

FACULTY POLICIES ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

In the event that any provision contained in this *Faculty Policies on Academic Standards* appears contrary to or inconsistent with any provision published in any edition of the *Samford University Catalog* governing Samford University undergraduate students, this Policy shall control matters pertaining to academic standards governing law students.

100 ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

101 RESPONSIBILITIES: The Academic Standards Committee, by delegation from the faculty, has the primary responsibility for the supervision and governance of all law school matters pertaining to the academic performance of its students, including but not limited to the following specific functions:

- (a) Establishment, subject to faculty approval, of appropriate standards governing academic dismissal of students;
- (b) Administration of academic standards relative to the readmission of students dismissed for academic reasons; and
- (c) Administration, within established faculty guidelines, of minimum academic requirements for graduation.

102 MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING: The Academic Standards Committee will consist of a chairperson and two members. All members will be full time law school faculty; each will have one vote in all matters before the Committee--a majority vote will govern in all matters. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will be an ex-officio member empowered to vote when a regular member cannot vote.

103 NO APPEAL: Decisions of the Committee are final. There is no specific right of appeal to the law school faculty as a whole.

104 COMMITTEE PROCEDURES: The Committee may establish its own internal operating policies and procedures as it deems appropriate.

105 ACADEMIC RULE-MAKING: All formal academic rules shall be approved by a majority vote of the faculty. The Academic Standards Committee shall have no rule-

making authority that is not expressly delegated by the faculty.

200 ACADEMIC POLICIES

201 **REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE**: Students who have completed ninety (90) credit hours of acceptable credit (credit given for a “D-” or higher in a course) with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher (“C” or higher); and who have satisfactorily completed the required curriculum, upon vote of the law school faculty, shall be recommended for the Juris Doctor degree (J.D.).

(a) **Course Requirements**: In order to qualify for award of the J.D. degree, the ninety (90) credit hours that a student successfully completes must include:

(i) All first-year courses: Civil Procedure I & II; Contracts I & II; Criminal Law; Evidence; Lawyering & Legal Reasoning I & II; Real Property; and Torts.

(ii) The following upper level required courses: Constitutional Law I & II; Business Organizations; Criminal Procedure I; Professional Responsibilities; Secured Transactions; and Wills, Trusts and Estates.

(iii) Beginning with the Class of 2022, students must register for a course or seminar designated as satisfying the upper-level writing requirement no later than the semester prior to the semester in which the student is slated to graduate. For members of the Class of 2022 only, the Associate Dean may, for good cause, waive this requirement.

(iv) Six (6) credit-hours of courses designated as satisfying the experiential learning requirement.

(v) Sixty-four (64) credit hours from courses that require attendance at regularly scheduled classroom sessions in the law school or distance education courses offered by the law school. The following *cannot* be used to satisfy this 64-credit-hour requirement: Law 720 and 721 (Directed Research I and II), Law 908-917 (Externship Placements), Law 751 and 752 (Legal Research Teaching Assistant), Law 722 (Law Review Writing Seminar, all credits), and Law 733 (Trial Journal Writing Seminar, all credits), Law 840 (National Trial Team, all credits), and Law 844 (National Moot Court Team, all credits).

(b) **Graduation Writing Requirement** (*effective for 1L class starting Fall 2022*). Pursuant to ABA Standard 303(a)(2), each student, after attaining 30-credit hours, must complete a supervised rigorous writing experience prior to graduation. To satisfy this requirement, each student must complete a course or seminar or other approved writing experience.

A course, seminar, or other approved writing experience will satisfy the writing requirement only if:

it is for academic credit and graded (pass/fail courses do not qualify);

it is taught by a member of the law school faculty;

it contains a rigorous writing component that constitutes a substantial part of the grade in the course; and either

the professor provides substantial individualized feedback on multiple iterations of a substantial, well-written and properly cited graded writing project, including written feedback on at least one complete draft prior to the student's submitting the final draft of the project, or

the professor provides substantial individualized feedback on multiple graded substantive writing projects assigned during the semester, including written feedback on at least one complete draft prior to the student's submitting the final draft of each writing project.

Every student must produce an original analytic paper (or papers) showing original thought and analysis which has undergone a comment and draft process under the supervision of a faculty member. Typically, that process will include the preparation of a formal outline, a thesis statement, and multiple draft(s), all of which have been completed in consultation with the supervising faculty member.

A paper (or papers) containing a combined total of 7,000 words (inclusive of footnotes) and otherwise prepared in accordance with the requirements of this rule will satisfy the graduation writing requirement.

The graduation writing requirement may be satisfied by the student producing:

- (1) a traditional note or comment;
- (2) a research paper with substantive analysis;
- (3) a proposal for law reform with defense and commentary;
- (4) a memorandum of law or a brief addressing a substantial legal issue(s); or
- (5) any other equivalent substantive writing project that meets the above requirements.

The associate dean shall determine each semester which courses and seminars meet the above requirements and thus will qualify as courses that satisfy the graduation writing requirement. In making that determination, the associate dean shall consider the number and nature of writing projects assigned; 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. Courses that satisfy the requirement then will be designated on the course schedule and other records with the designation "R" in their course numbers. Any course approved for "R" designation must comply with these graduation writing requirements.

The following will not satisfy the writing requirement:

- Experiential learning courses where grading is primarily based upon performance simulations;
- Externships;
- Courses that mimic the law firm clerking experience;
- Briefs and memoranda written for student competitions in which faculty supervision is not otherwise permitted; and
- Directed Research that is not designated as satisfying the above requirement.

Students must register for a course, seminar, or other approved writing experience designated as satisfying the graduation writing requirement no later than the semester prior to the semester in which the student is slated to graduate.

(c) Transfer Students: A student must be in good standing at another law school that is also accredited by the American Bar Association to be considered for a transfer to the Cumberland School of Law. In addition to the requirements for a degree under § 201, a transfer student must satisfactorily complete the required course curriculum. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall determine any credit for course equivalencies on transfer. Also, a transfer student must accumulate a minimum of 50 credit hours of study at the Cumberland School of Law in meeting the ninety (90) credit hour requirement under § 201.

(d) Normal Completion of Degree: Under normal circumstances a student is expected to complete ninety (90) credit hours within three (3) academic years taking a full course load as prescribed by the faculty. In no event will a student be allowed to take longer than four (4) academic years to complete all requirements for the degree without the written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs obtained during the four-year period.

(e) Course Loads

(i) Minimum/Maximum Loads: The minimum load which can be taken during each regular semester is thirteen (13) credit hours unless the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs approves a lighter load pursuant to (ii) below. The maximum load which a student can take is sixteen (16) credit hours each regular semester and eight (8) credit hours during a summer session unless the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs approves a heavier load pursuant to (ii) below, or unless the student qualifies for a heavier load as a joint degree

student pursuant to (iii) below.

(ii) Heavy/Light Loads: A student may take up to seventeen (17) credit hours as a maximum load with the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, but except as provided in (iii) below with respect to joint degree students, in no event will a student be permitted to take more than seventeen (17) credit hours. During a summer session a student may take nine (9) credit hours with the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, but in no event will the student be permitted to take more than nine (9) credit hours. Similarly, a student may take less than thirteen (13) credit hours in a regular semester only with the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. In exercising discretion under this section, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall consider the student's past academic record as an indicator of the student's ability to successfully complete a heavy course load; and the necessity for a heavy load to enable the student to graduate. This section does not apply to transient credit.

(iii) Certain Joint Degree Students: A student enrolled in the joint J.D./M.B.A., J.D./M.Acc, or J.D./M.S. (Env.M.) program may register for a combination of law and appropriate masters courses not exceeding eighteen (18) credit hours per law school regular semester. A student relying on this provision 201(c)(iii) may register for no more than twelve (12) credit hours in the law school for the semester.

(iv) Schedule Changes: Except for withdrawals pursuant to Section 202, all changes in a student's schedule after the drop/add period must be authorized by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the affected faculty members.

(f) Distance Education Courses: To the extent permitted under ABA Standard 306, a student may enroll in up to one-third of the credit hours required for the J.D. degree for Distance Education Courses; up to 10 of those credit hours may be granted during the first one-third of a student's program of legal education.

(g) Determining Credit Hours for Coursework: In accordance with ABA Standard 310, the Law School shall award one credit hour for approved educational experiences that require an amount of work that reasonably approximates:

(i) at least the equivalent of 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for 15 weeks, for a total of 42.5 hours of work; or,

(ii) at least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities that do not involve traditional classroom instruction. These other academic activities may include on-line coursework, simulations, field placements, externships, independent study, directed research study, co-curricular activities (such as the *Cumberland Law Review* and the *American Journal of Trial Advocacy*), and any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours by the Law School.

Every course or other activity for which academic credit is awarded – regardless of the format of the course or activity or the number of weeks during which the course or activity runs – must require an amount of work that reasonably approximates a total of at least 42.5 hours of work (in-class plus out-of-class work) per credit hour. For purposes of this calculation, out-of-class work includes all student work that is required or expected outside classroom or direct faculty instruction, including assigned readings and other preparation for class (e.g., reviewing, outlining, studying, and discussing assigned material); out-of-class writing assignments, exercises, and problems; research, drafting, conferences, and revisions for papers; contributing to online discussions; completing interactive tutorials or computer-assisted instruction; and preparing for and taking quizzes, midterms, and final exams.

The Associate Dean is responsible for ensuring that each course or other activity for which academic credit is awarded satisfies ABA Standard 310 and this Policy. Any proposal for a new course, and any proposal to award credit for any other activity, must include a calculation showing how the course or activity satisfies ABA Standard 310 and this Policy. The Associate Dean shall review the syllabus for each existing course to confirm that the work required is sufficient to satisfy ABA Standard 310 and this Policy. If, in the judgement of the Associate Dean, the syllabus does not show that a course satisfied ABA Standard 310 and this Policy, the Associate Dean shall require the responsible faculty member to provide a calculation showing how the work required for the course – all classroom or direct faculty instruction plus out-of-class student work – reasonably approximates at least the equivalent of 42.5 hours of work per credit hour.

Each instructor shall include in the course syllabus a reference to this credit-hour policy and a statement that students are expected to work for a total of approximately 42.5 hours per credit hour to satisfy the requirements of the course.

(h) Out-of-Class Student Work: For each credit hour in courses for which the number of credit hours awarded is based on time spent in regularly scheduled class sessions, students are expected to devote at least two additional hours to out-of-class work. Out-of-class work may include such activities as reading, reviewing, outlining, studying, group discussing, or otherwise working on materials and assignments for the course. Each instructor should include in the course syllabus detailed information appropriate to the particular course to advise students of this requirement. At least an equivalent amount of work must be required for each credit hour awarded for all other academic activities that do not involve traditional classroom instruction. These other academic activities may include on-line coursework, simulations, field placements, externships, independent study, directed research study, co-curricular activities (such as the *Cumberland Law Review* and the *American Journal of Trial Advocacy*), joint degree courses, and any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours by the law school.

202 WITHDRAWALS:

(a) Dropping Courses

(i) Dropping Courses During Drop/Add Period: Except for courses designated on the schedule as courses that cannot be dropped without the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in consultation with the faculty member, a student may drop a course during the drop/add period without academic penalty as long as the student complies with the minimum course load requirements set out in Section 201(c)(i).

(ii) Drops After the Drop/Add Period: Except for courses designated on the schedule as courses that cannot be dropped without the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in consultation with the faculty member, a student who officially drops a course after the drop/add period but before the last day of classes will receive a “W” (withdrew) on his or her record. A “W” carries no academic penalty. A student must obtain the permission of the faculty member teaching the course to drop a course after the drop/add period.

(iii) Drops After the Last Day of Classes: A student may not drop a course after the last day of classes except for good cause as determined by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. A student who drops for good cause pursuant to this paragraph (iii) shall receive a “W” (withdrew) on his or her record.

(iv) Effective Date of Course Drops: The date of a course drop will be the date that the completed official drop card is received by the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or his or her designee.

(b) Withdrawal From Law School:

(i) Withdrawal From Law School: A student may withdraw from or discontinue studies at the law school by notifying the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in writing that he or she is withdrawing. If the student officially withdraws from the law school, the student’s permanent record will show a “W” (withdrew) in each course. “W” carries no academic penalty.

(ii) Failure to Give Notice of Withdrawal: A student who withdraws from school without notifying the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in writing will receive an “F” in each course in which the student was registered that semester.

(iii) Readmission After Withdrawal: A student who withdraws or discontinues studies at the law school shall have no right to return to the law school. If the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Dean of the law school determine in their sole discretion that the circumstances occasioning the student’s withdrawal were such that readmittance is appropriate and the time since the student last attended classes at the law school is no longer than is reasonable under the circumstances, the Associate Dean shall readmit the student. Any student readmitted will be bound by all regulations and requirements in effect at

the time of his or her readmission.

(iv) Leave of Absence: Subject to the four year requirement of Section 201(a)(iv), a student may take a leave of absence for no more than two semesters by notifying the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in writing that he or she is taking a leave of absence. This notice must be given before the date of registration for the first semester the student takes a leave of absence and, unless arrangements are otherwise made with the Associate Dean, before the registration of the second semester (excluding summer semesters). If an event necessitates a student taking a leave of absence during a semester, the student shall notify the Associate Dean in writing that he or she is taking a leave of absence beginning during the semester. That semester shall be deemed the first of the two allowable semesters. The student will receive a “W” (withdrew) on his or her record for courses undertaken during the semester.

203 INCOMPLETE GRADES: A student who receives an incomplete (“INC”) grade must complete and submit all course work to the professor by the last day of classes of the next regular semester or such earlier time as the professor directs. Regular semester for this section means the Fall or Spring semester. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the appropriate faculty member and cure the deficiency. If a student has an incomplete (INC) grade and does not submit the completed course work by the last day of classes of the next regular semester, whether he or she is enrolled or not, the grade of “INC” will be changed permanently to an “F” on the student’s record. In case of extreme hardship, as determined by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean (if the course instructor agrees) may grant the student one additional regular semester to cure the deficiency provided no more than two consecutive regular semesters have elapsed since the “INC” was received.

204 TRANSIENT CREDIT (Credit for Study at Other Law Schools):

(a) In reference to this Section, a transient student is a student who:

(i) is currently attending another institution and desires to take a course or courses at Cumberland and have the credits transfer back to their home institution, or

(ii) is a currently enrolled Cumberland student who desires to take a course or courses at another institution and have the credits transfer back to Cumberland in order to fulfill their requirements for graduation from Cumberland.

(b) Students Qualifying for Transient Credit: Students must file requests for approval to take summer or regular semester credit on a transient basis.

(i) Students requesting *regular* semester transient credit must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.3 at Cumberland. Students requesting *summer* semester transient credit must have a minimum cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. Regular semester for this section means the Fall or Spring semester.

(ii) *Regular* semester transient credit requests may be approved only

(1) when the student demonstrates in writing that extreme hardship circumstances beyond mere personal convenience or financial considerations justify transient credit; or

(2) when the student demonstrates in writing (i) that she intends to pursue a career for which legal study in a foreign country is required or important; (ii) that she has identified a program of legal study in a foreign country that will substantially further her career objectives in a manner not offered by Cumberland; and (iii) that the proposed program of legal study meets the requirements of Standard 307 of the American Bar Association Standards for Approval of Law Schools.

(iii) All requests will be granted or denied by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs pursuant to the guidelines contained in this section.

(c) Courses Qualifying for Transient Credit: In order for a student to receive credit for transient study, the sponsoring school must be accredited by the American Bar Association, and it must grant credit toward its own first professional degree for the specific course taken by the student. Transient credit will not be given for those courses which are otherwise specifically required for graduation by Cumberland School of Law. A transcript must be furnished by the sponsoring school, indicating the course, grade and credit hours granted.

(i) A grade of “C” or better in approved courses is required for credit to be given for transient study.

(ii) Section 201(b)(i) respecting minimum/maximum loads to be taken apply to hours of summer or regular semester transient credit.

(iii) No more than fifteen (15) hours of transient credit may be applied towards a degree from Cumberland School of Law. Special study programs and summer credits are included in the transient hour limitation.

(d) Faculty Approval of Exceptions: Any exception to any provision in Section 204 requires the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and authorization by majority vote of the faculty.

205 DEGREE WITH HONORS: Upon recommendation of the faculty, a candidate for the J.D. degree may be awarded the J.D. degree *cum laude* if the student’s GPA at the law school ranks the student in the top fifteen percent of the graduating class. A candidate whose GPA at the law school ranks the student in the top five percent of the graduating class may be awarded the J.D. degree *magna cum laude*. A candidate whose GPA at the law school ranks the student in the top one percent of the graduating class, but no less than two students,

may be awarded a J.D. degree *summa cum laude*.

Students who have been admitted with advanced standing from other law schools must have maintained an overall average grade of B on all transfer credits and have satisfactorily completed sixty (60) semester hours of course work at the Cumberland School of Law to be eligible for honors.

206 GRADES AND EXAMINATIONS:

(a) Grading: Except for seminars and skills courses, the primary basis for a grade in a course is a final written examination. The manner of determining grades in seminars and skills courses shall be left to the faculty member. The faculty member has the discretion to augment the grading process by taking into consideration interim examinations, research papers, class participation, class attendance, or other factors deemed relevant, including conduct related to the class or the examination, whether or not the conduct falls within the ambit of the Honor Code and whether or not the matter is referred to the Honor Court.

(b) Failure to Take an Examination or Submit Research Paper: Students are expected to take an examination at the scheduled time and to submit research papers on due dates. Students may be excused from taking an examination or meeting a due date relating to a research paper only for good cause as determined by the faculty member teaching the course or, if the faculty member is unavailable, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Unless a failure to notify is beyond the reasonable control of the student, a student must give the required notification prior to the scheduled examination date or research paper due date that he or she cannot take the examination at the scheduled time or submit a paper at the established due date. Failure to have a good cause or to give the required notification will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" in the course. If the student has good cause and has notified the appropriate faculty member for his or her failure to take an examination or complete a research paper on time, the student shall be responsible for rescheduling the examination or setting a new due date for the paper. Such student shall receive an Incomplete ("INC") grade until the work is completed, the Incomplete subject to Section 203 of these Standards.

(c) Reexamination: A student does not have the right to retake an examination on which a failing grade ("F") was received. A student may not retake a course for academic credit in which a grade of "D-" or higher was received.

(d) Examination Schedule: The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in consultation with the Policy Committee shall submit a schedule for administering final examinations. Proctors under the supervision of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will administer final examinations pursuant to that schedule, with such schedule adjustments as are necessary to provide appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities. The schedule may provide "alternate" exam times, but a student may use an "alternate" exam time only with the prior approval of her professor. In lieu of, or in addition to, a scheduled examination time, a faculty member may administer take-home or floating exams during the examination period. A

faculty member may not administer a final examination during the last week of classes or during the study days between classes and scheduled examinations.

(e) Accommodations for Special Needs: The Director of Student Services and ADA Compliance shall arrange for reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students requesting an accommodation must process required paperwork through Samford University's Disability Resources office. In order for a student to receive exam accommodations, the Director of Student Services and ADA Compliance must receive from the university Disability Resources office no later than thirty days prior to the end of classes written notification of the examination accommodation. Examination accommodation notifications received after that deadline will be processed the following semester.

207 CLASS ATTENDANCE: Students shall attend class regularly and arrive punctually. At the beginning of each semester or term of classes, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will calculate and post the maximum number of absences that will be permitted in every course. That number shall be twenty percent (20%) of the total number of scheduled class meetings for the course (with any fractions rounded up to the next whole number). All faculty members shall record student attendance in every course and report all student absences to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs on a monthly basis. Any student with absences in excess of the maximum number will receive a mandatory grade reduction to the next lower grade increment. Additional absences may result in further grade reductions at the discretion of the faculty member after consultation with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Individual faculty members may impose more stringent class attendance policies and implement a punctuality policy as they deem appropriate. In no event shall any faculty member adopt an attendance policy that is less stringent than the rule set forth herein. For purposes of applying this rule, all student absences from any course for whatever reason will be considered "unexcused." It is each student's sole responsibility to record his or her own class attendance in the manner specified by each individual faculty member and to monitor his or her own class absences in all law school courses.

208 GRADING SYSTEM: Students are graded in their academic achievements according to a system of letter grades with quality points assigned as follows:

A	4.0	A-	3.7	B+	3.3
B	3.0	B-	2.7	C+	2.3
C	2.0	C-	1.7	D+	1.3
D	1.0	D-	0.7	F	0.0

INC INCOMPLETE
IP IN PROGRESS (limited to MCL students)
P PASS
W WITHDREW

(a) Minimum Academic Requirements for Graduation: In addition to fulfilling all the requirements for graduation, no student shall be permitted to graduate from the Cumberland School of Law who has not attained a cumulative GPA of 2.0 out of 4.0 as specified above (e.g., 180 quality points would be required to graduate if 90 hours of graded work is taken) as of the graduation date.

(b) Grade Reports: The report of a student's grades for each semester is made available or sent to the student personally. Grades will not be reported over the telephone.

(c) Notice: Receipt of official grade reports from the Director of Law Student Records constitutes official written notice to the student of his or her academic status.

(d) Faculty Grade Changes: Any faculty member may submit a grade change only to correct a clerical error or arithmetic error; or to change a prior "INC" [Incomplete] grade. A faculty member may not submit a grade change based upon any form of "regrading." The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will establish an administrative process to approve a grade change.

208.1 MEAN GRADING REQUIREMENT (*effective Fall 2023*):

(a) Absent both extraordinary circumstances and the express approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, all required first-year courses subject to the School of Law's 4.0 scale will be graded based on an average (mean) between 2.90 and 3.10.

(b) Absent both extraordinary circumstances and the express approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, all required upper-level courses subject to the School of Law's 4.0 scale will be graded based on an average (mean) between 2.90 and 3.20.

(c) Absent both extraordinary circumstances and the express approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, elective courses, except those specified in part (d), below, subject to the School of Law's 4.0 scale, will be graded based on an average (mean) grade between 2.90 and 3.30.

(d) Any elective course or section with an enrollment of 16 or fewer students is exempt from compliance with this grading policy.

(e) Any grades submitted by an instructor that do not conform to this policy will be returned to the instructor with instructions to recalculate the grades. If the grades are not recalculated by the instructor in accordance with this policy before the grading deadline, then the original grades will be adjusted (i.e., re-curved) by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to conform to the policy.

209 ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE: A faculty member is responsible for determining a grade for each student in the faculty member's courses pursuant to Section 206(a). The law school faculty and administration reserve the right to take disciplinary measures regarding law

school students. These rights and responsibilities are independent of and separate from actions undertaken by the Honor Court for Honor Code violations.

210 JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS

(a) General Policies: The law school participates in certain joint degree programs permitting J.D. students to earn an additional degree in concert with study for the J.D. degree. The details vary from program to program, but the typical joint degree program permits the participating student to count certain hours of credit in the other degree program toward the J.D. requirements, and to count certain hours of credit in the J.D. program toward the other degree requirements. Courses taken prior to matriculation in the law school's J.D. program may not be counted toward the J.D. degree requirements.

(b) Eligibility: To be classified as a joint degree student in the law school, a student must have completed the first year of the J.D. degree program and must have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in the J.D. program at the end of the first year of law school (or, if later, at the time of admission to the joint degree program).

(c) Time J.D. Degree Will Be Awarded: A student participating in a joint degree program will not be permitted to count the credit hours for courses taken in the other degree program toward the J.D. requirements unless and until the other degree is awarded following completion of all applicable requirements.

(d) Calculation of Grade Point Averages: In calculating a joint degree student's grade point average for all law school purposes (including class rank and honors granted by the law school), only courses taken in the law school shall be considered.

(e) Since Academic Standard 201(a)(iv) requires that a student earn 64 credit-hours from certain courses in the law school to earn the J.D. and since credit-hours earned in courses outside the law school do not count toward that requirement, joint degree students must take care to assure they satisfy the requirement set forth in Standard 201(a)(iv).

300 ACADEMIC DISMISSAL AND PROBATION

301 ACADEMIC GOOD STANDING

The academic standing of any student is first determined by his or her cumulative grade point average (GPA) after 10 credit hours of study. A student is in good standing if she or he maintains at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA.

301.1 ACADEMIC SUPPORT

All students whose cumulative GPA is below 2.60 after the completion of 10 credit hours of study, or whose cumulative GPA at any time thereafter subsequently drops below 2.60, MUST have their proposed schedule of courses for their next semester of study formally approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. In addition, all students whose cumulative GPA is below 2.4 at any time after the completion of 10 credit hours of study must develop a corrective academic success program with the Director of Academic Success before they will be permitted to register for classes. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will be responsible for developing and maintaining appropriate procedures for the implementation of this policy.

302 ACADEMIC PROBATION OR DISMISSAL

Students will be academically dismissed who are not in good standing and who do not qualify to continue on probation. The following students qualify to continue on probation:

(a) Students Who Have Completed 10-20 Credit Hours: Students, except transfer students, who have completed between 10 and 20 credit hours with at least a 1.50 cumulative GPA, but less than a 2.00 cumulative GPA, may continue on probation. Students with a cumulative GPA below 1.50 will be dismissed for academic reasons. A student cannot rely on this provision to continue on probation once the student has completed more than 20 credit hours of study.

(b) Students Who Have Completed 21-35 Credit Hours: Students, except transfer students, who have completed between 21 and 35 credit hours with at least a 1.75 cumulative GPA, but less than a 2.00 cumulative GPA, may continue on probation for one probation semester. Students relying on this provision must attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the end of that probation semester. Students failing to attain a minimum of 2.00 cumulative GPA by the end of the probation semester will be dismissed for academic reasons.

(c) Students Who Have Completed at Least 30 Credit Hours with a Cumulative 2.00 GPA: Students, except transfer students, who have a 2.00 cumulative GPA after completing at least 30 credit hours and subsequently fall below a 2.00 cumulative GPA shall have one probation semester to attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA. Students failing to attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the end of that one probation semester will be dismissed for academic reasons.

(d) Transfer Students: Transfer students who complete 10 credit hours at Cumberland must maintain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA on work undertaken at Cumberland School of Law. Transfer students failing to attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA after completing their initial 10 hours of study at Cumberland will be dismissed for academic reasons. Transfer students attaining at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA after the initial ten hours of study who subsequently fall below good standing shall have one probation semester to attain a

2.00 cumulative GPA. Transfer students failing to attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the end of that one probation semester will be dismissed for academic reasons.

(e) “Probation Semester” Defined: For purposes of this Section 302 and Section 303, “probation semester” refers to the next regular semester of study in which the student enrolls, which may only be either the fall or spring semester.

303 READMISSION OF STUDENTS DISMISSED FOR ACADEMIC REASONS

(a) General Rule: A student dismissed for academic reasons pursuant to Section 302 cannot continue studies at the law school. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, a student petitioning for readmission pursuant to Section 303(b) below may attend classes pending a decision by the Academic Standards Committee.

(b) Petition for Readmission: A student dismissed for academic reasons may petition to be readmitted for continued study on probation. Readmission of a student dismissed for academic reasons is not a matter of right, and will be granted only in exceptional cases. Unless otherwise advised in a letter from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, a student dismissed for academic reasons following the Fall semester must submit a petition no later than one week after the first day of classes beginning in January. Unless otherwise advised in a letter from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, a student dismissed after the Spring semester or after a Summer term must submit a petition no later than two weeks before the first day of classes beginning in August. A student whose petition is not actually received by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the designated time period waives all petition rights.

(c) Petition Procedure: A student dismissed for academic reasons who wants to petition to continue studies on probation must submit a petition to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs detailing in writing the reasons why the student should be permitted to continue study at the law school. The Associate Dean will forward the petition to the faculty members of the Academic Standards Committee. The Academic Standards Committee based on the petition and the student’s file shall rule on the student’s petition. The student will not be allowed to make a personal appearance before the Academic Standards Committee. The decision of the Academic Standards Committee shall be placed in the student’s permanent file. The decision of the Academic Standards Committee is final. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall notify the student of the Academic Standards Committee’s decision.

(d) Conditions on Readmission: The Academic Standards Committee may impose reasonable conditions on the readmission of a student dismissed for academic reasons, including taking a leave of absence for one or more semesters before resuming classes, retaking specified courses (the original grades will remain on the student’s record and go into the calculation of the student’s grade point average), or undertaking extracurricular remedial work.

(e) Readmission Conditioned on Student’s Attaining at Least 2.00 GPA in Next

Semester of Study: Among factors to be considered by the Academic Standards Committee in determining whether a student dismissed for academic reasons will be readmitted is the Committee's assessment of the student's ability to attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the end of one additional semester on probation and thus become a student in good academic standing. A student dismissed for academic reasons who is readmitted under this section must attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA by the end of his or her next semester of study. A student failing to attain at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA by the end of his or her next semester of study will be dismissed for academic reasons, without right of petition. "Semester" refers to the next semester of study for which the student enrolls, and may be a summer, fall, or spring semester.

(f) No Second Petition: A student readmitted under this Section 303 who does not attain a cumulative 2.00 GPA at the end of his or her next semester of study will be dismissed for academic reasons, and will have no right of petition under this Section 303.

304 COURSE SEQUENCE

Students on academic probation will take all course work as outlined by the law school curriculum applicable to all students, but are not permitted to enroll in pass/fail elective courses or in any course that does not require a written final exam unless the course is one that is required for graduation, for example a skills course or a writing course that satisfies the upper level graduation writing requirement.

305 SUMMER ENROLLMENT

Students on academic probation are eligible to enroll in summer school, but only at Cumberland School of Law on the Samford University campus. A summer school term is considered as a regular semester spent on probation for purposes of Academic Probation, including Section 302 and 303. A list of courses available to students on probation during the summer session will be made available in the Office of Law Student Records.

400 ADMISSION AS ENTERING STUDENT AFTER ACADEMIC DISMISSAL FROM A LAW SCHOOL

The Cumberland School of Law will not accept an application for admission from an academically dismissed law student.

500 INTERPRETATION

In all cases, these policies are to be read and interpreted consistent with current ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools in general, and with ABA Standards 301-307 and 501-508 in particular.

The foregoing Faculty Policies on Academic Standards were adopted by the Faculty of the Cumberland School of Law of Samford University at a called meeting on May 19, 1998, and published on July 2, 1998.

Section 202 was amended by the Faculty on September 10, 1998.

Section 205 was amended by the Faculty on April 15, 1999.

Section 201(c) was amended and section 210 was added by the Faculty on February 24, 2000.

Sections 201(e)(i) and 201(e)(ii) were amended by the Faculty on March 23, 2000.

Section 207 was amended by the Faculty on April 26, 2002.

Sections 201(d) and 210(f) were amended by the Faculty on February 23, 2006.

Sections 201(e)(iii), 203, 206(d), and 303(b) were amended by the Faculty on March 16, 2006.

Sections 201 and 210(c), 210(e) and 210(f) were amended by the Faculty on March 15, 2007.

Section 207 was amended by the Faculty on September 20, 2007.

Section 201(d)(iii) was amended by the Faculty on February 14, 2008.

Sections 204 and 206(e) were amended by the Faculty on March 13, 2008.

Sections 201 and 204 were amended and Section 301.1 was added by the Faculty on April 22, 2010.

Section 304 was amended by the Faculty on March 19, 2014.

Sections 201(f) and 201(g) were added by Faculty on April 20, 2017.

Section 201(a) was added, sections 201(b)-(g) were renumbered, and section 210(e) was revised by the Faculty on October 17, 2019.

Section 201(f) was amended by the Faculty on October 20, 2022.

Section 201(b) was amended by the Faculty on October 20, 2022 and added to Academic Standards on January 19, 2023.