



## **Independent and Directed Research Projects and Seminar Papers**

- A. Placements Outside the Law School:** Individual Research Projects (IRPs) and Directed Research Projects (DRPs) should not be used as vehicles to place students with organizations outside the law school; instead, these placements should be approved in accordance with the policies and procedures on internships.
- B. Definitions:** An IRP is a single scholarly research paper; a DRP is a series of shorter research papers. A seminar paper is a paper written in conjunction with any seminar course, other than the Honors Seminar.
- C. Uniform Standards for Directed Research Projects, Individual Research Projects, and Seminars**
- 1. Faculty Advisor:**
    - a. Seminar paper:** The faculty advisor for a seminar paper is the professor, whether full-time or adjunct, teaching the seminar course.
    - b. IRPs and DRPs:** Absent approval by the Associate Dean of Academics, only full-time faculty members may supervise DRPs or IRPs. If the Associate Dean approves an exception, the supervisor should be a member of the adjunct faculty; in addition, the Associate Dean should ensure that a member of the full-time faculty reads the student's final paper.
  - 2. Maximum Credit Hours:**
    - a. Seminar paper:** There is no limitation on the number of credit hours that a student may earn in seminar courses.
    - b. IRPs and DRPs:** Absent extraordinary circumstances, as approved by the Associate Dean of Academics, a J.D. student may not earn more than three total credit hours through IRPs and/or DRPs.
  - 3. Grading:**
    - a. Seminar paper:** Seminar courses are graded on a 4.0 scale unless otherwise approved by the Curriculum Committee. An Incomplete grade

will not be awarded without compelling circumstances.

- b. IRPs and DRPs:** Grading for IRPs and DRPs is on the S/U scale; specific grades on this scale are S+, S, S-, and U. An Incomplete grade will not be awarded without compelling circumstances.
- 4. Topic and Schedule:** Topics for IRPs, DRPs, or seminar papers must reflect current controversies, trends, developments, or confusions, etc. within the law or law-related disciplines, and/or involve an in-depth analysis of a topic for areas of concern in the law.
  - a. Seminar paper:** The legal subject that the student intends to address in a seminar paper must be identified in the manner required by the professor teaching the seminar course. The professor teaching the seminar course will determine the timetable for completing the project.
  - b. IRPs and DRPs:** The legal subject that the student intends to address under an IRP or DRP must be identified in a preliminary written statement that also includes a proposed timetable for completing the project. This statement must be attached to the Registrar's form and should be submitted to the faculty advisor for signature before the end of the add/drop period.
- 5. Performance Expectations:** A student who desires to register for an IRP or DRP, or a seminar course, must have successfully completed the first-year (or, for part-time students, first five semesters) required curriculum and also must demonstrate the motivation for self-study and self-directed research, and the ability to engage in in-depth research and analysis. Sources must be provided to the professor upon request.
- 6. Quality and Upper-Level Writing Credit:**
  - a. Seminar paper:** A student may earn upper-level writing requirement credit for completing a seminar paper. To do so, work submitted for the seminar paper must be of publishable quality, as determined by the faculty advisor. If a professor determines that a paper is not of publishable quality, a student may be denied upper-level writing credit, even if the professor determines that the student should receive course credit. Normally, a grade of 2.25 or higher reflects that the student has earned upper-level writing credit and a grade at or below 2.0 reflects that the student has not earned upper-level writing credit. If a professor determines that a student should not receive writing credit for a seminar paper, the professor should inform the Associate Dean of Academics and the Registrar as soon as practicable.
  - b. IRPs:** A student may earn upper-level writing requirement credit for

completing an IRP. To do so, work submitted for the IRP must be of publishable quality, as determined by the faculty advisor. If a professor determines that a paper is not of publishable quality, a student may be denied upper-level writing credit, even if the professor determines that the student should receive course credit. Normally, a grade of S+ or S reflects that the student has earned upper-level writing credit and a grade of S- or U reflects that the student has not earned upper-level writing credit. If a professor determines that a student should not receive writing credit for an IRP, the professor should inform the Associate Dean of Academics and the Registrar as soon as practicable.

- c. **DRPs:** A student may not earn upper-level writing credit for completing a DRP.

**7. Length and Formatting:** Unless the faculty advisor provides for a greater word count than noted below, the following standards apply:

- a. **Seminar paper:** The paper must be at least 7,500 words, including footnotes or endnotes. Students may use either Bluebook or ALWD citation format unless the faculty advisor requires use of a particular citation format.
- b. **IRPs:** For each credit hour, the paper must be at least 7,500 words, including footnotes or endnotes. Students may use either Bluebook or ALWD citation format unless the faculty advisor requires use of a particular citation format.
- c. **DRPs:** For each credit hour, the sum of written work should be at least 7,500 words, including footnotes or endnotes. Students may use either Bluebook or ALWD citation format unless the faculty advisor requires use of a particular citation format.

**8. Timely Submission:** The final paper should be submitted by the last day of classes in the semester in which the student is registered for the seminar course, IRP, or DRP, unless the faculty advisor requires a different submission date.

**Cross-references:** Graduation Requirements, Scholarly Writing Series, Grades, Academic Honor Code, Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct.

*Amended by the faculty May 6, 2009 (replaces Research for Credit); effective for the Summer 2009 session.*