



Experiential Learning Planning Guide

Effective March 2026

Experiential Learning Requirement

JD students must complete 15 units of experiential learning courses or their equivalent in order to graduate. These courses must fall into the following categories:

- 4 units of Legal Research & Writing I, II (LAW 181, 182)
- 6 units of upper-level courses designated as AEXP*, and
- 5 units of additional experiential courses that may be either AEXP or EXPR** or a waiver of this requirement¹

*AEXP: upper-level courses designated as experiential under the ABA definition of experiential courses, as determined by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and noted in the course schedule

**EXPR: classes designated as experiential by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, also noted in the course schedule. The notations above apply to the rest of this document to indicate whether a particular course is AEXP or EXPR.

General Unit Limits

Maximum 16 units per semester (Academic Policy 3.11)

Maximum 22 units total for non-letter graded units (i.e. graded at High Pass/Pass/Credit/Fail or Pass/Fail). (Academic Policy 3.40)

Maximum 22 units total for non-classroom courses (i.e. courses involving student participation in studies or activities in a format that does not involve attendance at regularly scheduled class sessions, including field placement programs (e.g. externship or practicum), moot court, law review, and directed research. (Academic Policy 3.12)

Maximum 10 units of externship per semester

¹ Students may seek a waiver for up to 5 units of the experiential education requirement by certifying that they have completed 50 hours of legal work under the supervision of a lawyer, without receiving school credit, paid or unpaid, per unit waived. Note that this is a waiver of units applicable to the 15 unit experiential learning requirement, not a waiver of total general units required to graduate. Email the Clinical Education Program at clinicallaw@pepperdine.edu for a waiver.



Plan Experiential Courses - 15 Unit Minimum Requirement

Term	Course	Units
1L Fall	Legal Research & Writing 1	2
1L Spring	Legal Research & Writing 1	2
2L Summer		
2L Fall		
2L Spring		
3L Summer		
3L Fall		
3L Spring		

Clinical Education Program

Clinical Education Programs are considered AEXP courses and satisfy any of the 11 units of upper-level and additional experiential course requirements.

I. Externships (1-10 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)*

Externships are field placements offered during Fall, Spring, and Summer where students earn academic credit for qualifying legal work under supervision of experienced lawyers.

Students may earn credit for legal work in courts, government agencies, public interest practices, and corporate counsel/in-house counsel offices, regardless of whether the student is paid or unpaid. Students may also earn credit for work at private law firms if they are either (1) nonprofit public interest entities (cf. section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code), regardless of whether the student is paid or unpaid, or (2) for-profit law firms where the student is paid.



II. Clinics (2-3 units per semester - classroom, non-letter graded units)*

Clinics are upper-level elective courses offered during the Fall and Spring semesters where students practice law under the supervision of law professors with real clients in high stakes environments.

Clinics (3 units - classroom units)

- Darling Religious Liberty Clinic (must apply)
- Disaster Relief Clinic
- Faith and Family Mediation Clinic
- Legal Aid Clinic
- Low Income Taxpayer Clinic
- Mediation Clinic - 2 units
- Ninth Circuit Appellate Advocacy Clinic (must apply)
- Quattrone Wrongful Convictions Appellate Clinic (must apply)
- Restoration and Justice Clinic
- Startup Law Clinic (must apply)

III. Advocacy Programs

Advocacy Programs are considered AEXP courses and satisfy any of the 11 units of upper-level and additional experiential course requirements.

Interschool Trial Competitions

Pepperdine competes at a very high level against other law schools on the national and international stage.

- ***Trial Competition Teams:*** To be eligible to try out for the trial team, 2L and 3L students must be in good academic standing, must have taken or be currently enrolled in Trial Practice (3 units - classroom, non-letter graded)*, and must compete in open tryouts during the Fall semester. Students selected for the Interschool Teams enroll in Honors Trial Practice (2 units - non-classroom, non-letter graded)*.
- ***Appellate Advocacy Team:*** This Appellate Advocacy Team competes in national and international moot court competitions, submitting written briefs and then presenting oral arguments. Team members are selected each spring semester. All students must enroll in Appellate Advocacy (2 units - writing intensive) in the fall and Honors Appellate Advocacy (2 units - classroom, non-letter graded)* in the spring.



IV. Journals

*Journals are considered EXPR courses and satisfy any of the 5 units of additional experiential course requirements. *Indicates that the course is designated as AEXP, **Indicates that the course is designated as EXPR*

Pepperdine Law Review (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)**

The Pepperdine Law Review is a scholarly legal journal edited and published by students selected on the basis of scholarship and the ability to do creative research and writing. Students write comments and notes on legal developments and significant cases, as well as edit the lead articles and book reviews written by professors, lawyers, judges, legislators, and other scholars.

Courses: Law 2/3 Law Review

Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)**

The law school published the inaugural issues of the Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal in 2001. Focusing on the area of dispute resolution, the journal features scholastic contributions similar to those found in traditional law reviews, as well as material written from the dispute resolution practitioner's perspective.

Courses: Law 42/43 Dispute Resolution Law Journal

Pepperdine Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship, and the Law (1-2 units per semester - non-classroom, non-letter graded units)**

The Pepperdine Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship, and the Law (JBEL) is sponsored by the Geoffrey H. Palmer Center for Entrepreneurship and the Law and is produced by Palmer Center Fellows. The journal contributes to the body of legal knowledge by publishing high quality academic articles in the fields of business, entrepreneurship, and the law.

Courses: Law 62/63 Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship and the Law