



## COVID-19 Student F.A.Q.s

*Last updated 7/02/2020*

**IMPORTANT UPDATE: This document has NOT yet been updated with information relevant to the Fall 2020 semester, but we anticipate having much more information to incorporate by early August. To share questions or feedback with the Academic, Student Community, or Staff Sunrise Working groups, complete our survey at: [z.umn.edu/Law\\_Hybrid\\_Survey](https://z.umn.edu/Law_Hybrid_Survey).**

Given the fluid and quickly-changing nature of the COVID-19 crisis, this document will be continuously updated with additional or revised information as appropriate. Note that decisions made at the University or State level will supersede determinations made by the Law School, and we will adjust our expectations accordingly. We appreciate your patience and flexibility as the Law School focuses on our core mission of supporting students in progressing academically towards their degrees.

### Key Information Links

- University of Minnesota Safe Campus COVID-19 Information:  
<https://safe-campus.umn.edu/public-health-alerts>
  - FAQ: Information for Students, Faculty and Staff  
<https://safe-campus.umn.edu/faq-information-students-faculty-and-staff>
- Law School COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness Page:  
<https://www.law.umn.edu/emergency-preparedness>
- Minnesota Department of Health Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) page:  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus (COVID-19) page:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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[I am an LL.M degree candidate and I am no longer able to take the bar in New York in July. Can I sit for the bar in another state and then transfer my score to New York?](#)

[At this time, the same jurisdictional limitations for non-JD applicants with a Foreign Legal Education will apply to LL.M candidates seeking to sit for a bar exam during the COVID-19 crisis as in any other time.](#)

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## Student Support Services

I'm feeling personally impacted by the COVID-19 situation or the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. Where can I get help?

We know this is an overwhelming time, and that students may be experiencing fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. As with classes and other services, the University has adjusted access for some support services. Students continue to have access to support avenues as follows:

- **Law School Student Affairs advising and referral:** email [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu) with personal or academic concern(s) and you will be connected to Assistant Dean of Students Erin Keyes, Registrar and Director of Student Affairs Dr. Noelle Noonan, or Senior Coordinator of Diversity and Student Programs, Nubia Esparza. We are all expanding our student advising hours to meet student needs.
- **Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers/Sand Creek EAP**

### **Minnesota Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL)**

651-646-5590; 877-525-6466 (toll-free) [www.mnlcl.org](http://www.mnlcl.org); [help@mnlcl.org](mailto:help@mnlcl.org);  
[www.facebook.com/mnlcl](https://www.facebook.com/mnlcl).

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers is the provider of Minnesota's Lawyers Assistance Program for lawyers, judges, law students, and their immediate family members. We offer free, confidential help with addictions, mental health disorders, chronic stress, and personal and career-related issues. Our services include: 24-hour crisis response; professional clinical assessments and referrals; interventions; short-term counseling; support groups facilitated by licensed counselors; peer support; and education.

### **Sand Creek EAP**

612-430-3383; 888-243-5744 (toll-free) [www.sandcreekeap.com](http://www.sandcreekeap.com)

LCL's Employee Assistance Program partner Sand Creek offers face to face and virtual counseling. You can speak with a counselor 24/7 by calling Sand Creek directly. Additionally, they host a website with articles and resources in many areas including frequently updated information on COVID-19. Go to [www.sandcreekeap.com](http://www.sandcreekeap.com) and click on "EAP WORK/LIFE PORTAL" to use or create your account. Use the Company Code "lawyers" when creating your account.

The American Bar Association's Commission on Lawyers Assistance Programs (CoLAP) provides a [summary of resources and guidance for those in the legal profession navigating COVID-19](#)

- **Medical / Boynton Health**

We want to ensure that those who need care immediately have appointments available to them. In order to prioritize those patients for the earliest appointments, all appointments will need to be scheduled by phone.

- Nurse Information Line: 612-625-7900
- Medical: 612-625-3222
- Eye: 612-624-2134
- Mental Health: 612-624-1444
- St. Paul: 612-624-7700
- **In-Person Mental Health Services at Boynton**

Boynton continues to provide urgent, in-person mental health services to students not self-isolating or quarantined. Care will be provided in alignment with CDC and MDH recommendations for social distancing. To contact the mental health clinic, please call 612-624-1444.
- **Student Counseling Services**

Student Counseling Services (SCS) will re-open Wednesday, March 18, following two days of telehealth provider training. SCS will begin to roll out phone and video support for students currently in Minnesota. Current SCS clients are being contacted with information about options for support during this transitional time. As we anticipate evolving work plans to adapt to the circumstances, it is best for students who want to speak with a counselor to call SCS's main office number at 612-624-3323. The [SCS website](#) will be regularly updated.
- **Mental Health Crisis Line**

The [University crisis line](#) remains available 24 hours a day. Please call **612-301-4673** or text "UMN" to **61222**.
- **Remote Mental Health Services - Learn to Live**

To access confidential online cognitive behavioral therapy, visit the [Learn to Live](#) website (enter code "UMN").
- **International Student & Scholar Services** counselors, call (612) 626-7100 to make an appointment.

International students can contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for questions about their immigration status. ISSS also provides support services for international students including counseling, support for academic difficulty, and funding for financial challenges. Please visit [issss.umn.edu](http://issss.umn.edu), call 612-626-7100, or contact ISSS at [issss@umn.edu](mailto:issss@umn.edu).
- **Boynton Health COVID-19** (information on what to do if you have symptoms or are sick.)
- **University Office of Student Affairs Care Program**
- **Bias Response and Referral Network**
- **OSA Mental Health Resources** information regarding mental health resources found on the [OSA website](#).

What should I do if I'm concerned about a law student?

Please freely share the above support resources. If you think the Law School can be helpful in reaching out to a student, please complete the [Student Support Referral Form](#) for any student who may need direct outreach from the Student Affairs team.

What should I do if I'm concerned about COVID-19 exposure?

Boynton Health Services has provided guidelines for community members who are concerned that they may have been exposed to the novel coronavirus or who are exhibiting possible symptoms. Visit <https://boynton.umn.edu/coronavirus> for more information.

## Financial and Student Loan Support Information

I am experiencing a **current financial emergency**. Where can I go for help?

- **University of Minnesota Emergency funds.** The University of Minnesota is committed to supporting student wellbeing. Emergency funds are available for students who are unable to meet essential needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. To request student emergency funds, email One Stop Student Services at [onestop@umn.edu](mailto:onestop@umn.edu).
- **University of Minnesota Care Program.** The University's [Care Program](#) provides a range of supports to students, including advising on resources to address financial crisis, housing insecurity, childcare assistance, public benefits access, etc. Review a comprehensive [summary of resources](#). To request a Care consult, email [osacare@umn.edu](mailto:osacare@umn.edu).
- **Nutritious U Food Pantry.** Students experiencing food insecurity can sign up for groceries through the [Nutritious U Pantry](#).
- **Law School Emergency funds.** Through the generosity of AccessLex and other donors, the Law School has limited funds available for students with emergency financial situations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more or to request a consultation, email a brief summary of your situation and need to [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu).

I have significant concerns about my finances in the coming months.

Where can I find advice and support?

### Free Support from AccessLex.org

- **“Managing your Money During the COVID-19 Pandemic Webinar,”** a special program for law students/grads. Topics include organizing financial accounts and debt, bridging unemployment and income uncertainty, prioritizing outflows, and constructing credible support systems. The CARES Act and what to do with your stimulus check will also be discussed. Click on the date links below to sign up for a session.
  - [Thursday, May 7 at 3:00 pm ET](#)
  - [Wednesday May 13 at 12:00 pm ET](#)
  - [Tuesday May 19 at 4:00 pm ET](#)
- **[Expanded webinar offerings](#)** on multiple financial topics. Presented by Accredited Financial Counselors (AFCs), who are well-versed in the special considerations for law students and future legal professionals.
- **[AccessConnex: FREE one-on-one remote coaching](#)** on money matters with AccessLex AFCs. Counselors can help you plan around loan repayment, deferment, and strategies for navigating uncertainty.

**University of Minnesota**

- **Financial wellness tools and counseling.** Students with questions about financial management strategies and specific situations can explore a [range of resources and tools](#) and can get free, virtual, [one-on-one financial counseling](#).
- **Care Program.** The University's [Care Program](#) provides a range of supports to students, including advising on resources to address financial crisis, housing insecurity, childcare assistance, public benefits access, etc. Review a comprehensive [summary of resources](#). To request a Care consult, email [osacare@umn.edu](mailto:osacare@umn.edu).
- **Nutritious U Food Pantry.** Students experiencing food insecurity can sign up for groceries through the [Nutritious U Pantry](#).
- **International Students.** International Student Scholar Services (ISSS) supports international students with counseling, help for academic difficulty, and funding for financial challenges. Visit [iss.umn.edu](http://iss.umn.edu), call 612-626-7100, or contact ISSS at [iss@umn.edu](mailto:iss@umn.edu).
- **Student Legal Service,** UMN's on-campus law office for current fee paying students, remains open (remotely) and is ready to assist and help students navigate these difficult times. Confidential counsel, advice and assistance, is provided by experienced professionals in landlord/tenant, consumer, criminal, immigration issues and much more. Email [usls@umn.edu](mailto:usls@umn.edu) to schedule a phone or video conferencing appointment.

## Law School Support

- **Emergency funds.** Through the generosity of AccessLex and other donors, the Law School has limited funds available for students with emergency financial situations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more or to request a consultation, email a brief summary of your situation and need to [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu).
- **Summer options.** For rising 2L and 3L students still seeking summer legal opportunities or adjusting to employment changes:
  - **Connect with your Career Counselor** about your interests, options, and changes in your anticipated plans.
  - **Consider Summer coursework.** The Law School is expanding summer course options for 2020 beyond those [currently posted](#). New course availability will be shared via email and will be posted on our [Summer Session page](#). Note that:
    - Summer enrollment incurs tuition as reflected on the [Summer session page](#), but may enable lighter courseloads in future semesters.

- Federal financial aid for Summer tuition and cost of living may be available to students otherwise eligible for federal loans. For questions, contact the Law School's Liaison to the Office of Student Finance, Jim Parker at [j-park1@umn.edu](mailto:j-park1@umn.edu).

### **Additional Resources**

- [Care Program Immediate Resources](#) for University of Minnesota students
- [United Way Coronavirus Resources and Information](#). Comprehensive information about support available to Minnesotans impacted by COVID-19
- [PFUND Foundation COVID-19 Rapid Response](#) serving Minnesota LGBTQIA communities

I'm worried about the summer job market due to the impact of COVID-19 on many employers. What are my options?

If you do not already have summer employment, consult your Career Counselor on ways to get substantive legal experience before the next semester. Options can include remote externship or volunteer positions through the [Minnesota Justice Foundation](#). Since COVID-19 is impacting the legal industry world-wide, prospective employers are aware of widespread legal employment disruptions and impacts on students.

The Law School is also expanding available online [summer courses](#), with updates provided to all students via email. Students who are otherwise eligible for federal financial aid can receive both tuition and cost of living loans for the Summer if they take 3 or more credits in the summer term.

Does the Law School plan to provide a refund for Spring 2020 student fees?

Along with all University units, the Law School has provided information to the Board of Regents regarding our application of funds collected from the Law School collegiate fee. Funds from those fees are designated for support of Career Center and Law School Technology functions, which have continued in full operation throughout the Spring semester.

The decision whether or not to refund any Spring 2020 fees will be made by the Board of Regents and students will be notified of their decision.

### **Campus Access and Events**

Will Fall 2020 courses be at Mondale Hall or online? When can we expect to find out either way?

The University of Minnesota is planning for a variety of scenarios for fall classes and other events in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A decision is expected around mid-June by President Gabel. The University's approach will continue to be guided by advice and

counsel from the Minnesota Department of Health, Governor Tim Walz, and the University's own public health experts.

Once a decision has been made by the University, the Law School will communicate directly with students on any plans that vary from a traditional on-campus experience.

Will students be able to access Mondale Hall and the Law Library while classes are held online?

The University has moved to weekend hours for all classroom buildings, including Mondale Hall, which means you need your U card to enter the building and the Law Library. While the building is not closed, that access may change if the Central University moves to limit campus access in the future. **For your safety, we ask that you not come to Mondale Hall unless absolutely necessary.** Students who do come to campus are urged to wash hands frequently, and to employ other recommended hygiene and social distancing practices. For example, if you would normally meet with a study group on campus, consider instead setting up a joint Zoom meeting.

How can I access textbook resources if the Library is unstaffed?

*From Connie Lenz in the Law Library:*

Students may access casebooks published by **Carolina Academic Press**, **LexisNexis**, and **Wolters Kluwer**, as well as **NITA Case Files** on the VitalSource platform through May 24. To get started, visit [bookshelf.vitalsource.com](http://bookshelf.vitalsource.com) and create an account using your umn.edu email address. Step-by-step instructions for creating an account are available [here](#). Once you create an account, log in and click on the "Explore" tab in the upper left corner of the screen. This tab provides access to the freely available e-textbooks, which you can search by title. Each student can download up to seven titles. Additional details about this program are available [here](#).

**West Academic** is offering students complimentary digital access to required **West Academic** and **Foundation Press** casebooks. The offer is intended only for students who do not have access to their purchased casebook due to the suspension of in-class instruction.

- Students should call West Academic at 877.888.1330 (ext.4) to set up their eBook
- If you don't already have a West Academic Online Study Aids account, set up a West Academic account before calling in; this can be done at, <https://eproducts.westacademic.com/>. Please note that this is a West Academic account, which differs from a Westlaw password.
- West Academic would like to emphasize that this offer is only for required textbooks.

**LexisNexis** is providing access through mid-May to **LexisNexis** and **Carolina Academic Press** casebooks on the [LexisNexis Digital Library platform](#), where you may sign in with your x500 ID and password. Search your casebook by title to see if it is available.

Which events have been cancelled or postponed?

**All large-scale events**, in accordance with [President Gabel's March 13, 2020 email](#), including but not limited to:

- Barristers Ball
- Campus Preview Weekend
- Theatre of the Relatively Talentless musical
- Commencement
  - *See Graduating Students section below, which includes a section on Commencement-related questions.*

**Student group organized meetings and events** should be cancelled, postponed, or moved to an on-line format.

Where can I find information about options for satisfying the 2L Writing Requirement?

In lieu of the live information sessions normally presented regarding 2L writing requirement options, information and links to guides and videos on journal and moot court options can be found at: <https://minnesotalawreview.org/about/membership/Vist>  
For a general overview, review these guides:

Moot Court General Info: **Guide**

Journal General Info: **Guide**

Will the petition for journal membership still occur? Where can I find information about journal options? (updated 4/7/2020)

**Yes**, the petition is still scheduled to run from Thursday, May 7 to Sunday, May 31. The petition itself will be completely remote. All petition events will be held virtually, as announced via the Petitioning Committee ([lawpetition@umn.edu](mailto:lawpetition@umn.edu)) and posted at <https://minnesotalawreview.org/about/membership/>.

Virtual journal trainings and important dates include:

**Petition 101:** Monday, April 6, 11-12:30, **Zoom**

**Bluebooking Breakout 1:** Tuesday, April 7, 12:15-1:15, **Zoom**

**Bluebooking Breakout 2:** Thursday, April 9, 12:15-1:15, **Zoom**

**Bluebooking Breakout 3:** Wednesday, April 15, 12:15-1:15, **Zoom**

**Bluebooking Breakout 4:** Thursday, April 16, 12:15-1:15, **Zoom**

**Diversity Bluebooking Session:** Friday, April 17, 12:15-1:15, **Zoom**

**Petition Preparation and Strategy Session:** Monday, April 20, 4-6pm, **Zoom**

**Petition Period (tentative):** Thursday, May 7 to Sunday, May 31

**Offers Extended (tentative):** June 17-June 27

For information on individual journals, see:

*Minnesota Law Review:* **Video & Guide**

*Journal of Law and Inequality:* **Video & Guide**

*Journal of International Law:* **Guide**

## Where can I find information about moot court options?

Moot Court information is posted at:

<https://minnesotalawreview.org/about/membership/>, and includes:

Moot Court General Info: **Guide**

Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Moot Court: **Video & Guide**

Environmental Law Moot Court: **Video & Guide**

I.P. Moot Court: **Video & Guide**

National Moot Court: **Video & Guide**

## Course Instruction

### How will instructors manage make up classes for sessions that would have been held during the extended Spring Break period, on March 17th and 18th?

Instructors will communicate directly with students about how course content will be covered. In most cases, faculty will make any make-up sessions available to all class members via recording or will use other online mechanisms to cover missed content.

### How will students access coursework online?

During the extended Spring Break period, faculty and instructors received training in remote teaching through platforms such as Zoom or Canvas. You will receive specific guidance from each instructor about how class meetings will be held and any other changes to the syllabus.

To prepare for online instruction, students are encouraged to become acquainted with the Zoom platform, with guidance provided on the Law School's [Emergency Preparedness site](#).

### How should I approach experiential learning such as externships and field placements while classes are held online?

Communicate directly with the faculty member overseeing your externship or field placement. They have guidance from Law School leadership on how to proceed.

### What if I still need "in-class" credits to meet graduation requirements?

In keeping with recent ABA guidance regarding emergencies, the Law School will make adjustments necessary to ensure students receive course content by appropriate means, including online instruction for courses that would normally be held in person.

Coursework that qualifies as "in-class" instruction for the Spring 2020 semester will continue to satisfy that requirement even if a portion of the class instruction takes place online.

How will clinic students fulfill requirements and obligations to clients?

All Clinic students have been contacted by Nicole Smiley and individual clinic faculty regarding the continuation of client-related work. Given the unique situation of each clinic, enrolled students should follow guidance from individual instructors and/or Clinic administration.

I am unable to keep up with coursework due to personal or family needs associated with COVID-19. Where can I go to explore my options?

(3/20/2020)

Contact Student Affairs at [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu) to discuss your individual needs and circumstances. We will work with you to consider and evaluate a range of options.

## Academic Advising and Support

Where can I go for academic advising?

All students with academic advising questions can request a meeting with a Student Services advisor by emailing their question(s) and a meeting request to [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu). Students can also reach out to Concentration Faculty chairs or other faculty who teach in an area of interest. 1L students can also reach out via email to their faculty advisor.

What will happen for scheduled SSG sessions for 1L courses?

SSG instructor teams will continue to provide materials and information relating to Spring semester subjects and academic guidance. They may also use Zoom to hold virtual SSG sessions with their section. Instructor teams will be reaching out with specific plans during the period of remote instruction.

## Exams

How will exams be administered?

All final exams for the Spring 2020 semester will be administered remotely. Specific plans and advising for Spring 2020 can be found on the [Remote Exam FAQ](#).

All students should ensure they [have a laptop](#) in good working order as exams will be administered via [ExamSoft's Examplify program](#). For guidance on maintaining your laptop in good working order, visit:

<https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/law-tech/maint?authuser=1>.

How will I receive disability accommodations?

The Law School will continue to provide necessary accommodations for degree-seeking students with disabilities, both with respect to online instruction and exam administration. If you are not already registered with the Disability Resource Center,

email our DRC Liaison [Molly Giffin](#) to consult about your needs. For questions about implementation of accommodations, contact Student Affairs at [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu).

## Grading and Evaluation

Will the Law School be changing the grading basis for Spring 2020 classes in light of disruptions from the COVID-19 emergency?

**Yes.** Per Dean Jenkins' March 27, 2020, email to the Law School community:

In light of the disruption caused by the public health emergency, including the shift to remote instruction for the balance of the spring 2020 semester and the associated and varied burdens on students and faculty, the faculty has reached a consensus decision: **grades for all current Law School courses will be awarded on a mandatory S/N (satisfactory/not satisfactory) basis.** This applies to all first- and upper-year J.D. students, as well as LL.M. and MSPL students.

...

We are continuing to work diligently through the various detailed implications of this move to S/N grades. But, I didn't want to delay this communication until every one of those details was finalized. While I have included some of these changes below, I ask for your patience and understanding as we move forward to address additional issues. For further updates on implementation questions, please consult the FAQ for students maintained by Student Affairs.

I can inform you of the following:

- All rules and policies linking graduation requirements to satisfactory completion of specified courses will be deemed satisfied by obtaining an "S" in a specified course that converted to S/N grading this semester.
- Students enrolled in year-long courses in the 2019-20 academic year may receive a grade under the original grade basis for the course (A/F or H/P/LP/F) for the Fall 2019 semester, if the instructor has a sufficient foundation for grading based solely on work completed in the Fall and the amount of Fall semester work warrants the number of credits attributed to the Fall semester. In all other cases, the S/N grading basis will apply to eventual conversion of the Fall semester grade.
- The policy change applies to Spring 2020 semester courses completed after March 6, 2020.
- Transcripts will be annotated to indicate that Spring 2020 grades reflect the Law School policy in response to the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus rather than the choices of any individual student.
- ~~While traditional book awards will not be given this semester, faculty will have the option to recognize outstanding class performance by designating award winners (name TBD), similar to the book awards. Like the book awards, these will not appear on student transcripts and will be limited in number. Faculty may choose to designate recipients in both a J.D. category and an LL.M. category. [See Book Awards entry for update]~~

- Law students enrolled in courses in other University of Minnesota schools or departments should consult the policies of those schools or departments for information about timing, delivery, and grading of their courses; law students remain subject to the policies of those schools or departments for those courses.
- Undergraduates enrolled in 3000-level courses reserved for undergraduates will be graded in accordance with University policy; mandatory S/N grading will apply to all University students in law courses of 5000-level and above.

### How will the Law School address ranks and quartiles after the Spring 2020 semester?

The Law School will not be calculating ranks for rising 2L and 3L students after the Spring 2020 semester. Instead, students should use their cumulative GPA to reflect performance. We anticipate that the next rank/quartile calculation will be after the conclusion of Fall 2020 classes, when we expect grading to return to the A/F or H/P/LP/F grading bases. Similarly, we will suspend Dean's List determinations until after the 2020-2021 academic year.

There will be a final graduation rank and honors calculations after the Spring 2020 semester.

### Will Book Awards still be awarded to top students in Spring 2020 classes?

**Yes**, with slight revisions to current Law School Academic Rule 12.7.

Under a new amendment approved by faculty in response to the COVID-19 crisis, an additional provision (e) is added to Rule 12.7 that retains the provisions of that rule EXCEPT as follows:

- Faculty may name a Book Award winner in any class that was previously graded on the A/F basis in Spring 2020 (continuing to exclude moot courts and clinics);
- For classes of 30 or more students, *instructors are no longer required* to name a Book Award winner;
- Instructors may now give Book Awards to both JD and LL.M students, so long as at least 3 LL.M students are enrolled in a course;
- Instructors are now encouraged to disclose to their classes whether or not they name any Book Award winner for Spring semester.

## Technology and Remote Access

### Where can I learn more about Zoom and other remote access platforms?

The Law School Technology team has compiled links to training and other information for Zoom, Google Hangouts, and other remote access platforms on our [Emergency Preparedness: COVID-19 Updates page](#).

What if I don't have internet access where I live? (updated 3/24/2020)

If you do not currently have internet access where you live, note that major providers nationwide are providing free or reduced cost access in Minnesota and nationwide. For more information, visit:

- The Office of Information Technology (OIT)'s page on **Working and Learning Off Campus**: <https://it.umn.edu/working-learning-campus>
- **Getting Internet Access Off Campus**: <https://it.umn.edu/working-learning-campus/get-internet-access-campus>

## Information for Graduating Students

### Commencement

Do I still need to complete the [Commencement Survey](#) from Student Affairs?

**Yes.** If you haven't already done so, please complete the [Graduation and Commencement Survey](#) so that we can track your plans around graduation, and so that we have your name and hometown as you'd like it to appear in any alternate Commencement-related publications or events.

What are the Law School's plans for Commencement now that it will not be held in May?

The University has confirmed that it will be hosting an online Commencement ceremony at 11 AM on Saturday, May 16th. The Law School will have its own virtual commencement at 11:30 AM on the same day, and will feature addresses by faculty and student speakers. An in-person Commencement gathering is being planned for the Class of 2020 in Spring 2021, with details forthcoming. For more information, visit: <https://www.law.umn.edu/current-students/academic-resources/graduation-bar-certification/commencement>.

Will I receive a refund if I already ordered Commencement regalia?

For those of you who placed an order for your regalia, Herff Jones (regalia provider) has canceled all current orders and you will be receiving a full refund. Please allow 30 days for the refund to show on your credit card. You are welcome to email [gradmidwest@gmail.com](mailto:gradmidwest@gmail.com) with any regalia concerns or questions.

Additionally, Herff Jones has created a new website where, if desired, you are able to place a new regalia order that will be shipped to your home free of shipping cost. You'll receive a prepaid mailing label to return prior to September 1st, allowing you to celebrate this summer or whenever most convenient for you and your family. You can visit [herff.ly/umnlaw](http://herff.ly/umnlaw) to place your new regalia order. Please note, this is completely optional and not a requirement from the Law School.

If you choose to order regalia, note that you can disregard the language around the commencement date on the website (it reflects the month of December). A date needs to be included on the site, however, we understand this date is not correct, nor does it confirm a postponed commencement date. It will NOT impact your order. Please email [gradmidwest@gmail.com](mailto:gradmidwest@gmail.com) with questions.

## Degree Completion and Graduation

I am currently enrolled in coursework or other exercises required for my degree. Will the transition to S/N grading impact my ability to complete requirements in progress?

**No.** A satisfactory (“S”) grade for any Law credits in progress in Spring 2020 will be considered sufficient to fulfill degree requirements that may have otherwise required a minimum grade under either A/F or H/P/LP/F grading.

Will I still be able to complete a Concentration if required courses are graded S/N?

**Yes.** Current Concentration credits in progress will be accepted towards Concentration requirements with an “S” grade. If you haven’t already done so, be sure to submit your [Concentration Memorandum](#) to the Concentration Faculty Chair.

## Where to go with Bar-related Questions and Requests

Where should I go with bar-related questions or form requests?

A number of offices work with students in the run-up to the bar exam. Generally, bar-related topics can be divided into “Application,” “Character & Fitness,” and “Exam Preparation.” Review the chart below for where to go with common questions and needs:

Category	Topic, Question, or Request	Office / Person	Email/Website
Application	I need advising about where to apply for the bar.	Career Counselor or Dir. of Academic and Bar Success	<a href="mailto:ronning@umn.edu">ronning@umn.edu</a>
Application	Dean’s Certificate, Certificate of Graduation, or similar	Student Affairs - Registrar	<a href="mailto:lawreg@umn.edu">lawreg@umn.edu</a>
Application	Student Practice Certification or Similar Certification for any jurisdiction	Student Affairs - Registrar	<a href="mailto:lawreg@umn.edu">lawreg@umn.edu</a>
Application	How to request an OFFICIAL transcript	MyU ( <i>note: Law School Registrar CANNOT provide official transcripts</i> )	<a href="http://myu.umn.edu/Academics/Grades/">myu.umn.edu/Academics/Grades/</a> Request Official Transcript

Application	I need to review my Law School application or other record from my student file	Student Affairs - Registrar	Online <a href="#">Student Records Request Form</a>
Character & Fitness	Application Amendment Request	Student Affairs - Asst. Dean of Students	lawdos@umn.edu
Character & Fitness	Questions or concerns about how to respond to character and fitness questions or inquiries	Student Affairs - Asst. Dean of Students	lawdos@umn.edu
Exam Preparation	Planning a bar study strategy	Dir. of Academic and Bar Success Kim Ronning	ronning@umn.edu
Exam Preparation	How to choose a commercial bar support course that fits my needs and budget	Dir. of Academic and Bar Success Kim Ronning	ronning@umn.edu
Bar Financing	Where can I assess my options for getting a Bar Study Loan or Personal Loan to support my needs while I study for the bar?	AccessConnex 1-on-1 financial counseling	<a href="https://www.accesslex.org/accessconnex">https://www.accesslex.org/accessconnex</a>

### Where should I submit a form that needs the Dean's signature?

Most required forms related to bar applications or practice certification are prepared by the Law School Registrar's Office (via [lawreg@umn.edu](mailto:lawreg@umn.edu)) and then routed to the appropriate Dean for review and signing. When in doubt, submit your request to [lawreg@umn.edu](mailto:lawreg@umn.edu) *first*.

- **For the Bar** - Students applying for the bar outside of Minnesota should submit the appropriate state bar certification form(s) - with all necessary applicant information completed - to the Registrar's Office ([lawreg@umn.edu](mailto:lawreg@umn.edu)). **The Registrar will obtain the Dean's signature.** Students applying for the Minnesota bar only need to notify the Registrar at [lawreg@umn.edu](mailto:lawreg@umn.edu) or via the Bar Plans Survey) of their intent to take the exam.
- **For Student Practice** - In Minnesota, go to the [Student Practice Certification request form here](#). Outside of Minnesota, students are responsible for researching the certification requirement for the state in question, and submitting to the Law School Registrar's Office ([lawreg@umn.edu](mailto:lawreg@umn.edu)) all relevant forms and instructions. **The Registrar will obtain the Dean's signature.**

## Bar Application

Should I complete the [Bar Plans Survey](#) if I'm not 100% sure of my plans?

Yes. We understand that things are fluid at the moment, and that your plans may be in flux as jurisdictions consider whether to delay the July 2020 bar exam. Knowing your

preferred jurisdiction will help us coordinate the most helpful advising. The Registrar's office is also working closely with Professor Kim Ronning regarding updates she receives about graduate plans, so you can also provide her updates at [lawreg@umn.edu](mailto:lawreg@umn.edu).

Generally, we will use the information received for you most recently as the most accurate reflection of your plans.

### Where can I go with questions about my bar application?

For general advising about the bar application process, please request a meeting via Student Affairs by emailing [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu). If you are trying to decide where to take the bar exam, contact Kim Ronning, Director of Academic and Bar Success at [ronning@umn.edu](mailto:ronning@umn.edu) and/or consult with your Career Counselor regarding your options.

### What if my application is due but I can't get a physical signature for a required form or affidavit, or have trouble obtaining other documentation due to COVID-19-related closures?

The MN Board of Law Examiners advises applicants to submit the bulk of their application by the deadline, but to follow up with additional materials as soon as they are available. In other words, **do not delay submission of a bar application** if it is substantially complete, and include a cover letter detailing additional materials that will be submitted when available.

Applicants in other states should consult the bar authority for specific guidance, but they will likely also allow some flexibility.

### What if I need a document to be notarized but I cannot find a notary?

Contact the bar authority for clarification. Many bar authorities, including Minnesota, will temporarily waive the requirement for notarized signatures.

The Minnesota Board of Law Examiners has [announced](#) that you may submit your Affidavits of Good Character (as required in Rule 4B) **without notarization**. However, they request that you have your affiant include the following language immediately above their signature: *"I declare under penalty of perjury that everything I have stated in this document is true and correct."*

For the notarization of the bar application itself, local banks frequently offer notary services by appointment even during COVID-19 stay at home orders because banks are deemed essential services. That said, the Minnesota Board has said that they will *temporarily* waive the requirement for notarization.

### What if my graduation is delayed due to disruptions related to COVID-19?

The Law School's priority this Spring is to facilitate completion of required credits for students expecting to graduate. We anticipate that bar authorities may consider increased flexibility due to the unprecedented crisis. Students with specific concerns about completion of credits should contact Student Affairs at [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu) to request a consultation.

## Bar Preparation and Support

How will the Law School provide support on bar application and preparation?

Students with bar application questions, including character and fitness concerns, should contact Student Affairs at [lawdos@umn.edu](mailto:lawdos@umn.edu). Our new Director of Academic and Bar Success, Kim Ronning, is also now working with 3Ls individually regarding their bar plans and preparation strategies.

When will the Law School's new Director of Academic and Bar Success, Kim Ronning, be available to consult with students?

Professor Ronning has started her role remotely and is focused on meeting ALL 3L students in April to set up individual remote consultation meetings. If you haven't already:

- Watch her **comprehensive [Preparing for the Bar Exam](#) video** (in which she provides an overview of the bar exam, preparation strategies, and some considerations for how to manage the unpredictability caused by the COVID-19 crisis);
- Sign up to meet with her [via her virtual appointment calendar](#); or
- Email her at [ronning@umn.edu](mailto:ronning@umn.edu).

## Bar Administration Changes

Will the bar exam still take place in July 2020?

**On May 5th, the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) confirmed that it will release July Bar exam questions** to jurisdictions that choose to administer a July 2020 exam.

**As of May 1, 2020, the Minnesota Board of Law Examiners is still planning to administer the bar exam in July 2020, as well as in September 2020.** Applicants may apply for either administration, or if they sign up for July and are unable to take the exam at that time, they may request a switch to September.

Planned administrations in Minnesota are contingent on guidance from the Centers of Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health and Governor's Office.

Outside Minnesota, states have been evaluating their own plans for July 2020. A full list of expected administration in states across the country is compiled at: <http://www.ncbex.org/ncbe-covid-19-updates/july-2020-bar-exam-jurisdiction-information>.

What is the status of the delayed New York Bar?

Per the [New York Court of Appeals website](#) as of April 30, 2020:

**The New York administration of the Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) is presently scheduled for September 9-10, 2020.** The application process for the September exam will proceed on a rolling basis as space permits. From Tuesday, May 5, 2020 through Friday, May 15, applications will be accepted from any J.D. or LL.M. candidate who is sitting for the bar examination for the first time and who has graduated (or will graduate in Spring 2020) from one of the fifteen law schools located in New York State.

At the close of the first application period, the Board will assess available seating in light of existing health and safety guidance. If seating remains available, the Board will then open the application period to a larger pool of candidates.

Given the constraints caused by the public health crisis, candidates are strongly encouraged to consider sitting for the UBE at a later date or in other jurisdictions that may be better positioned to accommodate test-takers.

I've heard that some states are considering allowing graduates to begin practice once they have earned their law school diplomas. Is this true? Does it apply in Minnesota?

Some state bar authorities are weighing options for some form of interim licensure in the event their bar exam is delayed beyond July 2020. Some in the legal profession have advocated for a "diploma privilege" option that would allow July 2020 applicants a path to licensure without sitting for the bar at all, though only Utah has authorized this option for selected law graduates as a result of COVID-19 concerns. Wisconsin is the only other state that offers diploma privilege for graduates of its own law schools but this rule was in place prior to COVID-19. Another option is extending some form of student practice certification after graduation.

As of May 1, 2020, Minnesota is still planning to administer its exam in July and on September 9th and 10th. The Law School and other Minnesota law schools are in close contact with the Minnesota Board of Law Examiners. Updates will be shared as soon as they are received.

For graduates seeking to practice in New York, a recent announcement from the New York State Court of Appeals notes:

...Therefore, the Chief Judge on behalf of the Court will also explore the expansion of authority for practice orders that allow law graduates who meet specified criteria to engage in certain law practice under supervision of licensed attorneys. The expansion contemplated would allow private sector attorneys and law firms, as well as government offices and legal aid organizations, to apply to the Appellate Division for practice orders, and to allow such orders to include law graduates who are awaiting the administration of the first bar examination following their graduation, as well as law graduates who are awaiting results of the Bar Examination and meet the required criteria.

What are the Minnesota Bar's plans for the July 2020 bar administration?

The Minnesota Board of Law Examiners has not cancelled the planned July 2020 bar administration and has also planned to administer a September 2020 exam consistent with a number of other states.

I was planning to take the bar in New York, or another UBE state that has decided to postpone the July 2020 bar administration. Can I instead sit in Minnesota and later transfer my score to my preferred state?

While it may be possible to apply to a different UBE jurisdiction to sit for an earlier bar (or a jurisdiction without as many seating limitations), the best approach is still to pursue licensure in the state where you expect to practice, under its regulations and timeline.

Some jurisdictions offer [courtesy seating](#) which allows an applicant to sit for the UBE in the jurisdiction without having the intention to seek bar admission in that jurisdiction. See the NCBE's *Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements* [table of deadlines and fees](#).

If your intended jurisdiction has delayed its July 2020 administration and you are considering applying to sit for the bar in another jurisdiction, contact Kim Ronning, Director of Academic and Bar Success at [ronning@umn.edu](mailto:ronning@umn.edu) and/or consult with your Career Counselor regarding your options.

I am an LL.M degree candidate and I am no longer able to take the bar in New York in July. Can I sit for the bar in another state and then transfer my score to New York?

At this time, the [same jurisdictional limitations for non-JD applicants with a Foreign Legal Education](#) will apply to LL.M candidates seeking to sit for a bar exam during the COVID-19 crisis as in any other time.

What if my post-graduate employment is contingent on bar passage, but I no longer have the option of taking the July 2020 bar?

The COVID-19 crisis is impacting the legal profession broadly and employers know that delays in bar administration are out of graduates' control. Many states, including New York and Minnesota, are considering interim licensing options, such as an extension of student practice certification. We expect many states to communicate about their plans after the May 5th NCBE announcement regarding release of UBE exam materials. We encourage you to consult with your career counselor about your particular circumstances, goals, and options.

# Academic Rule and Policy Changes in Response to COVID-19

In response to the unexpected and disruptive transition to online learning in the middle of the Spring 2020 semester, the Law School's administration and faculty have made the following adjustments to key rules and policies related to grading and evaluation. These changes do NOT apply to future semesters, including semesters in which online learning is required on a partial or full-time basis. To view pre-COVID-19 Rules and Policies, go to:

<https://www.law.umn.edu/current-students/student-affairs/student-support-standards>.

## Grading Basis Change for Spring 2020 Courses - Academic Rule 12.1

**In March 2020, the Faculty approved the following additional provision to Academic Rule 12.1, regarding grading basis for Law classes:**

- (c) Exception for Spring 2020. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules:
  - (1) Because of the disruption caused by a public health emergency, all courses in the spring 2020 semester completed after March 6, 2020 will be graded on the S/N basis. The Dean will deem a spring course to have been completed by March 6, 2020 only if all graded exercises and other components of the final grade specified in the syllabus were complete by that date.
  - (2) Students enrolled in year-long courses in the 2019-2020 academic year may receive a grade under the original grade basis for the course (A/F or H/P/LP/F) for the fall 2019 semester if the instructor has a sufficient foundation for grading based solely on work completed in the fall and the amount of fall semester work warrants the number of credits attributed to the fall semester. In all other cases, the S/N grading basis will apply to eventual conversion of the fall X grade.
  - (3) All rules and policies linking graduation requirements to satisfactory completion of specified courses will be deemed satisfied by obtaining an S in a specified course that converted to S/N grading under this provision.

## Book Awards - Academic Rule 12.7

**In April 2020, the Law School's faculty approved the following new Subsection (e) to Academic Rule 12.7 regarding Book Awards:**

- (e) The foregoing provisions of this rule shall apply in the Spring 2020 semester, except as follows:
  - (1) Awards may be given in courses converted from A/F to S/N grading.
  - (2) Rule 12.7(a)(2) shall not apply, so there is no minimum number of required awards.

(3) In courses in which the instructor is authorized to grant a “Book Award” to a J.D. student, the instructor may also grant an “LL.M Book Award” to an LL.M student if three or more LL.M students are enrolled.

2. Instructors are encouraged to inform their students as soon as possible whether they plan to grant Book Awards this semester.