

## GRADUATION WRITING REQUIREMENT STANDARDS

### A. Requirement:

Each second or third year student is required to complete satisfactorily one rigorous writing requirement prior to graduation. To complete this requirement each student must prepare a scholarly, well documented and well written paper that develops a thesis on a legal topic. The paper must be fully researched and supported by authority. For a paper to satisfy the graduation writing requirement it must be written under the supervision of and approval by a faculty member at the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

### B. Grade:

The paper written for the graduation writing requirement will be evaluated by the supervising faculty member separately from the student's overall performance in a seminar or course for which it may be written. The paper must be of at least B minus (B-) quality in order to satisfy the writing requirement. Since seminar or course requirements may differ from the graduation writing requirement, a paper written for the writing requirement may not satisfy a particular professor's course or seminar requirements. Likewise, a paper that satisfies a particular professor's course or seminar requirements may not automatically satisfy the graduation writing requirement standards.

### C. Minimum Standards:

A paper must be of a length appropriate to the subject matter under investigation by the student. As a general guideline, the paper should total a minimum of twenty double-spaced textual pages, exclusive of the title page, table of contents, footnotes, bibliography, and appendixes. Students must submit a hard copy and an electronic copy of their papers. Students should be aware that the College is party to license agreements that allow electronic comparison of their papers with the writings of others. To facilitate such comparisons, the requisite electronic copy must be submitted in an acceptable format. Acceptable formats include Word or pdf.

### D. Progress Report and Deadline:

Each faculty member supervising a student will require at least one progress report or initial draft during the semester the paper is being written. More progress reports or drafts may be required at the discretion of the faculty member supervising the student. Unless an earlier date is established by the supervising faculty member, the deadline for submitting the substantial paper written for the upper class writing requirement is the last day of finals in the semester in which the student is writing the paper. The supervising faculty member may grant the student a continuance if good cause is shown. Penalties for late submission of a paper are at the discretion of the supervising faculty member.

### E. Form and Style:

It is expected that any paper submitted to satisfy the writing requirement will be in standard written English including proper spelling and punctuation. The student should conform the style of paper to the most recent edition of either *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* or *ALWD Citation Manual* unless the faculty member supervising the paper directs otherwise.

F. Graduation Writing Requirement Curriculum:

1. There are a number of courses that will provide the opportunity for second or third year students to satisfy this writing requirement. These are:
  - a. All seminars will provide the opportunity for students to satisfy the requirement. A list of the seminars offered each semester will be provided to the students in enrollment materials. If in the faculty member's discretion the course work for a seminar would not otherwise provide the opportunity for a student to satisfy the writing requirement, the faculty member must allow the student to do additional work that would satisfy the writing requirement.
  - b. All students who enroll for Directed Legal Research will be given the opportunity to write a paper that satisfies the writing requirement.
  - c. A law review's writing requirement will provide the opportunity for students to satisfy the graduate writing requirement. Fulfillment of a law review's requirements, however, will not automatically satisfy the graduation writing requirement. That requirement will be met only if the paper also satisfies the minimum graduation writing requirement standards.
  - d. Other courses in the curriculum may offer an opportunity for students to satisfy the writing requirement. If any course offers the student the option of writing a paper or papers to satisfy the course's requirements, the student may submit, upon permission of the professor, that paper or series of papers to the professor for certification by the faculty member as satisfying the graduation writing requirement.
2. Some courses and curricular activities at the College of Law will not offer students the opportunity to satisfy the writing requirement. These include:
  - a. Courses with no paper option or requirement.
  - b. Competitions.
  - c. Serving as a law review editor or officer.

G. Procedure:

Students who enroll in any course with the intention of writing a paper to satisfy the writing requirement must inform the professor of that intention at the earliest possible time in the semester. The faculty member will be required to certify the student's successful completion of the writing requirement on a form provided by Student Services.

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**GRADUATION WRITING REQUIREMENT**

I hereby certify that \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Student)

has satisfactorily completed the Graduation Writing Requirement in the following course:

\_\_\_\_\_ during the \_\_\_\_\_ semester  
(Name of Course)

in accordance with the standards approved by the Faculty. Included among those standards:

- Each student must prepare a scholarly, well documented and well written paper that develops a thesis on a legal topic.
- The paper must be of at least B minus (B-) quality in order to satisfy the writing requirement.
- As a general guideline, the paper should total a minimum of twenty double-spaced textual pages, exclusive of the title page, table of contents, footnotes, bibliography, and appendixes.
- Each faculty member supervising a student will require at least one progress report or initial draft.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Faculty Member Signature)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \*

**ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools, 302(a)(3):**

“A law school shall require that each student receive substantial instruction in writing in a legal context, including . . . at least one . . . rigorous writing experience after the first year . . . .”

**Interpretation 302-1:**

“Factors to be considered in evaluating the rigor of writing instruction include: the number and nature of writing projects assigned to students; the opportunities a student has to meet with a writing instructor for purposes of individualized assessment of the student’s written products; the number of drafts that a student must produce of any writing project; and the form of assessment used by the writing instructor.

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