdictions.
- The UBE is administered over two days (the last Tuesday and Wednesday of February and July)
 - Day 1: MEE and MPT
 - Day 2: MBE
 - Jurisdictions that use the UBE may also require applicants to complete a jurisdiction-specific law component.
- **The Virginia Bar Exam**
 - The Virginia Bar Exam is composed of two parts
 - Nine Virginia law essay questions and 10 multiple-choice questions
 - This portion of the exam may test the applicant's knowledge in the following subject areas:
 - Contracts
 - Business Organizations
 - Creditor's Rights
 - Criminal Law
 - Domestic Relations
 - Evidence
 - Federal Practice and Procedure
 - Local Government Law
 - Professional Responsibility
 - Real and personal property
 - Torts
 - Uniform Commercial Code (Articles 2, 3A & 9A)
 - Virginia civil and criminal procedure (including appellate practice)
 - Wills, Trusts & Estates
 - the MBE
 - The Virginia Essay exam is prepared and graded under the supervision of the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners (VBBE)
 - The Virginia Bar Exam is administered over two days (the last Tuesday and Wednesday of February and July)
 - Day 1: Nine Virginia law essay questions and 10 multiple choice questions
 - Day 2: MBE
 - A note about the MPRE in Virginia
 - In Virginia, the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners requires for licensure that one achieve a score of 85 or higher on the MPRE "within the calendar year you pass

the Virginia Bar Exam, within the two calendar years immediately preceding your passing the Virginia Bar Exam, or within the two calendar years immediately following your passing the Virginia Bar Exam.”

- More information here: <https://barexam.virginia.gov/faqall.html>

FYI for Faculty Advisors

- The NCBE is phasing in a new bar exam over the next 3 to 4 years (2026 target date)
- The “Next Gen Bar Exam” will replace the existing three components of the UBE (the MBE, MEE, and MPT) with “a more integrated approach that emphasizes legal skills over an expansive knowledge of the law.”
- The NCBE currently has no plans to do away with the MPRE
- More information here: <https://nextgenbarexam.ncbex.org/>

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