
Peking University School of Transnational Law Academic Rules

Fall 2024

These rules are intended to preserve the academic integrity of Peking University School of Transnational Law and the value and prestige of STL degrees. Strict compliance with these rules is expected of all STL students; noncompliance would undermine the hard-earned academic achievements of STL students and the reputation of STL.

While enrolled at STL, students are subject to the Academic Rules of both Peking University and STL. In some cases, because of the access to the legal profession afforded by an STL degree, an STL rule may impose a higher standard of conduct than a counterpart Peking University rule. *In all such cases, students are obliged to comply with the higher standard of conduct imposed by the STL rule.*

Students who violate STL's Academic Rules are subject to appropriate academic sanction, including letters of reprimand, a conditional revocation of good academic standing, failure of a course, or, subject to concurrence by PKUSZ Student Affairs and Chancellors Committee, suspension or dismissal from STL.

ACADEMIC RULES AND STANDARDS

1. Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance of STL classes is required as a condition of receiving credit for a course. Ordinarily, students may miss class only with advance permission from the instructor. Excessive absences may result in a lower grade for the course, dismissal from the course, or failure of the course. In addition, no student who is enrolled in a course may miss the first class of that course unless excused in advance by the instructor.

Missing more than two classes without excuse is presumptively excessive for 1L students; missing more than ten percent of classes without excuse or more than fifteen percent of classes with or without excuse are presumptively excessive for upper-level students. Instructors are authorized to require a higher standard of attendance and to take absences from class into account in awarding grades.

2. Preparation for Class

Adequate preparation of assignments and informed participation in class discussion are expected of every student. A student's preparation for class and the quality of a student's participation in class discussion may be taken into account in determining a student's grade for a course. A persistent lack of preparation will lead to dismissal from the course.

3. E-mail

All STL students are required to check e-mail daily during the academic year. Most administrative and class announcements are sent via e-mail to each student's PKU STL email account. Missing an announcement because of a failure to check e-mail is never a valid excuse.

Students should create e-mail accounts with pinyin usernames (for example: wangwang@stu.pku.edu.cn) in place of the numerical usernames assigned on the basis of student ID numbers (123456789@stu.pku.edu.cn).

4. Limitations on Student Employment and Internships

J.D./J.M. students may not accept employment or internships during periods of residency that interfere with the obligations of the full-time study of law.

First and second-year J.D./J.M. students may not accept employment or internships of any kind, except that second-year international J.D./J.M. students may accept employment or internships that require no more than 20 hours work per week.

No third or fourth-year J.D./J.M. student who is in residence and enrolled full-time may accept employment or internships of any kind that exceed 20 hours per week.

LL.M. students may not during periods of residency accept employment or internships of any kind that exceed 20 hours per week without advance approval from the Dean or his or her designee.

Employment or internships are never a valid excuse for class absence.

5. Minimum and Maximum Credit Limits Per Academic Quarter (Classes of 2021 and Earlier)

To qualify for full-time status in any given quarter, a student must take and complete at least 9 credits. Part-time status is available for students during the first 13 quarters of STL's standard J.D./J.M. program or the first 9 quarters of STL's international J.D./J.M. program only with the consent of the Director of Academic Affairs.

No students may enroll in more than 15 credits in any first, second or third quarter unless they (i) enroll in no more than a total of 18 credits of which no more than 15 are credits from J.D. courses, or (ii) the Office of Academic Affairs announces an exception before the registration period for a particular quarter due to the scheduling of required courses. No student may enroll in more than 13 credits in any fourth quarter.

5. Minimum and Maximum Credit Limits Per Academic Quarter (Classes of 2022 and Later)

To qualify for full-time status in any given quarter, a student must take and complete at least 9 credits. Part-time status is available for students during the first 13 quarters of STL's standard J.D./J.M. program or the first 9 quarters of STL's international J.D./J.M. program only with the consent of the Director of Academic Affairs.

No students may enroll in more than 15 credits in any first, second or third quarter unless the Office of Academic Affairs announces an exception before the registration period for a particular quarter due to the scheduling of required courses. No student may enroll in more than 13 credits in any fourth quarter.

6. Residency Requirements

Students in STL's standard J.D./J.M. dual degree program must maintain full-time status for at least 11 quarters during STL's four-year J.D./J.M. program.

The requirement of 11 quarters of residency is a minimum requirement. The faculty of STL emphasize that students are encouraged to take their time to pursue their studies and should not attempt to hastily complete their academic programs.

Students enrolled in STL's J.D./J.M. program for international students must maintain full-time status for at least 9 quarters.

Students participating in approved overseas exchange programs will be credited with appropriate equivalent residency credit by the Office of Academic Affairs.

7. Limits on Particular Types of Credits (Classes of 2021 and Earlier)

No more than the specified number of the following credits may count toward satisfaction of J.D. or J.M. degree requirements:

Six credits of graduate-level courses offered by PKU academic units other than STL, but only with advance approval of the Office of Academic Affairs;

Four credits for STL law review or journal membership;

Three credits for approved moot court participation;

Nine credits for approved externships;

Four credits of independent study;

No more than one pass/fail-eligible course four or fewer credits.

No more than 16 credits, total, of the foregoing types of credits may be counted toward J.D./J.M. degree requirements.

7. Limits on Particular Types of Credits (Classes of 2022 and Later)

No more than the specified number of the following credits may count toward satisfaction of J.D. or J.M. degree requirements:

Six credits of graduate-level courses offered by PKU academic units other than STL, but only with advance approval of the Office of Academic Affairs;

Four credits for STL law review or journal membership;

Three credits for approved moot court participation;

Six credits for approved externships;

Four credits of independent study except that no single independent study may account for more than two credits and a second independent study will require the approval of the Dean or Associate Dean for J.M. Academic Affairs;

No more than one pass/fail-eligible course.

No more than 12 credits, total, of the foregoing types of credits may be counted toward J.D./J.M. degree requirements.

8. Required Courses

Students are expected to take required courses in the sequence prescribed by the Law School. Dropping or deferring a required course is not permitted except in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Director of Academic Affairs.

9. Course Add and Drop Deadlines

Course Add Deadline

Students may add a course through the expiration the first ten percent of instructional hours of the course and before instruction begins in excess of ten percent of the instructional hours, but not thereafter absent compelling circumstances and the permission of both the instructor and Academic Affairs.

Course Drop Deadline

Students may drop a course during the first thirty percent of instructional hours of the course, but not thereafter absent compelling circumstances and Academic Affairs approval.

Consequences of Dismissal from Courses for Poor Attendance

Students who are dismissed from or fail a course for poor attendance or non-attendance will lose their enrollment priority for the following two quarters.

10. Auditing

An upper-level student may audit a course with the written permission of the instructor and the Director of Academic Affairs. First-year students may not audit courses. Auditing a course entails adherence by the student to such standards and conditions as the instructor may prescribe, except that the student is not required to submit papers or to take a final examination and is not graded. The fact that a student has audited a course shall be indicated in the official records of STL.

A student may take a course for credit that he or she previously audited for fewer than five weeks.

11. Grading Expectations

Classes of more than 20 students

For classes in which more than 20 students are enrolled, the mean grade should be approximately 3.5 except with the approval of the Dean or Dean's designee.

Grades of A+, A, and A- should be limited to 30 to 40% of the class.

The distribution of the grades of B+, B, B-, C+, C, and C- is at the discretion of the instructor as long as the mean grade is approximately 3.5.

Grades of A+ may be awarded to a maximum of 5% of the class.

Up to a maximum of 4% of the students may be nominated to receive a Dean's Citation.

Classes of 20 or fewer students

For classes of 20 or fewer students, the mean grade should be between approximately 3.6 to 3.7 except with the approval of the Dean or Dean's designee.

Grades of A and A- are not limited to any specific percentage as long as the mean grade is between approximately 3.6 to 3.7.

The grade of A+ may be awarded to a maximum of one student.

Up to a maximum of one student may be nominated to receive a Dean's Citation.

Exceptional Circumstances: Instructors may award grades that diverge appreciably from the above expectations on the basis of exceptional circumstances with the consent of the Dean or the Dean's designee.

Courses Taught in Multiple Sections: Generally, for courses taught in multiple sections by the same instructor during the same quarter, the number of students in the class will be the combined number of students in all of the sections.

Grades of F: Nothing in the above grading policy is to be read as precluding instructors from awarding grades of F where, among others, the course learning outcomes are not met, a student fails to appear at a final examination without leave, is excessively absent from the class, is not permitted to attend the final examination, or violates the Academic Integrity Code.

12. Good Standing

In order to remain in good academic standing, an upper-level student or LL.M. student must (i) maintain a cumulative grade point average of C+ or higher, (ii) achieve a grade point average of C+ or higher in every quarter in which the student is enrolled full-time, and (iii) not receive a grade of C or lower in more than forty percent of the maximum credits in any single quarter.

In order for a first-year student to remain in good academic standing, the student must (i) maintain a cumulative grade point average of C or higher and (ii) not receive a grade of C- or lower in any course.

In order to remain in good academic standing, all students must abide by STL's academic integrity rules and the high standards for integrity and ethical conduct required by the profession of law.

13. Academic Probation

The Office of Academic Affairs will notify the Dean and student of any student's failure to maintain good academic standing. A student who falls out of good academic standing shall be placed on academic probation according to terms and conditions set by the Faculty Academic Standing Committee if the student's conditional continuation in law school seems likely in the Committee's opinion to result in the student regaining good academic standing. The Faculty Academic Standing Committee shall refer to the Dean for PKUSZ processing any student the Committee deems ineligible for conditional continuation in law school and any student who fails to regain academic standing according to terms or conditions established by the Committee.

14. Examinations

Students must take examinations at the scheduled dates and times. Students must refrain from scheduling other activities (employment start dates, interviews, travel, etc.) during exam periods. Exam scheduling changes are rarely granted and only where it can be demonstrated either through documentation or otherwise that (i) the request was made prior to the examination, (ii) the student contacted the Director of Academic Affairs immediately upon learning of the conflict, and (iii) the conflict was beyond the student's control.

Because of the importance of anonymous grading, students must not discuss any exam scheduling or re-scheduling issues with faculty.

15. Dean's Citations

For every 25 students in a class, an instructor may nominate one student to receive a Dean's Citation recognizing superior performance.

An instructor should round up to the nearest multiple of 25 to determine the number of Dean's Citations that may be awarded. For example, in a class of 20 students, an instructor may award one Dean's Citation; in a class of 45, up to two Dean's Citations; and, in a class of 90, up to four Dean's Citations.

16. Retaking a Failed Course

Any student receiving a failing grade in a required course shall be required to retake the course. The failing grade shall be recorded on the student's STL transcript and included in the student's grade point average. Once a previously failed course is retaken and passed, the grade earned when the student retook the course also shall appear on the student's STL transcript and be factored into the student's grade point average.

A student may retake a failed elective course only with permission of the instructor. In such a case, both the original failing grade and retaken grade shall appear on the student's STL transcript and be factored into the student's grade-point average.

17. Reporting and Announcement of Grades

Instructors are required to submit their final grades in all completed courses of a particular quarter to the Office of Academic Affairs no more than 45 days beginning from the last day of the designated examination period for that quarter.

Within a reasonable time of receipt of grades from instructors, the Office of Academic Affairs report the grades to students on the electronic system utilized by the university.

18. Juris Doctor Substantial Research Paper Requirement

Every J.D. degree candidate must complete a substantial research paper (SRP). An SRP is:

- a) a careful, extensive and original treatment of a topic that has been certified in advance as appropriate for SRP designation by a full-time member of the Law School's resident faculty (or non-resident visiting or part-time faculty member approved by the dean) who also has agreed to supervise preparation of the paper;
- b) submitted by a student who has taken advantage of one or more opportunities to respond to suggestions and criticism in producing the paper; and
- c) not largely derivative of pre-existing or concurrent work undertaken for another academic degree, internship or other job, or some other project outside of the Law School (for example, a moot court or an exchange program).

An SRP is typically 40 pages in length, but revisions and opportunities to rework arguments and writing are more important than length.

A paper completed for a Law School course designated by the faculty as an advanced legal writing course may satisfy the SRP requirement if it is approved by the instructor of that course for this purpose.

A paper completed for independent study credit under the supervision of a faculty member in full-time residence at the Law School (or a non-resident part-time or visiting faculty member approved by the dean) may satisfy the SRP requirement.

19. Juris Master Thesis Requirement

Every J.M. degree candidate must complete and successfully defend a graduation thesis. The paper requirements for the graduation thesis are equivalent to those for the SRP and a student may submit a paper for which SRP credit was approved as his/her thesis.

20. Limitations on Participation in External Moot Court and Student Competitions

No first-year students enrolled in STL's J.D./J.M. dual degree program may participate in an external moot court competition until Quarter Four of the first year of their studies.

No student may participate in an external moot court competition or any stage thereof without the advance approval of the Dean or his or her designee.

Students who participate in external moot courts or other competitions must seek advance permission from their instructors if participation in the competition conflicts with their scheduled classes. Rule 1's definition of "excessive absence" applies in all events.



Participating in moot court or other competitions is not an excuse for failing to prepare for, attend and participate fully in class. Instructors may take absences from class into account when awarding grades.