

# THE TORERO BLUE BOOK

ACADEMIC ADVISING GUIDE 2021  
FOR STUDENTS ENTERING LAW SCHOOL IN FALL 2020

PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE FOR LAW STUDENT AFFAIRS

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Academic Success and Bar Programs

Warren Hall 206; (619) 260-4793; [lawacademicsuccess@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawacademicsuccess@sandiego.edu)

Admissions and Financial Aid

Warren Hall 203; (619) 260-4528; [lawaid@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawaid@sandiego.edu)

Career and Professional Development

Warren Hall 113; (619) 260-4529; [lawcareers@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawcareers@sandiego.edu)

External Relations (Alumni and Development)

Guadalupe Hall 202; (619) 260-4692; [lawalum@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawalum@sandiego.edu)

Graduate and International Programs (LLM and Study Abroad)

Warren Hall 207; (619) 260-7584; [lawgradprograms@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawgradprograms@sandiego.edu)

Law School Registrar

Warren Hall 202; (619) 260-4526; [lawreg@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawreg@sandiego.edu)

### **Additional Contact Information**

USD Department of Public Safety: Hughes Center 150; [publicsafety@sandiego.edu](mailto:publicsafety@sandiego.edu)

Emergency: (619) 260-2222 or x2222 from any on-campus phone

Non-Emergency: (619) 260-7777 or x7777 from any on-campus phone

USD Counseling Center: Serra Hall 300

To make an appointment: (619) 260-4655; online at [mywellness.sandiego.edu](https://mywellness.sandiego.edu)

Counselor-On Call (after hours): (619) 260-2222

Graduate Student Life: Student Life Pavilion 401; (619) 260-2227

Student Bar Association (SBA): Warren Hall 114F; [usdlawpres@gmail.com](mailto:usdlawpres@gmail.com)

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## ACADEMIC ADVISING GUIDE

The Torero Blue Book is designed to be a starting point for your journey at USD Law beyond your first year. Why just a starting point? Because inevitably you will have a question that is unique to you or a situation that arises that these pages do not address. Definitely start with the Torero Blue Book – but do not let your quest for information end here! The Office for Law Student Affairs is ready and available to assist you in creating your academic plan. The Torero Blue Book is intended to serve as a useful guide rather than a substitute for reading and understanding the Academic Rules and Student Handbook. Students are responsible for ensuring that they meet all degree requirements.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

### ✓ QUICK CHECK

- 88 total credits minimum (70 of which must be letter-graded)
- Residency requirement
- Required courses (all first-year courses plus Tax I, Professional Responsibility, Multistate Bar Exam Review, and Fundamentals of Bar Exam Writing)
- Upper Division Writing Requirement
- Experiential Course Requirement
- Minimum GPA of 2.2

### 1. You need 88 credits to graduate.

For at least 70 of these 88 credits, students must earn a grade on the letter-grade grading scale specified in Academic Rule XVI.A.1. ("letter-graded credits"). That means that only 18 credits may be earned on either the H/P/L/F or P/F scales ("pass/fail credits"). However, students may petition for a reduction in required letter-graded credits if they participate in an approved visit, the USD Washington D.C. Externship Program, or enroll in a judicial externship for credit.

At least 82 of the 88 credits must be taken at USD School of Law, unless a request to visit or exchange for a semester at another law school has been approved.

Students must complete these credits within 72 months (six years) of starting law school. Typically it will take three or four years depending on the division (full-time or part-time).

### 2. You must "reside" at USD School of Law for six full-time semesters or eight part-time semesters.

**Full-time students** must attempt and pay for six full-time regular (fall or spring) semesters. A full-time regular semester is a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 16 credits.

**Part-time students** must attempt and pay for eight part-time regular (fall or spring) semesters. A part-time regular semester is a minimum of eight credits and a maximum of 11 credits.

**Transfer students** who have entered USD after spending their first year at another law school must attempt and pay for at least four full-time regular (fall or spring) semesters or six part-time regular (fall or spring) semesters in order to meet their residency requirement.

Students who are approved to change divisions (full-time to part-time or vice

versa) must comply with the applicable hybrid residency requirement. See Law Student Affairs for details.

**Summer school** allows full-time students to take fewer than 12 credits in a fall or spring semester, though students will still pay full-time tuition as if they had attempted 12 to 16 credits. If a student has credits from a prior summer school session, they may apply those summer credits towards satisfying the requirement of attempting 12 credits in a regular semester. Students can only reduce a regular semester load by up to four credits (no full or part-time student may ever go below eight credits in a regular semester).

*Example:* Blake takes and pays for three credits in the summer. Blake decides to apply those credits to the upcoming fall semester, and therefore only takes nine credits that fall. Blake still pays full-time tuition in the fall, but has lightened their course load to allow more time to work.

No more than seven credits may be taken in any single summer, regardless of whether the student is full-time or part-time.

**3. You must take and pass (receive a grade of 1.1 or above in letter-graded or a P or above in H/P/L/F and P/F courses) all required courses.**

Course <sup>1</sup>	Credits
Civil Procedure	4
Constitutional Law I	4
Contracts	4
Criminal Law	4
Property	4
Torts	4
Legal Writing and Research I and II	4
Experiential Advocacy Practicum I and II	2
Professional Responsibility <sup>2</sup>	3
Tax I <sup>2</sup>	3 (or 4)
Multistate Bar Exam Review <sup>2,3</sup>	4
Fundamentals of Bar Exam Writing <sup>2,3</sup>	2
<b>Total Required Credits<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>42 (or 43)</b>

<sup>1</sup> First-year part-time students take some of the required first-year courses in the second year.

<sup>2</sup> Courses required after the first year; Tax I may be taken for either 3 or 4 credits.

<sup>3</sup> This requirement is waived for students who complete their second year (or third year, for part-time students) with a GPA of 3.4 or above.

<sup>4</sup> Students who complete their first or second year with a GPA of 2.85 or below are subject to Academic Supervision and are required to take additional courses. More information is provided later in this guide.

**4. You must satisfy the upper division writing requirement.**

The upper division writing requirement may be satisfied in one of the following ways:

Successful completion of a graded writing course after the first year. See Academic Rule I.H. for what constitutes a graded writing course. Courses that meet these requirements are designated with "Requirement(s): Writing" in the course description or with "Law - Upper Division Writing LWRT" under "Attributes" in the class schedule (from the class schedule, click on the course name, then click "Attributes" on the left).

**OR**

Scholarly written work submitted to the *San Diego Law Review*, *San Diego International Law Journal* or *Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues* for publication, upon certification of the approving faculty member.

Please be aware that successful completion of the writing requirement is not determined by the student's grade in or completion of the course or written work, but is separately indicated by the professor in the manner specified by the Law School Registrar's Office.

**5. You must satisfy the experiential course requirement.**

The experiential course requirement may be satisfied by successfully completing one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credits. Experiential course electives are designated by the Dean. A course will be included on this list if it is a simulation course, a law clinic or a field placement and if it meets the requirements encompassed in ABA Standard of Approval for Law Schools 303(a)(3). Courses that meet these requirements are designated with "Requirement(s): Experiential" in the course description or with "Experiential E" under "Attributes" in the class schedule (from the class schedule, click on the course name, then click "Attributes" on the left).

*NOTE:* Certain courses may be designated as meeting either the upper division writing requirement or the experiential course requirement. A course cannot count for both requirements, so for such courses a student must make an election as to which requirement they intend for the course to fulfill. This election is made in class at the beginning of the semester and the election is final.

**6. You must graduate with a minimum GPA of 2.2.**

## GRADES

### ✓ QUICK CHECK

- A minimum GPA of 2.4 at the end of each regular semester maintains good academic standing.
- A GPA of 2.85 or below at the end of any academic year results in Academic Supervision.

### Grading Policy

The School of Law uses the following grading system:

Grade	Value
A+	4.2 – 4.3
A	3.9 – 4.1
A-	3.5 – 3.8
B+	3.2 – 3.4
B	2.9 – 3.1
B-	2.5 – 2.8
C+	2.2 – 2.4
C	1.9 – 2.1
C-	1.5 – 1.8
D+	1.3 – 1.4
D	1.1 – 1.2
F	1.00
H (Honors)	N/A
P (Pass)	N/A
L (Low Pass)	1.70

### First Year Course Grading “Curve”

Grades for all letter-graded first-year courses can range from 1.0 to 4.3 on a mandatory curve. The average of the grades for each course must be between 3.15 and 3.25. The grade distribution must be as follows:

- 20-25% of students must receive a grade in the range of 3.7 or above.
- 20-25% of students must receive a grade of 2.6 or below.
- 8-12% of students must receive a grade of 2.0 or below, and these students also count toward satisfying the requirement that 20-25% receive grades of 2.6 or below.

Legal Writing and Research is graded pursuant to the upper year course grading curve.

### Upper Year Course Grading “Curve”

Grades for upper-division courses which are not on the H/P/L/F or P/F scale can range from 1.0 to 4.3 on a mandatory curve. The average of the grades for each course must be between 3.3 and 3.4. The grade distribution must be as follows:

- 20-25% of students must receive a grade of 3.7 or above.
- 25-30% of students must receive a grade of 3.0 or below.
- No more than 8% of students may receive a grade of 2.0 or below.

*EXCEPTION:* The curve is only recommended, rather than mandatory, for upper year courses with an enrollment of fewer than 20 students and for graduate tax courses (except Tax I and Corporate Tax). The mean for such courses cannot exceed 3.6.

### Ranking

Many students and employers like to understand where a certain cumulative GPA ranks against other GPAs for the same class year. At USD, first-year full-time JD students are not ranked after the fall semester, but only after the first year. First-year part-time students are not ranked until their third semester (however, they can obtain a letter from the Law School Registrar indicating their approximate rank had they been ranked with the first-year full-time students). In addition, only the top 25% of each group of JD students receive an ordinal rank on their transcript. Class rank cut-offs are posted online by the Law School Registrar ([www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/grading-and-ranks/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/grading-and-ranks/)). The following is an example using the spring GPA cut-off rankings for 1L students:

Rank	Spring 2020 GPA Cut-Off for 1L Full-Time Students (231 total students)
Top 10%	3.90
Top Quarter	3.70
Top Third	3.56
Top Half	3.29

Students are encouraged to talk with Career & Professional Development about how best to address “rankings” questions from employers.

### Good Academic Standing

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.4 to remain in good academic standing. First-year students who complete their first year with a cumulative GPA below 2.4 are academically disqualified.

Students who are disqualified after their first year with a cumulative average of at least 2.2 but below 2.4 may petition for readmission. First-year students who complete their first year with a cumulative GPA below 2.2 cannot petition for readmission. Petitions are rarely granted.



**Academic Supervision**

The Academic Supervision program provides a select group of students with additional support and coursework to help improve their academic performance. Students who complete their first year of law study with a cumulative GPA of 2.85 or below are subject to a mandatory program of Second Year Academic Supervision.

Academic Rule I.M.2. applies to those students who are subject to the Second Year Academic Supervision program, which incorporates additional graduation requirements. Students who are subject to Academic Supervision will be contacted by the Office for Law Student Affairs.

Students who complete their second year of law study with a cumulative GPA of 2.85 or below are subject to a mandatory program of Third Year Academic Supervision (Academic Rule I.M.3.).

Students who are placed into an Academic Supervision program must meet all program requirements in order to remain enrolled and/or graduate.

## CHOOSING CLASSES

After your first year, you have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of elective courses to fulfill the 88 total credits needed to graduate. As a reminder, the four classes you **must** take after your first year are **Tax I, Professional Responsibility, Multistate Bar Exam Review**, and **Fundamentals of Bar Exam Writing**. The latter two courses are meant to be taken in your final semester. Additionally, you must satisfy the upper division writing and experiential course requirements (see page 6 for more information).

### Rules to Remember When Choosing Courses

There are several academic rules in place to ensure students take a variety of types of courses prior to graduation. Keep these rules in mind as you plan your semesters:

- No more than 18 total pass/fail credits earned over all combined semesters may count towards your degree. Courses graded on an H/P/L/F or P/F scale are denoted as such in the course description. A list of these classes is also available online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/courses-graded-pf-hplf.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/courses-graded-pf-hplf.php)).
- No more than two Supervised Independent Research credits earned over all combined semesters may count toward your degree.
- No more than six total Journal, Mock Trial, Moot Court, and Supervised Independent Research credits earned over all combined semesters may count towards your degree.
- No more than six total non-law credits earned over all combined semesters may count towards your degree.

When constructing your semester schedule, you should also keep the following in mind:

- Full-time students will need to take a total of 58 credits in their last two years. This is typically two 14-credit semesters and two 15-credit semesters.
- Part-time students will need to take a total of 66 credits in their last three years, which is 11 credits per semester.

Over the next few pages are courses and opportunities to consider when developing your academic schedule.

## Bar Subject Courses

In order to be licensed to practice law in a particular state you must pass that state's licensing or "bar" exam. Most of the courses you took in your first year are covered on bar exams across the country. However, there are additional subjects tested on the bar exam which are not required, but which students are strongly encouraged to take as electives.

### California Bar Subject Courses

- California Civil Procedure (3 credits)
- Community Property (3 credits)
- Constitutional Law II (3 credits)
- Corporations (4 credits)
- Criminal Procedure (3 credits)
- Evidence (4 credits)
- Remedies (3 or 4 credits)
- UCC Sales (3 credits)
- Wills and Trusts/Trusts and Estates (3 credits)

### Uniform Bar Exam (UBE) Subject

- Constitutional Law II (3 credits)
- Corporations (4 credits)
- Criminal Procedure (3 credits)
- Evidence (4 credits)
- Family Law (3 credits)
- UCC Sales (3 credits)
- Wills and Trusts/Trusts and Estates (3 credits)

This is not an exhaustive list of subjects tested on the bar exam. Schedule a one-on-one advising session for guidance on selecting bar subject electives.

## Concentrations

Many students come to law school with a particular practice area in mind for their future career or quickly develop a special interest. USD offers concentration options in ten key practice areas. These concentrations highlight curricular strengths, offering a rich selection of courses taught by leading scholars and expert practitioners. Each concentration requires 18 credits and a 2.2 cumulative GPA in the concentration courses. Successful completion of a concentration is noted on your law school transcript.

Concentrations are offered in:

- Business and Corporate Law
- Children's Rights
- Civil Litigation
- Criminal Litigation
- Employment and Labor Law
- Environmental and Energy Law
- Health Law
- Intellectual Property and Technology Law
- International Law
- Public Interest Law

Students ready to focus their study after the first year can immediately start taking courses to count towards a concentration. For those who do not know in which area of law they would like to practice, the concentration curriculum can serve as an informal guide for shaping their education or enhance career preparation. To see what courses are required for each concentration, visit the concentrations web page ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/jd-program/concentrations](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/jd-program/concentrations)). For assistance in planning your schedule to meet the requirements of a concentration, contact Director for Law Student Affairs Irene Meloney.

## Electives

Students must take 42-43 credits of required courses, leaving 45-46 credits in elective courses that they can choose. Students can opt to take more than 88 total credits. In addition to the suggested bar subject courses and the path to a concentration, there are other elective options to consider. Law school is your chance to explore many areas of law and to find out where your passion lies. When looking at the course offerings, ask yourself "What interests me?" USD offers an assortment of courses in many areas of the law and society. The offerings include Animal Law, Trademark Law, Employment Discrimination, Child Rights and Remedies, International Business Transactions, and Civil Rights Theories Seminar just to name a few! We recommend that you use your elective credits to explore various areas and get to know the professors teaching these courses. Your main source of information about USD's course offerings can be found on the course descriptions web page ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/course-descriptions.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/course-descriptions.php)).

While USD offers a wide variety of substantive law courses, you should also consider exploring the many other opportunities to earn academic credit.

**Clinics:** USD has over a dozen legal clinics which provide excellent practical legal training early in your law school career. Clinical programs offer students the opportunity to train under experienced professors and attorneys, learn professional responsibility in the real world, and acquire interpersonal skills. There are several different opportunities for students to gain clinical experience.

**Legal Clinics:** The Legal Clinics offer a wide range of practice specialties. All Legal Clinic students are supervised by a practicing attorney and are given valuable hands-on experience. Clinics include a classroom component as well as interaction with clients. Clinic applications are available online. Prerequisites vary, so please read the clinic descriptions carefully. All clinics require authorization to enroll, and you may be contacted for an interview by the professor. Enrollment is limited and some clinics fill quickly.

Barcelona Hall, Room 305; (619) 260-7470; [www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/clinical-education/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/clinical-education/)

**Center for Public Interest Law (CPIL):** CPIL's mission is to harness the power of the law to institute positive social change by educating the next generation of leaders. CPIL offers a yearlong course, Public Interest Law and Practice (PILP). In PILP, students learn the tools needed to create systemic change on a policy level in all three branches of government in California. Students are taught the substantive law governing state regulatory agencies and have the rare opportunity to study them in real time. Students monitor the activities of one state agency, attend agency meetings, observe agency rulemaking, and track litigation and legislation. Students draft reports on their assigned agency, which are published in the *California Regulatory Law Reporter*. After successful completion of PILP, students may enroll in the Public Interest Law Clinic and design an individualized research and/or advocacy project.

Legal Research Center, south side; (619) 260-4806; [www.sandiego.edu/cpil/](http://www.sandiego.edu/cpil/)

**Children’s Advocacy Institute (CAI):** CAI is one of the nation’s premier academic, research, and advocacy organizations working to improve the lives of children and youth. CAI trains law students to be effective child advocates through its Child Advocacy Clinic offerings. Students who wish to participate in a Child Advocacy Clinic must first take (or be concurrently enrolled in) Child Rights and Remedies.

Legal Research Center, south side; (619) 260-4806; [www.sandiego.edu/cai/](http://www.sandiego.edu/cai/)

**Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC):** EPIC is a research center that studies energy policy issues affecting the San Diego region and California. EPIC sponsors the Energy Law and Policy Clinic, a unique opportunity for students to work in partnership with a related state agency to conduct legal and policy research on a topical issue. Students will present their research to the agency at the end of the semester. Students who wish to participate in this clinic must first take Energy Law and Policy.

Legal Research Center, south side; (619) 260-4589; [www.sandiego.edu/epic/](http://www.sandiego.edu/epic/)

**Field Placement Program:** There are several opportunities for students to receive academic credit for part-time legal work performed under the supervision of an attorney at approved placement sites. In addition to hands-on work at the placement sites, students enroll in a faculty-taught course designed to enhance the placement experience. Students work a minimum of 50 hours per credit. Students should consult with the Office of Career and Professional Development if they are interested in any of these opportunities. More information about the various programs can be found online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/externships/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/externships/)).

**Agency Externship:** The Agency Externship Program allows students to earn academic credits for legal work with a government agency or non-profit organization. Students can earn up to six academic credits per regular semester and per summer term.

**Corporate Counsel Externship Program:** This program allows students to earn academic credits for working in the legal department of a corporation, company or other business entity. Students may also potentially work in non-legal departments of a corporation as long as they are supervised by an on-site licensed attorney. Students can earn up to six academic credits per regular semester and per summer term.

**Judicial Externships:** The Judicial Externship Program allows students to earn academic credits for their work with judges in state or federal trial or appellate courts. The primary purpose of these placements is to translate academic legal education into practical adjudicative decision making, thus helping students understand how the courts work and how attorneys, judges and litigants succeed and fail in the process. Judicial externs also hone their skills in research, writing, and oral communication. Students can earn up to six academic credits per regular semester and per summer term. More information is also available online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/externships/judicial-externship.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/externships/judicial-externship.php)).

**Washington, D.C. Externship Program:** This program allows students to spend the entire fall (or spring, by arrangement) semester working in Washington, D.C. with a government or public interest agency, non-profit organization, judicial placement, think tank, or advocacy organization. This is a unique opportunity for students to learn about the role of government, public policy, and agency lawyers or advocates in our legal system. Along with the work component, students will also be enrolled in graded courses. Students can earn up to 15 academic credits in the program. In addition to the work and class component, students will gain valuable experience, meet with USD alumni working in our nation’s capital, cement new professional

contacts, and enhance their professional profile. More information about the program can be found online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/externships/washington-dc.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/clinics-externships/externships/washington-dc.php)).

**Corporate Tech Externship:** This program places students at local law firms and companies to provide legal assistance to technology companies in the areas of corporate formation, financing, contracting, employment, and related areas. The course begins with six class sessions in the fall semester, but the work component continues into the spring semester. An application process in the spring semester is used to select students for the following academic year. Students can earn up to six academic credits per regular semester. Contact Professor Ted Sichelman for more information.

**IP Externship:** This program places students at local law firms and companies to provide legal assistance to individuals (inventors, artists, musicians, and others) and tech and media companies in the area of IP law (patent, copyright, trademark, trade secrets, and related fields). The course begins with six class sessions in the fall semester, but the work component continues into the spring semester. An application process in the spring semester is used to select students for the following academic year. Students can earn up to six academic credits per regular semester. Contact Professor Ted Sichelman for more information.

**Law Review and Journals:** Membership on any of our three student-run journals will help you gain significant experience with legal research, writing, and editing of articles. Through the write-on competition that takes place at the end of exams each spring, rising 2Ls have the opportunity to earn a spot on the *San Diego Law Review*, *San Diego International Law Journal*, or *San Diego Journal of Climate & Energy Law*. Students should check with each individual journal and the Academic Rules for information about applying to a journal and the number of credits a student can earn for their writing. Information about our academic journals can be found online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/journals/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/journals/)).

**Advocacy Programs:** USD offers competition teams which students can join and, in certain circumstances, earn academic credit for their participation. These teams provide the opportunity for students to hone their oral and written advocacy skills and to represent USD law at national and international trial, appellate, arbitration, client advocacy, and transactional tournaments. For more information on any of these opportunities, please contact Associate Director for Law Student Affairs Haley Shumaker.

**Client Advocacy Team (CAT):** CAT seeks to foster and encourage the development of client advocacy skills among USD law students. Members of the team compete in various client advocacy competitions. Students selected for a competition team can receive academic credit.

**Mock Trial:** The USD National Trial Team is dedicated to teaching the art of trial advocacy and molding strong future litigators. The team competes in several major trial tournaments every year and is coached by seasoned attorneys with both mock trial and real-life litigation experience. Members of the team are selected through participation in a spring intramural competition. Students selected for a competition team can receive academic credit.

**Moot Court:** The Appellate Moot Court Board is dedicated to fostering the development of appellate advocacy skills among our students. Members of Moot Court receive training from professors and attorneys experienced in legal writing and appellate argument. Moot Court hosts two intramural competitions each year which are open to all upper-division students. Each spring, the Appellate Moot Court Board selects rising 2Ls to serve on the associate board. Students in their last year have an opportunity to

serve on the executive board and be a competing member of a national team. National team members, in addition to serving on the executive board, travel and compete in intercollegiate national tournaments. Students can receive up to one credit for their participation on a national moot court team.

**Transactional Law Team (TLT):** TLT provides a forum for students to hone their corporate and transactional law skills, to explore the mergers and acquisitions process, and to further develop their negotiation tactics. Members of TLT obtain an inside look into practical corporate transaction deals. The team competes in various regional competitions. Students can receive up to one credit for their participation on a competition team.

**Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot (VICAM):** VICAM competes in the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot in Vienna and Hong Kong. The mission of the team is to foster the development of international legal writing, arbitration, and oral advocacy among its members. In addition to competing abroad, VICAM hosts a pre-moot competition here at USD which attracts teams from around the world. Team members are selected in the fall. Students can earn academic credit by enrolling in the companion course (International Asia-Pacific Commercial Arbitration) or if they are selected for the traveling competition team.

**Summer Study Abroad and Semester Exchange:** USD offers both summer and semester abroad options for students interested in gaining international education, experience, and connections. USD's summer study abroad programs provide intensive coursework in international law while introducing USD students to the legal institutions of another country. Students may earn up to seven credits in summer abroad programs in London or Paris. For students interested in studying abroad for a full semester, USD offers nine exchange programs in various countries throughout the world. Students participating in a semester abroad pay tuition and fees to USD and are only responsible to the host university for board, lodging and any obligatory fees. The credit for coursework undertaken (the majority of which is taught in English) must be approved by USD in the same manner as any coursework submitted for a visit under our academic rules. For more information on the summer study abroad or semester exchange programs, please contact the Office for Graduate and International Programs in Warren Hall Room 207; (619) 260-4596; [lawgradprograms@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawgradprograms@sandiego.edu). More information is also available online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/study-abroad/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/study-abroad/)).

**Supervised Independent Research:** After your first year of law school, you may earn up to two pass/fail credits during any regular semester or summer for supervised independent research and writing. Forms are available online. For more information on selecting a topic and faculty advisor, please contact the Office for Law Student Affairs.

**Non-USD Law Courses:** Upon application and approval, you may earn up to six credits of coursework outside of the law school. These six credits will count towards the 88 credits needed for graduation and towards your total pass/fail credits. The courses must be graduate-level or offered at another ABA-accredited law school. For graduate-level courses, you may take a course offered at a graduate school here at USD. The course must be letter-graded and you must earn a B or above in the course. For courses offered by another law school, the course cannot be offered at USD, it must be letter-graded, and you must earn a C or above in the course. The credits will transfer to your USD law transcript as pass/fail and will not be calculated in your law school GPA. For more information about the requirements and application, please contact the Office for Law Student Affairs. Please note that the courses must be pre-approved by the Assistant Dean for Law Student Affairs, and they are approved on a case-by-case basis.

## REGISTRATION

**Students should visit the following web pages *before* their registration date in order to construct their academic schedule and back up plans:**

**Course Descriptions** can be found online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/course-descriptions.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/course-descriptions.php)

**Course Schedule** can be found on MySanDiego. Under “Torero Hub,” click on “Law Student.” Under “Banner Registration Tools” click “Look Up Classes.” Select the semester you want to view. In the “College” drop down menu, select “School of Law” then hit the “Search” button. You can sort by title by clicking on “Title” at the top of the left-hand column. Take note of the four-digit “CRN” number (in the sixth column) for the courses you would like to take. You will use the CRN to register for classes.

**Course Frequency Guide** can be found online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/course-frequency.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/curriculum/course-frequency.php)

**Exam Schedule** can be found online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/exams/schedule.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/exams/schedule.php). When looking at exam dates, be sure to consider the exam accommodation policy at [www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/exams/accommodations.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/exams/accommodations.php).

**Concentration** information can be found online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/jd-program/concentrations](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/academics/jd-program/concentrations).

We recommend looking at both the course descriptions and course schedule at the same time when constructing your semester schedule.

Be sure to check your “Registration Status” in the MySanDiego portal well in advance to ensure there are no holds that will prevent you from registering.

Students are able to register for summer school and for fall classes during the spring semester (usually in March or April of each year). Students are able to register for spring classes during the fall semester (usually October or November of each year).

For Fall 2021, registration for all continuing law students has been scheduled as follows ([www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/registration/when-to-register.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/registration/when-to-register.php)):

**Friday, March 26, 2021 at 7:00 a.m.**

- All JD students who will be in the part-time program
- All LLM and MSLS students

**Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 7:00 a.m.**

- All rising 3L JD students who will be in the full-time program

**Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 7:00 a.m.**

- All rising 2L JD students who will be in the full-time program

Students should log into MySanDiego no later than 6:45 a.m. on their registration date. Registration begins promptly at 7:00 a.m.

Each semester, online registration for courses is unavailable during the study period and the final exam period.



**Registration Procedures: Using the BANNER system on MySanDiego**

Below are brief instructions on how to register for courses using the BANNER student system. More information can be found online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/registration/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/registration/).

- Log into the MySanDiego portal with your USDOne username and password.
- On the left side under "Torero Hub," select "Law Student." Scroll down to the Banner Registration Tools area.
- Click "New Add/Drop Registration."
- Select "Register for Classes" and select the semester you are registering for.
- In the "Register for Classes" section, be prepared to input the CRNs of the courses for which you want to register.

*Registration Tip:* Check to ensure that your chosen courses do not conflict or overlap for even one minute in time, otherwise the system will come back with an error message.

- Once you submit your CRNs, you will see a summary screen. This screen will show either the classes you added or any errors you may have encountered.

*Registration Tip:* If you receive a message that the course you select is "Reserve Restricted" it is due to the fact that a number of seats have been reserved for special categories of students. This message indicates that the class is currently closed to additional students at this time. If these reserved seats are not utilized they will become available to additional students near the start of the semester.

*Registration Tip:* If you receive a message that the "section is closed" but the "waitlist is open" then you may manually add yourself to the waitlist.

- Check your summary screen to confirm that you are successfully registered for courses.
- You can also drop a class or remove yourself from a waitlist using the "New Add/Drop Registration" link. Use extra caution when dropping classes with waitlists. The moment you drop, a space opens for another student and everyone else moves up on the waitlist. If you drop in error, your only option is to add yourself to the end of the waitlist (if the waitlist is still open). Please note, the BANNER system will prevent you from ever dropping your last class. If you wish to drop your last class, you must contact the Office for Law Student Affairs.

If you experience technical difficulties during registration, please contact the Help Desk at [help@sandiego.edu](mailto:help@sandiego.edu) or (619) 260-7900.

## Waitlists

If you are not able to enroll in a class because it is closed, put yourself on the waitlist. Placing yourself on an automated waitlist allows you to reserve a place in line for the next available seat in the section. When a student drops a class, the first student on the waitlist will be eligible to register in the section.

The automated waitlist system is managed by the larger university. The law school and professors do not have the ability to modify the waitlist procedure or students on the waitlist. **But never fear! Registration is never a one day process!** The registration period remains open throughout the semester and the summer/winter breaks (closing temporarily during the study and final exam periods). You may still get that class you want, it just might be later in the process than you hoped. Stay patient.

Some important things to know about the automated waitlist process:

- Placing yourself on a waitlist does NOT guarantee that you will eventually be able to enroll in the course.
- Open seats are offered based on your position on the waitlist. The first person who signs up for the waitlist is the first person offered an opening.
- Notifications of an open seat are sent by email to your @sandiego.edu email account only. Please be sure to check that account frequently if you are on a waitlist.
- You have 24 hours from the time of email notification to register for the course. If you do not register in that time period, you are dropped from the waitlist and the next person on the waitlist is offered the open seat. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE 24-HOUR RULE.
- In order to be added to a waitlist, you must meet the same prerequisite restrictions as if registering for the course.
- You may add yourself to the waitlist for a different section of a course in which you are already enrolled. Be aware that if you are offered an open seat, you will need to drop the section you are enrolled in and resolve any time conflicts with other registered courses. You must drop yourself from the other section before moving from waitlisted to registered status in your designated class. You may waitlist for more than one section of the same course.
- You may also waitlist for courses that meet at the same time as courses in which you are already enrolled. Be aware that if you are offered an open seat, you will need to drop the conflicting courses you are enrolled in and resolve any time conflicts with other registered courses before moving from waitlisted to registered status in your designated class.
- Once you drop a class, if it has a waitlist, you will not be allowed to add it again. You will have to add yourself to the end of the waitlist. Be sure you want to make the change because you cannot reverse the drop after the "Submit Changes" button is clicked.

It is important to note that professors do not have any control over which students are let off of their waitlists. In other words, a professor may not allow a student to "jump" the waitlist outside of the automated university-wide waitlist system. If a student has a critical need to enroll in a class for which they are on the waitlist, the student should come to the Office for Law Student Affairs rather than to the professor. There is no guarantee of enrollment in a specific course. More information about the automated waitlist is available online ([www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/registration/how-to-register.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/registrar/registration/how-to-register.php)).

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

After your first year, you will find that there are many co-curricular and off-campus activities that can enhance your time at USD. Getting involved as a student allows you to explore different areas of law and meet different members of the USD and San Diego legal communities. However, be careful not to over-schedule or commit yourself to too many of these activities, as the academic component of law school should remain your primary focus.

### Student Activities and Leadership Opportunities

The Student Bar Association (SBA) is the umbrella organization for all law student organizations at USD. The SBA also serves as the student voice before the faculty and administration. The executive board is composed of the President, Vice President, Vice President of Student Organizations, Treasurer, and Secretary. These positions are filled through a general election process held each spring. Class representatives, ABA representatives, and Honor Code Hearing Committee members also comprise the main student leadership positions and are also elected in the same spring election. You do not have to be an elected officer to participate in SBA. A great way to get involved with the SBA is to attend SBA General Meetings which typically occur every other week at noon. Committees are formed, regulations are adopted, events are planned...and you can participate in it all. For more information, check out SBA's TWEN page. You can also email the SBA President at [USDLawPres@gmail.com](mailto:USDLawPres@gmail.com).

In addition, USD offers ample opportunity to enrich your legal education and leadership skills through participation in more than 40 student organizations. Many of these clubs represent group concerns, plan speaker programs and networking events, provide study assistance, participate in and sponsor competitions, host social activities, and promote community relations. Read your weekly *SIDEBAR* email for information on their meetings and events. Joining a student organization is a great way to meet other students and local attorneys. You can view a list of our current student organizations online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/student-life/student-organizations/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/student-life/student-organizations/).

The Office for Law Student Affairs offers leadership training to SBA and student organization officers to enhance the management, communication, and effectiveness of these groups. All student organizations are required to register with the Office for Law Student Affairs every year. Among other things, registration allows organizations to receive SBA and supplemental university funding, obtain assistance with event planning, make room reservations, and announce upcoming events and meetings to a school-wide audience. If you do not see a student organization with your interest, you can create one! Make an appointment to see Director for Law Student Affairs Irene Meloney to learn more about the process.

## Pro Bono and Volunteer Opportunities

*Pro bono* is short for *pro bono publico*, which means “for the public good.” Pro bono work is legal work provided without compensation (or credits) and is part of a lawyer’s ethical obligation. Engaging in pro bono work while in law school encourages students to be lifelong volunteers. In addition, pro bono work helps students develop legal skills and obtain practical, legal experience. Through its Pro Bono Service Recognition program ([www.sandiego.edu/law/current/pro-bono-volunteer.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/current/pro-bono-volunteer.php)), USD awards those students who have completed a minimum of 100 hours of pro bono legal service throughout their three or four years here. These students receive a certificate, the privilege of wearing a white cord signifying this accomplishment at graduation, a transcript notation, and will be listed in our annual Honors Brochure. Several student organizations create opportunities for law students to volunteer their time to give legal assistance to the local community. The Pro Bono Legal Advocates (PBLA) helps bring legal help to those who would otherwise be lost in the legal system or who might not be able to afford competent counsel. PBLA hosts several different programs, some of which are not specifically law-oriented. The hours are flexible and it is an easy way for students to get involved in the community. For more information, contact the Chair of PBLA at [chair.pbla@gmail.com](mailto:chair.pbla@gmail.com). The Advocates for Children and Education (ACE) and Pride Law also hold programs that students can volunteer for and earn pro bono hours.

## Scholarships and Writing Competitions

After the first year, scholarships for varying amounts may be offered to students in each year of the full- and part-time divisions.

Throughout the year, the Financial Aid Office posts announcements from the legal community about outside scholarship opportunities ([www.sandiego.edu/law/financial-aid/types/scholarships/jd-outside.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/financial-aid/types/scholarships/jd-outside.php)). Visit this website on a regular basis as it is updated frequently with additional scholarship opportunities.

Students can also submit their work to a writing competition and win an opportunity to be published and prize money. Information about writing competitions can be found online at [www.sandiego.edu/law/current/writing-competitions.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/current/writing-competitions.php). There are a variety of topics that students can write on and deadlines vary.

## Academic Success Program

Our Academic Success Program ([www.sandiego.edu/law/current/academic-success/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/current/academic-success/)) offers a variety of services and programs specially designed to help law students succeed during each year of law school. They hire and train Academic Success Fellows for all first-year courses. A Fellow is an upper-division law student who, whenever possible, has taken the class previously from the same professor, did well in the class, and will attend the class again to be a resource for that class. The Fellows hold office hours that any first-year law student may attend. The Fellows also host various study skills workshops throughout the semester and prepare class-specific handouts to help first-year students master the material. The Academic Success Resources Center (ASRC) is located in Warren Hall Room 206 and is available to all law students. When physically open, it offers free use of popular supplements for a variety of first-year, upper-division, and bar preparation courses. Any law student can also sign up for one-on-one meetings to discuss study strategies, exam preparation, and bar preparation planning. Email [lawacademicsuccess@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawacademicsuccess@sandiego.edu) for more information about the resources available or to make an appointment.

## THE BAR EXAM — ONE & DONE

In order to be licensed to practice law in a particular state, you must pass that state's licensing or "bar" exam. We are here to help you pass the bar on your first attempt, so embrace this motto now: **Do it once, do it right – be One & Done!**

Our One & Done bar programming provides a holistic approach to bar exam planning and preparation through curricular offerings and informational programming. We are confident that USD law students can pass the bar exam on the first attempt if they remain engaged in bar exam planning throughout their time as law students and complete their bar exam review courses during the preparation period.

There are several bar exam action items that you must complete while you are still a student, so be sure to refer to all One & Done communications you receive. The One & Done checklists are designed to keep you on track with your bar exam preparation by completing a just few steps each year. You can find the One & Done checklist online on our website [www.sandiego.edu/law/current/california-bar/](http://www.sandiego.edu/law/current/california-bar/) or on the Academic Success & Bar Programs TWEN page.

To ensure your success on the bar exam, use all of the resources available to you, including:

- The One & Done Checklist: a year-by-year approach to bar exam planning
- USD's Multistate Bar Exam Review course
- USD's Fundamentals of Bar Exam Writing course
- Year-specific informational and Q&A workshops
- Substantive and skills lectures on a variety of bar exam topics
- And more...

Contact the Office of Academic Success and Bar Programs ([lawacademicsuccess@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawacademicsuccess@sandiego.edu)) for more information or additional bar exam resources.



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **May I visit away at another law school?**

Yes. We would love for you to stay here, but students may visit for a semester away during their second year, or during their third year for “good cause.” Good cause will normally include when a spouse or registered domestic partner has had to relocate, a close family member is ill requiring the student to move home to care for the family member, or a part-time student’s employer has transferred the student from San Diego to another city. Good cause does not include that the student intends to practice law in the other city, a desire to save expenses by attending a state school or living at home, or that a boyfriend/girlfriend has relocated to another city. While students must take letter-graded credits at the host school, credits earned as a visiting student come back as transfer credit and will not affect the student’s GPA. Students interested in visiting must first consult with and receive approval from the Office for Law Student Affairs.

### **May I graduate in five full-time semesters or seven part-time semesters?**

In limited circumstances, an option to graduate in five full-time regular semesters is available for full-time students who comply with all requirements and file a petition with the Office for Law Student Affairs no later than the last month of their third semester. The student must take at least 12 credits during each of the five regular semesters and must take at least 12 credits of summer school at USD. Upon approval of such a petition, a student may graduate in five full-time regular semesters with 12 or more summer credits completed at USD. If a student petitions to graduate early but has not taken 12 credits of summer school at USD, approval may be granted but the sixth semester of tuition will be charged to the student. Choosing the five semester and summers option may have adverse effects on employment or bar examination studies, so consult with Career & Professional Development and the Office for Academic Success & Bar Programs before pursuing this option.

In limited circumstances, an option to graduate in seven part-time regular semesters is available for part-time students who comply with all requirements and file a petition with the Office for Law Student Affairs no later than the last month of their fourth semester. The student must take at least 11 credits of summer school at USD. Upon approval of such a petition, a student may graduate in seven part-time regular semesters with 11 or more summer credits completed at USD. If a student petitions to graduate early but has not taken 11 credits of summer school at USD, approval may be granted but the eighth semester of tuition will be charged to the student. Choosing the seven semester and summers option may have adverse effects on employment or bar examination studies, so consult with Career & Professional Development and the Office for Academic Success & Bar Programs before pursuing this option.

### **May I take summer school classes and reduce my tuition during a regular (fall or spring) semester?**

No. Payment for summer school courses is in addition to the regular semester tuition owed by each student. Although summer school is an additional out-of-pocket expense, some students find it beneficial to take summer school. Students should consult with the Office for Law Student Affairs to review their options.

### **May I take summer school classes and reduce my credit load during a regular semester?**

Yes. Full-time students may take summer school classes (at USD or, upon approval, another law school) and then in subsequent regular semesters reduce their credit load below the required 12 credits (but never below eight credits). Students essentially “borrow” credits from a previous summer session in order to take less than 12 credits during a regular semester. Students are limited to “borrowing” up to four credits per semester. Please be aware that even though your credit load is below

12 credits does not mean you will pay a reduced tuition rate. You will still be billed for a full-time regular semester. Neither full-time nor part-time students may drop below eight credits in a regular semester, regardless of whether they took summer school.

**May I switch from the full-time division to the part-time division or vice versa?**

Yes. Students interested in transferring from the full-time division to the part-time division, or from the part-time division to the full-time division, must submit a request in writing to the Office for Law Student Affairs outlining their intended academic plan. Students who switch divisions will be subject to hybrid residency requirements. Students may only transfer between divisions once and it must be before the beginning of a student's fourth semester. Students subject to the Academic Supervision rules may not be eligible to switch divisions. Any student considering switching divisions should seek individualized academic counseling from the Office for Law Student Affairs prior to filing their request.

**Do I really only have 18 pass/fail credits?**

Yes and no. Instead of thinking of how many pass/fail credits you CAN have, remember that you must have 70 letter-graded credits out of a total of 88 credits to graduate. This means that you can take a few more pass/fail credits as long as you have 70 letter-graded credits when you graduate. Typically, however, students have 18 total pass/fail credits that can be applied toward the 88 credits needed to graduate. Note that you take two P/F credits for Experiential Advocacy Practicum during your first year and will take two P/F credits in your last semester for Fundamentals of Bar Exam Writing. If you complete a judicial externship or the USD Washington, D.C. Externship Program, you can submit a petition to the Office for Law Student Affairs to request a modification of the 70 letter-graded credits requirement. Students should articulate within the petition how they used their pass/fail credit allotment and why an adjustment is requested. It is rare for a student to be granted more than three additional pass/fail credits. Students who have petitions granted are typically allowed to graduate with 67 letter-graded credits instead of 70. Modifications to the 70 letter-graded credit requirement are also made for students who are approved for a visit, participate in a semester exchange, or transferred from another law school.

**As a full-time student, may I take 17 credits in a regular semester?**

Yes. Upon petition and approval by the Office for Law Student Affairs, a full-time student may take 17 credits once in their law school career. The student must pay the per unit charge for the extra credit on top of their full-time block tuition.

**As a part-time student, may I take 12 credits in a regular semester?**

Yes. Upon petition and approval by the Office for Law Student Affairs, a part-time student may take 12 credits once in their law school career. The student will still be classified as a part-time student for academic purposes (however, enrolling in 12 credits may result in full-time classification for other purposes, such as parking, etc.). The student must pay the per unit charge for the extra credit on top of their part-time block tuition.



This Academic Advising Guide is provided for the convenience of USD law students by the Office for Law Student Affairs. This guide was published in February 2021 and is subject to change. This Academic Advising Guide is not a substitute for one-on-one academic advising or the official Student Handbook, Academic Rules and Administrative Policies and Procedures of the University of San Diego. Students are encouraged to consult both the Office for Law Student Affairs and the Academic Rules before making final academic planning decisions. Students are responsible for ensuring they meet all degree requirements.