

First Year JD Curriculum Reform

The Curriculum Committee has been asked to investigate the current curriculum in the first year of the Juris Doctorate (JD) program and to produce a proposal recommending revisions of the curriculum for Faculty Council to consider.

A diagram of the current JD curriculum is attached as an appendix to this document.

For reasons set out below, the Committee intends to propose to Faculty Council a small set of revisions to the curriculum that, if passed by Faculty Council at its meeting in February 2023, could be implemented for the JD class entering in September 2023. The Committee describes these revisions as **the short-term proposal**.

The Committee will also continue its work to produce a broader proposal that will come to Faculty Council in the 2023-24 academic year. The Committee describes these revisions as **the long-term proposal**.

As part of this process of review, the Committee invites feedback from our community. At this moment, the Committee seeks particular feedback on the short-term proposal via an online survey and through in-person/hybrid consultations described at the end of this document. Before completing the survey, please review the background information below.

Motivation and Constraints

Student Wellbeing Concerns

Out of concern for student wellbeing, the Committee is working on a short-term proposal to modify the first-year curriculum for the class entering in September 2023, while also working towards a broader review of the curriculum. A recent and comprehensive student wellbeing survey revealed the impact of what many consider to be an unmanageable first-year workload on student well-being. Students identified the second term of first year, when they have seven courses and when most of those courses are evaluated with 100% final exams in April, as having a particularly negative impact. Concern about this negative impact has led the Committee to produce a short-term proposal that, if passed through Faculty Council and Senate in time, could be implemented for next year.

Constraints

In producing this proposal, the Committee has been limited by several significant constraints that reduce the time available for considering changes and that restrict the options.

1. Student Information System

The University is in the process of moving to a new student information system – Workday Student. As part of the transition, any curriculum changes that are to take effect in time for next year (the 2023-2024 academic year) or the following year (the 2024-2025 academic year) must pass Senate by May

2023. In order to be ready in time for the Senate in May, the proposal will need to come to Faculty Council for a first reading in January 2023 and for a vote in February 2023.

The Committee has determined that it is not possible to undertake the needed consultation and study in order to recommend *major* curricular changes by the Senate deadlines. As a result, the Committee will continue to work towards a proposal for broad-based curriculum reform, to be implemented for the 2025-26 academic year. In the meantime, it is focusing on preparing a short-term proposal to be introduced to Faculty Council in January 2023.

2. Credits

The Committee has determined that it is not possible, within the short window available, to alter the number of credits (32 credits) that are currently allocated to first year. Reducing the number of credits in first year would affect tuition revenue for the Law School and could have an impact on financial aid for students, both of which require longer term planning than is possible in the near future.

3. Scheduling

Teaching assignments and class schedules have already been set for 2023-24. The Committee has determined that it is not possible at this stage to make major changes that will affect the schedule.

Short-Term Proposal

Given the Committee's sense of the need to act on student well-being concerns, the constraints on what is possible to implement for the 2023-24 academic year, and the need for broader consultation and study before proposing significant and long-term changes, the Committee is proposing the following short-term revisions to the first year JD curriculum to be implemented in September 2023:

- Remove LAW261 Transnational Law (2 credits) as a required first-year course.
- Insert LAWXXX Transnational Law (2 credits) as a required upper-year course.
- Create LAWXXX Advocacy (2 credits, Pass/Fail) as a required course in the first year, Term 2.

LAWXXX Advocacy will incorporate the existing first-year moot requirements which are currently taught in first-year as a non-credit add-on to one of the courses. The workload for students in this new course will be the same as the current first-year moot.

The Committee is proposing this curriculum change for the following reasons:

- Moving a course out of Term 2 responds directly to student concerns about the number of courses and its negative effect on well-being.
- Creating LAWXXX Advocacy to replace LAW261 Transnational Law maintains the existing number of credits in first year.
- Assigning credits to a new course (LAWXXX Advocacy) recognizes work that students are already doing and does not increase the workload.
- Inserting Transnational Law as a required course in the upper year curriculum retains the required content of the existing JD program.

- Moving Transnational Law into the upper year curriculum instead of other courses (notably the other 2-credit courses: LAW281 Legal Research & Writing and LAW291 Aboriginal & Treaty Rights) is least the disruptive to the scheduling and structure of the existing curriculum.

The Curriculum Committee is introducing this proposal as a short-term measure. It is the Committee's view that adopting this proposal is not committing the Faculty to it in the long term. These changes, along with the curriculum as it currently exists, will be reviewed as part of the Committee's work to produce a long-term proposal.

Consultation on Short-Term Proposal

The Committee envisions consultation will occur in many ways. For Fall 2022, the Committee has created an online survey and will hold in-person and virtual consultation sessions to explain the short-term proposal and to hear feedback and comments from students and faculty. We anticipate undertaking further consultation with a broader range of stakeholders on longer-term reform in the new year.

Student Consultations re Short-Term Proposal Coordinated through the LSS

- Wednesday, November 16, 2022 @ 12:30 location TBD
- Wednesday, November 24, 2022 @ 12:30 location TBD

Faculty Consultations re Short-Term Proposal

- Tuesday, November 15, 2022 @ 12:30-2:00pm in Allard Hall Room 111 & via Zoom
- Wednesday, November 23, 2022 @ 12:30-2:00pm in Allard Hall Room 114 & via Zoom

Contact Us

Written comments or feedback to the Curriculum Committee can be sent to Co-Chairs [Doug Harris](#) and [Debra Parkes](#).

2022-2023 Committee members are:

Professor Debra Parkes (co-chair)
Professor Doug Harris (co-chair)
Associate Dean Isabel Grant
Associate Professor of Teaching Nikos Harris
Associate Professor Jie Cheng
Assistant Professor Robert Clifford
Ryan Sissons, LSS Representative
Vaibrav Aggarwal, LSS Representative
Kaila Mikkelsen, Assistant Dean, Students
Susan Morin, Director, Academic Services
Janice DeSouza-Vas (Administrative Support)

Appendix: Current JD Curriculum



PETER A. ALLARD
SCHOOL OF LAW

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

(for students commencing their law degree in September 2020)

To graduate with a Juris Doctor degree, a student must earn a minimum of 92 credits to graduate (32 first year credits + 60 upper year credits).

All of the first-year courses (32 credits) are compulsory:

- Law 200 Indigenous Settler Legal Relations (3 credits)
- Law 211 Contracts (5 credits)
- Law 221 Criminal Law & Procedure (5 credits)
- Law 231 Property Law (5 credits)
- Law 241 Torts (5 Credits)
- Law 261 Transnational Law (2 credits)
- Law 271 Introduction to Public Law & the Charter (3 credits)
- Law 281 Legal Research & Writing (2 credits)
- Law 291 Aboriginal & Treaty Rights (2 credits)

In the upper years (2L & 3L), a student must complete 60 upper-year credits including the following mandatory courses:

- Law 347 Federalism (2/3 credits)
- Law 300 Jurisprudence and Critical Perspectives (3 credits)
- Law 372 Administrative Law (4 credits)
- Law 468 Ethics and Professionalism (3 credits)
- Seminar or [Directed Research](#) (3 credits)
- Experiential requirement

CREDIT RESTRICTIONS

- Maximum of 18 credits per term and 34 credits per Winter Session
- 103 credit maximum towards degree
- Maximum of 6 UBC credits of courses outside Law (with [advance permission](#) and in accordance with Faculty regulations)

EXPERIENTIAL REQUIREMENT

Students must complete one experiential course or program before graduation. This requirement is met through successful completion of a credit-bearing:

- [clinical program](#); or
- [competitive moot](#); or
- course approved by the Associate Dean Academic Affairs and the Curriculum Committee as having a substantial experiential component and listed as meeting the requirement on the Allard Law website (such courses to be identified on a year to year basis). The following courses meet the experiential requirement:

- Law 446.001: Corporate Solicitors' Workshop
- Law 472: The Allan McEachern Course in Trial Advocacy
- Law 474: Trial Advocacy
- Law 477: Negotiation and Dispute Resolution
- Law 478: Foundations of Dispute Resolution
- Law 481D.001: Intercultural Dispute Resolution
- Law 481D.002: Resilient Lawyering in a Time of Change

These courses (if offered) will be open for student self-registration during the July registration period. These courses are NOT included in the 20 credit clinical and moot credit cap.

CLINICAL AND MOOTING LIMITS

The following rules apply to clinical and moot credits for all JD students:

- Students are limited to **20 credits** of clinical and competitive moot
- Students are not permitted to take more than **two clinical programs** in the course of their JD degree
- Credit will be granted for only one of LAW 488 (Indigenous Community Legal Clinic), LAW 490 (Criminal Clinic), and LAW 491 (LSLAP)