

Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America, Outcomes Statement

ABA Standard 302 requires law schools to establish learning outcomes that address the basic competencies required to participate in the legal profession. The Outcomes Statement set forth below satisfies Standard 302, while also addressing goals specific to the program of legal education at CUA Law. This Outcomes Statement is distinct from, but a necessary step toward, an assessment tool required under Standard 315. Students and faculty should note that not every course will lend itself to every outcome identified below, and that the knowledge and skills most important for each student will vary according to the kind of law the student intends to practice. Students, with guidance from faculty, may use the Outcomes Statement to plan a course of study that addresses the knowledge and skills identified below, while preparing them for a particular area of practice.

1.0 Doctrinal and substantive knowledge

By the end of the J.D. degree program, each graduate will have developed the doctrinal and substantive knowledge that an entry-level attorney would need for competent, effective, ethical, and responsible participation as a member of the legal profession.

Each graduate will demonstrate that he or she understands and can apply the law in the doctrinal courses he or she has taken. Specifically, with regard to each such doctrinal course, graduates will demonstrate

1.1 an understanding of the basic principles of the law;

1.2 a familiarity with the legal terminology and the ability to define those terms accurately; and

1.3 an ability to identify the applicable elements of causes of action, crimes, or defenses that frequently arise; when a matter is litigated before a tribunal or regulatory body, an ability to identify what facts are in issue, who has the burden of pleading, who has the burden of producing evidence, who has the burden of persuasion, and what that burden is.

2.0 Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

By the end of the J.D. degree program, each graduate will have developed the critical thinking and problem solving skills that an entry-level attorney would need for competent, effective, ethical, and responsible participation as a member of the legal profession.

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to

2.1 critically read applicable authority; identify and synthesize key legal principles, rules of law, and policy considerations; and apply them to a factual situation;

- 2.2 evaluate potential counterarguments, determine the likely outcome, and analogize the facts of that situation to and distinguish those facts from existing precedent to determine the likely outcome;
- 2.3 engage in strategic, ends/means thinking, anticipating possible legal and non-legal consequences of different legal positions or courses of action; and
- 2.4 exercise professional judgment by assessing benefits and risks in light of client objectives and determining what course of action to recommend or undertake.

3.0 Legal Writing & Research Skills

By the end of the J.D. degree program, each graduate will have developed the legal writing and research skills that an entry-level attorney would need for competent, effective, ethical, and responsible participation as a member of the legal profession.

3.1 Legal Writing

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to

- 3.1.1 write legal documents and professional correspondence that are clear, concise, well-reasoned, logically organized, professional in tone, tailored to the audience and the circumstances and, where appropriate, supported by proper citation to authority; and
- 3.1.2 convey, in writing, relevant legal theories, rules of law, and policy arguments based on statutory and/or case law analysis, synthesize the relevant rules of law into a logical analytical framework, and apply rules of law to analogize or distinguish a client's facts from precedent to predict the likely outcome of a matter.

3.2 Research Skills

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to research the law effectively and efficiently, including

- 3.2.1 designing and implementing a logical research strategy that appropriately supports the requirements of a client matter and reflects an understanding of limitations imposed by time and financial constraints; and
- 3.2.2 identifying the major forms of primary and secondary authority and assessing the relative weight of those authorities.

4.0 Legal Practice Skills

By the end of the J.D. degree program, each graduate will have developed an array of additional core skills of legal practice that an entry-level attorney would need for competent, effective, ethical, and responsible participation as a member of the legal profession.

4.1 Graduates will demonstrate competency in oral communication by speaking clearly, concisely, persuasively and in a professional manner appropriate to the audience and context; and listening effectively, including identifying and responding to the interests and perceptions of others.

4.2 Graduates will demonstrate competency in client interaction by developing a relationship of trust, demonstrating empathy, and effectively counseling clients on alternative courses of action in light of legal and nonlegal objectives.

4.3 Graduates will demonstrate competency in fact development and analysis by planning and implementing an organized fact investigative strategy using formal and informal means, effectively interviewing clients and other persons, and developing and refining an effective theory of the case.

4.4 Graduates will demonstrate competency in conflict resolution by utilizing effective negotiation techniques, understanding the strategic advantages and disadvantages of various mechanisms for dispute resolution, and proficiently employing trial, administrative, and appellate advocacy techniques.

4.5 Graduates will demonstrate facility with current technologies widely used in the legal profession.

5.0 Professionalism and Ethics

By the end of the J.D. degree program, each graduate will have developed the professionalism and ethics that an entry-level attorney would need for competent, effective, ethical, and responsible participation as a member of the legal profession.

Graduates will demonstrate

5.1 a fundamental understanding of the law governing lawyers and the obligation of all members of the profession to uphold those rules of professional responsibility;

5.2. the ability to identify issues of professional responsibility and demonstrate the steps appropriate to properly avoid and/or resolve such issues;

5.3. the ability to conform their conduct to the fundamental professional behavioral competencies required by entry-level attorneys;

5.4 an understanding of the multiplicity of cultural values and religious perspectives and how those affect lawyers' communications and interactions with others; effectively engage in a multicultural society; and interact respectfully with diverse others; and

5.5 the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively in a group or on a team as well as the ability to work independently.

6.0 Public Service

By the end of the J.D. degree program, each graduate will have developed an ethos of public service that an entry-level attorney would need for competent, effective, ethical, and responsible participation as a member of the legal profession.

6.1 Graduates will understand and fulfill the obligation of lawyers to participate in community and civic affairs and to contribute to increasing access to justice for the poor, underrepresented, and marginalized persons and groups through the provision of legal services on a *pro bono* basis and other professional pursuits.