

International Student Exam Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) University of Minnesota Law School

If you have any questions about exams, please be sure to ask BEFORE the exam period.

TOPICS:

- How do exam variances work for non-JD international students?
- When is my exam?
- How much time will I have to complete and submit my exam?
- Where will my exam take place?
- How does “blind grading” work?
- Where can I find written exam instructions in advance of the exam?
- What exam materials will I receive from the Law School?
- What should I bring with me to the exam?
- What should I NOT bring with me to the exam room?
- Do I have an option to type or handwrite my exams?
- If I choose to type my exam, what technology support is available?
- What if I have a “take-home” exam?
- What does it mean that the Honor Code applies to all exams?
- Who should I talk to if I have an emergency that interferes with my attendance at an exam?
- What if my exam appears to include a mistake, or if I need clarification from an instructor?

HOW DO EXAM VARIANCES WORK FOR NON-JD INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

- The Dean of Students Office (lawdos@umn.edu) automatically prepares examination variance notices for non-JD international students who are not native English speakers. Each student’s schedule is reviewed and adjustments may be made to the date, start time, and length for any standard, in-class exams.
- Variance notices will be sent via University of Minnesota email addresses to each qualifying student during the last week of classes. Students are responsible for carefully reviewing their variance notice and referring any questions to lawdos@umn.edu.
- **International students who receive variances should always refer to the variance email** for specific information on time and location for your exams. If your email variance notice and the published exam schedule differ, **you should follow the instructions in your variance notice**. If you have questions about your variance, please contact the Dean of Students Office in Room 472 or at lawdos@umn.edu . **Variance questions should NOT be raised to instructors, in order to preserve the blind grading protocol.**

WHEN IS MY EXAM?

- Generally, exams are administered in accordance with the schedule published here: <http://www.law.umn.edu/current/courseschedules.html>. However, non-JD international students who receive an examination variance may have closely-spaced exams moved to allow more study time between exams. This is not always possible if the altered dates extend beyond

the end of the exam period. **Refer to your exam variance email for specific details about the date and time of your exam(s).**

- In general:
 - **STANDARD “IN-CLASS” EXAMS** for LL.M, Humphrey, and non-English language Exchange students are **all rescheduled**, usually to 10:00 AM. Report to the table in the Sub Plaza to get your room assignment, instructions, and exam materials. **Please come to the Dean’s Table in the Sub Plaza by at least 9:50 AM.** We recommend you plan to arrive at the Law School by 9:30 AM to ensure you have enough time to gather your materials and get set to start on time. **Arriving late for your exam will cause you to lose time.**
 - **TAKE-HOME** exams should be picked up at the Information Desk at the time allowed by the exam instructions from the professor. Any take-home exam of 8-hours or longer will not qualify for a time extension. For 8-hour take-home exams, you should plan to pick up your exam between 8:00 and 8:30 AM. For longer exams, make sure you pick up your materials so that the deadline does not fall outside of business hours (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM) OR on a weekend. For example, you should not pick up a 24-hour take-home exam on a Friday because staff will not be available at the Information Desk on the weekend to accept your materials. **The latest an exam can be turned in to the Information Desk is 4:30 PM on the last day of the exam period.**

HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT MY EXAM?

- Instructors for each course determine the total exam time, which does not necessarily track with the number of credits in the course. Standard in-class exams are often three- or four-hours. Many take-home exams are 8- or 24-hours. The instructor-determined exam length will be included on the exam instructions pages that will be emailed to all enrolled students in advance of the exam. Students eligible for variances in exam length will have the adjustments made on the day of the exam, on the bases of the instructor-mandated exam length with the applicable variance fraction applied.
- International students in the LL.M, Humphrey, and Exchange programs will automatically be granted additional time if they come from a country where English is not a first language. The time adjustment will be noted in the variance email. For standard in-class (not take-home) exams, additional time is granted as follows:
 - LL.M., Humphrey, and Exchange students receive **1.333 time** for standard exams. For example, an exam that is normally 3 hours for JD students would be 4 hours for LL.M., Humphrey, and Exchange students.
- **NO ADDITIONAL TIME IS GRANTED FOR TAKE-HOME EXAMS** that are 8 hours or longer.
- For all take-home exams and exams administered under a variance, **students are responsible for tracking their time and ensuring that all exam materials are timely submitted.** The final time when all materials are due will be clearly written on the exam cover sheet, and students are expected to strictly adhere to that deadline. Failure to submit exam materials in accordance with pre-established timelines will result in a referral for an Honor Code investigation.

WHERE WILL MY EXAM TAKE PLACE?

- The location of your exam varies by the type of exam and time of day you take it. The location where you should report for your exam will be included in your exam variance email.
- Generally, standard in-class exams are administered in classrooms on the Law School sub plaza. Students should report to the Dean's Table in the Sub Plaza to receive instructions about which classroom to go to.
- For ALL TAKE-HOME exams: pick up your exam materials at the Information Desk on the 2nd floor. Take-home exams may be typed anywhere you choose, but you should be sure to allow enough time for travel and printing so that all your exam materials can be returned by the deadline.

WHERE CAN I FIND DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXAM FORMAT AND PERMITTED SOURCE MATERIALS?

- The exam instructions for each exam are emailed to the class lists for all enrolled students as they are provided to the Registrar's Office. Consult the instructions to find out the exam format and what specific materials you are allowed to bring with you to the exam. The exam proctors will always follow the WRITTEN exam instructions, so if you have a question about the instructions, please consult the professor BEFORE the exam.
- PLEASE NOTE that you should consult your exam variance letter and/or Dean of Students regarding the specific start time and length for your standard exams, which may differ from the posted instructions. Instructors are NOT involved in the exam variance process.

HOW DOES "BLIND GRADING" WORK?

- To preserve anonymity in the exam grading process, students are not identified on their exam answers. Instead, students receive a unique number card for each exam, and the three-digit number from this card is used to track all exam materials.
- The number card is the ONLY place a student's name should be written. For all other exam materials, including the exam questions, exam answer, scantron sheet, and exam supplement, if applicable, the student must clearly indicate the exam number from his or her card.
- When exams are processed, the Registrar must sort all materials to ensure receipt of a number card, exam answer, exam questions, scantron form, and any other applicable materials for EACH student. Failure to write the correct exam number on all of these materials will cause delays in processing, or in correctly identifying and scoring your exam answers.
- Failure to turn in exam questions at the end of the exam may be considered an Honor Code violation. Exam questions may not be shared with others, whether in hard copy, electronically, orally, or through other forms of communication. Including personally-identifiable information on an exam answer is also subject to referral for an Honor Code investigation.

WHERE CAN I FIND WRITTEN EXAM INSTRUCTIONS IN ADVANCE OF THE EXAM?

- The instructor's Instructions for each exam are emailed to all students enrolled in the class shortly after they are received by the Registrar. Consult the written instructions to determine the exam format, number of questions, and what specific materials you are allowed to bring with you to the exam.
- If the written exam instructions differ from oral instructions you received from an instructor, the exam will be administered in accordance with the WRITTEN exam instructions and if applicable, your exam variance letter. If you have questions or concerns about the exam format or allowed materials, please contact your professor BEFORE the exam is administered. Any changes or clarifications to the written instructions will be disseminated to the entire class.
- Students with variance exams are bound to the same general requirements as other students, though the date, time, length, or other logistical detail may be altered as appropriate. Students with variances should carefully review both the standard exam instructions and their written variance message and refer questions/clarifications to the Dean of Students Office (lawdos@umn.edu).

WHAT EXAM MATERIALS WILL I RECEIVE FROM THE LAW SCHOOL?

- For ALL exams, you will receive the following materials:
 - o An exam cover sheet that states the time allotted for your exam. This form also includes an Honor Code certification that must be signed before you turn in your materials.
 - o A number card (this is the ONLY PLACE you will write your name)
 - o Exam Questions (remember to place the number from your number card on the upper corner of your exam Questions. We MUST account for each set of questions from every single student and, without your number, we cannot ensure you have submitted your questions.)
- When applicable, you may also receive:
 - o Scratch paper
 - o An exam supplemental reading
 - o A scantron form for multiple-choice exams
 - o ExamSoft instructions if you are typing a standard exam
 - o Blue exam answer sheets if you are handwriting a standard exam

CRITICAL NOTE: ALL MATERIALS YOU RECEIVE AT THE START OF THE EXAM MUST BE TURNED IN AT THE END OF THE EXAM. YOU WILL BE CONTACTED BY THE DEAN OF STUDENTS IF ALL MATERIALS ARE NOT SUBMITTED. KEEPING YOUR EXAM QUESTIONS AFTER THE END OF THE EXAM MAY BE CONSIDERED AN HONOR CODE VIOLATION.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME TO THE EXAM?

- **Course materials SPECIFICALLY permitted by the exam instructions.** The **ONLY** materials you may bring to an exam (or consult during take-home exams) are those specifically permitted by the written exam instructions. This is why it is important to review instructions before the exam, in case you have questions about what is permitted. Questions about permissible materials may go to the instructor, and a clarification to written instructions will be sent to the entire class.

- **Printed, hard-copy class notes, outline, or other permissible materials you would normally access electronically on your laptop.** For standard (non-take-home) exams, you will not be able to access these on your laptop while an ExamSoft/SofTest exam is in progress. Students who are handwriting will not be permitted to access a laptop computer or other electronic device during the exam.
- **Laptop AND power cord, if you will be typing your exam.** The Law School does not have spare power cords, and you will handwrite the remainder of your exam if your laptop loses power before the exam is finished.
- **Pens and pencil (with eraser)** to take notes during your exam and to complete any multiple choice answer sheets.
- **Earplugs (foam or wax only).** Headphones or other attachments to electronic devices are NOT permitted, even if they are not connected.
- **International students who have received a variance MAY bring a standard, non-annotated foreign language/English dictionary with you to any exam.** This DOES NOT include a legal dictionary. Dictionaries may NOT be shared by students, so please bring your own. Dictionaries may be hard-copy or electronic but they may not be annotated or be capable of storing additional information.

WHAT SHOULD I NOT BRING WITH ME TO THE EXAM ROOM?

- **All electronic devices other than a laptop computer are barred from the exam room, including:** cell phones, smart phones, personal data assistants, tablets, ipods/MP3 players, music players, headphones of any kind, programmable calculators, etc. Laptops are barred for any student who is hand-writing an exam. The only exceptions are:
 - a simple calculator IF permitted by the written exam instructions.
 - a separate mouse tool, so long as its only capability is screen navigation.
 - an electronic English-foreign language dictionary that cannot accept additions.
- Do NOT bring any materials, books, publications, etc. that are not specifically permitted by the written exam instructions.
- Do NOT bring food or drink that may be disruptive to other students taking the exam.
- DO NOT bring any item, including a backpack, computer bag, or other item into any classroom for a CLOSED BOOK exam.

DO I HAVE AN OPTION TO TYPE OR HANDWRITE MY EXAMS?

- **JD students** are required to type standard exams using a laptop computer equipped with the ExamSoft SofTest program. LL.M, Humphrey, Exchange, and non-degree students are encouraged but not required to type exams. Recommended laptop specifications are posted at: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/law-tech/students/rex>.
 - o The following laptop limits and prohibitions apply:
 - Any laptop with **dual-boot technology may not be used** during administration of a standard exam due to the possibility of accessing prohibited materials.
 - The definition of "laptop" does not extend to tablets, smart phones, or devices running the Windows Mobile, iOS, or Android operating systems.
 - Students are cautioned against adopting new operating system updates during the semester until confirming that the new OS will support the ExamSoft SofTest program that is used to administer exams.
- **ExamSoft's SofTest is the software product used for secure administration of standard (NOT take-home) exams.** When installed and used correctly, SofTest enables students to type their exam answers without accessing any other content from their laptops, and then to securely submit exam answers wirelessly at the conclusion of each test. SofTest includes basic word processing functions, including word count and spell check, and saves exam answers every 60 seconds. SofTest also provides specific records to the Registrar's Office about when the exam file is opened and closed, to ensure compliance with the Law School's Honor Code.
- International students who plan to type their exams are responsible for:
 - o **Reading and following all instructions and deadlines** for the SofTest program and exam file download process, which are disseminated to students' University email accounts. *Students who fail to properly download ExamSoft materials and exam files prior to posted download deadlines will be expected to handwrite their exams.* Instructions for the download and installation process can be reviewed at: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/law-tech/KB/do/es>.
 - International students should be sure to attend calendared trainings on how to download and use SofTest. All students in need of SofTest download assistance should contact the **Law Technology** team at law-tech@umn.edu, or visit their office in Room 260 of the Law Library BEFORE the download period concludes.
 - During the exam period, Law Technology staff are available to assist students with SofTest issues at tables in the Sub Plaza near Room 25.
 - o **Maintaining a laptop in good working order.** General laptop care and maintenance tips can be reviewed at: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/law-tech/KB/do/maint>. Students can seek repair or technical assistance at their own cost via that [University's TechStop](#) site or campus locations, or another vendor.
- **In rare cases, if a student fails to properly download the SofTest program and exam files OR experiences a technical problem with SofTest functioning just before or during a standard exam that cannot be remedied by Law Technology staff after 15 minutes, students will be**

assigned to handwrite standard exams using blue exam answer sheets. Handwriting students will receive the same amount of time as prescribed by the course instructor or variance. Students handwriting exams SHOULD NOT NOTIFY their professor of that fact, given the very small number of hand-written exams and the risk of self-identification.

- **Take-home exams are NOT administered via the SofTest program and should be typed** using a standard word processing program. Students are responsible for printing take-home exams either at the Law School or off-site. All take-home exam materials must be turned in together within the allotted time limit. Students should plan ahead for travel and printing. Students who encounter printing problems should bring their laptop and all exam materials to the Information Desk BEFORE the exam deadline, where they will receive further instructions from Student Services staff.

IF I CHOOSE TO TYPE MY EXAM, WHAT TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR EXAMS?

- Law Technology staff post and regularly update laptop and technology-related instructions and trouble-shooting resources at: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/law-tech/home>.
- Law Technology staff provide trainings for new students (1L, transfer, LL.M, Exchange, and Humphrey) as part of Orientation and in advance of exams to assist with the download process for the SofTest program and required exam files. Download instructions and deadlines for the SofTest program and exam files are sent to all students' University email addresses, and are posted at : <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/law-tech/KB/do/es>.
- Any student with SofTest download questions or problems should seek help from Law Technology staff BEFORE posted SofTest download deadlines. Law Tech staff can be reached at:

Room 260
law-tech@umn.edu
(612) 625-0740

- **Students who do not follow the SofTest program and exam file download instructions and timelines will be required to handwrite their exams.**
- During the final exam period, students may seek limited assistance with SofTest functioning from Law Technology Staff who are stationed on the Sub Plaza near Room 25.
- **Students who seek hands-on help with a SofTest problem during a pending standard exam will be required to review and sign the waiver below:**
 - o *By signing below, I grant explicit permission to allow Law Technology staff to work on my laptop in order to restore access to my exam answer file.*
 - o *I understand and agree that I will not hold Law Technology, Student Services, the Law School, or the University of Minnesota liable for any damage to my device or data lost in their efforts to recover my exam file or troubleshoot my exam program.*
 - o *I understand and agree that Law Technology's efforts will be limited to basic troubleshooting of my exam software and/or searching for and recovering my exam file.*

- *I understand and agree that, if they are able to solve my problem within five (5) minutes of presenting my computer at the Technology desk in the Sub Plaza, I will not receive additional time to complete my exam.*
 - *I understand and agree that, if they are unable to solve my problem within fifteen (15) minutes of presenting my computer at the Technology desk in the Sub Plaza, I will handwrite the remainder of my exam, whether or not they are able to recover and print out earlier portions of my exam file.*
 - *I understand and agree that I will not receive any additional time for efforts spent trying to troubleshoot the problem on my own before presenting my computer to the Law Technology desk in the Sub Plaza.*
- Students who agree to hands-on assistance will receive the following support if a problem arises during a pending standard exam:
- Attempts to establish or restore access to a pending exam file.
 - If access is restored within five minutes of a student leaving the exam room, the student will return to the exam room to complete the test in the time allotted to the rest of the class.
 - If access is not restored within five minutes, the student's time will be stopped and he or she will be instructed to retrieve all belongings from the exam room. Law Technology Staff will work for up to an additional 15 minutes to restore access to the student's pending exam file.
 - If access is restored, the student will be moved to a separate exam space and will receive the time remaining at initial departure from the exam room to continue typing in the restored SofTest file.
 - If access is not restored, the student will be moved to a separate exam space and will receive the time remaining at initial departure from the exam room to complete the exam by handwriting on blue exam answer sheets.
 - Attempts to access and retrieve any portion of the exam already completed in SofTest at the time of the problem. If Law Technology staff successfully access and print the exam file after the student has started hand-writing, the typed exam answer will be provided to the student if the exam is still in progress, or to the Registrar to be included with the student's blue exam answer sheets.

What if I have a "take-home" exam?

- While non-native English speaking students receive additional time for standard exams, additional time is NOT granted for take-home exams. Take-home exams are noted on the exam schedule, and may vary in time (most commonly 8 or 24 hours).
- All materials for take-home exams are picked up from the Information Desk (not in the Sub Plaza). This is where you will also return all your exam materials within the time allotted.
- ExamSoft is NOT used for take-home exams, however, you should plan to type your answer on a computer using any word processing program. Your answer should be printed and brought to the Information Desk by the deadline. Plan ahead to ensure you have enough time for travel

and printing. If you experience a printing problem, take your computer and all exam materials to the Information Desk before the deadline.

- Take-home exams are just like standard exams in that the Honor Code applies at all times. Students SHOULD NOT discuss any part of the exam with any other person or student either while the exam is in progress, or afterwards. It may be an Honor Code violation to seek or provide information about the exam before all students in the class have completed it.

What does it mean that the **Honor Code** applies to all exams?

- The Honor Code binds all students at all times, and can be found on the Law School website under [Rules, Policies and Requirements](#). It is a good idea to read it BEFORE exams.
- Specifically, the Honor Code imposes the following restrictions:
 - o You should not talk to any other person about the exam while you are taking it, except that you may seek clarification from the professor (or proctor) regarding a specific question while you are taking the exam. The answer to your question will be provided to the entire class;
 - o You may not exceed the time allotted for completing your exam. Students who continue typing/writing after time has been called for a given exam, or who turn in a take-home or variance exam after the deadline, will be referred for an Honor Code investigation;
 - o You may not include your name on your exam answer or other information that would indicate your identity to the instructor reading the exam;
 - o Your work must be your own and not be copied from any other materials or other students' work;
 - o You must not consult any materials that are not specifically permitted by the written exam instructions, including online or in-person resources;
 - o You must not retain any exam materials, including the exam question, after the end of the exam. You are also prohibited from copying any exam materials to retain for yourself or to distribute to other people;
 - o You must not disseminate, orally or in writing, ANY information about the content of the exam after you have taken it, to ensure that exam information is not purposefully or inadvertently provided to students taking make-up exams. **The best policy is to avoid discussing an exam with other students, even if you have already completed it; if the other student has not yet taken the exam and you reveal information about it, you will have given this student an unfair advantage, in violation of the Honor Code;**
 - o You MUST report to Professor Nancy Cook any Honor Code violation that you witness by another student;

- You may NOT take any other action that would give you an unfair advantage over other students taking the exam.

WHO SHOULD I TALK TO IF I HAVE AN EMERGENCY THAT INTERFERES WITH MY ATTENDANCE AT AN EXAM?

- Contact the Dean of Students office by email (lawdos@umn.edu) or phone (612-625-2456) to explain your circumstances. If you need to reach the Dean of Students office during business hours, call the Information Desk at 612-625-1845 and ask for assistance.
- DO NOT contact your professor about any variations from the normal exam schedule. This is to protect the blind grading protocol.

WHAT IF MY EXAM APPEARS TO INCLUDE A MISTAKE, OR IF I NEED CLARIFICATION FROM AN INSTRUCTOR?

- If you are taking a standard or variance exam in the Law School Sub Plaza, please contact a proctor. There will be a proctor outside of Room 25 throughout the exam period.
- If you are working on a take-home exam, you may, unless specifically barred from doing so by the exam instructions, email your professor directly for a clarification or question. Otherwise, you can contact a Student Services staff person at the Law School Information Desk in person, or by phone during business hours at 612-625-1845.
- If you are taking a variance exam, please contact the Information Desk staff for assistance with an exam-related question.