University of Minnesota Law School  
Policy and Procedures Regarding Academic Credit for Journal Service

Adopted by the faculty on January 28, 2014 and amended on February 24, 2015

1. Eligible Journals. The Law School will award academic credit toward the J.D. degree for service on the following five Journals:
   -ABA Journal of Labor and Employment Law (JLE) (faculty/student edited)
   -Law and Inequality: A Journal of Theory and Practice (L&I)
   -Minnesota Journal of International Law (MJIL)
   -Minnesota Journal of Law, Science, and Technology (MJLST)
   -Minnesota Law Review (MLR)

References in this Policy to a Journal or Journals are to those listed above. References to faculty/student edited Journals are to those designated as such in this Section.

2. Grading System. Journal participation for editors shall be graded on the S/N scale. An N grade eliminates one semester of eligibility for credit. Service as a staff member earns academic credit through separately graded legal writing courses governed by Academic Rules 5.3 and 5.4.

3. Responsibility for Grading. The Dean shall appoint at least one Faculty Advisor for each Journal. The Advisor shall have final responsibility for grading, but may consider recommendations from the student Editor in Chief.

4. Journal Positions. When calculating credit and listing credit on transcripts, students shall be designated as “Staff Members” for their first two semesters of journal service and, if selected, as “Editors” for their third and fourth semesters of service.

5. Credits. Students may receive credit for service on only one Journal (except as noted in Section 8(d)) and for a maximum of four semesters. Credits shall be awarded as follows:

   (a) Staff Members: 1 in the Fall, 1 in the Spring awarded through a corequisite note writing course.

   (b) Editors: 2 in the Fall, 2 in the Spring.

   (c) Summer Credit. Students may request that a maximum of one semester of credit for service as an Editor be awarded in the Summer immediately preceding the Fall in which they would otherwise begin their service as an Editor instead of in the Fall or Spring. The Law School will allow a student to register for Summer credit under this Section if the student certifies on a form prepared by the Registrar that: (1) the student will not be available to work on the Journal in the Fall or Spring; (2) the student will complete an amount of work in the Summer that is comparable to what he or she would normally complete in the subsequent Fall or Spring; (3) the Faculty Advisor endorses the request (and signs the form); and (4) the student complies with Section 5(d). For purposes of this Policy, service on a Journal during the Summer shall count as a “semester” of service.
(d) Registration and Residence. Students may earn credit in a semester only if they are registered at the Law School for that semester and have paid any applicable tuition. A student who meets this requirement can serve on a Journal even if he or she is not physically present on campus if the Editor in Chief and Faculty Advisor determine that the student’s physical presence is not necessary for the satisfactory completion of his or her responsibilities.

(e) Full-Year Service. The Registrar will treat Journals as full-year courses. Credit will be awarded only to students who complete two semesters of service in a particular academic year (either Fall and Spring, Summer and Fall, or Summer and Spring). The Registrar will note an X grade on transcripts after satisfactory completion of the first semester. After satisfactory completion of the second semester, the Registrar will award an S for both semesters. If the student fails to satisfactorily complete the second semester, he or she will receive a W for the first semester unless authorized to receive an S under Section 10(a).

6. Enrollment Limits.

(a) Staff Members. Journals may select no more than the following number of Staff Members each Summer: MLR (39), MJIL (25), L&I (25), MJLST (22), JLE (9). If a Journal selects two or more rising 3L candidates, it may select one additional Staff Member beyond the otherwise applicable maximum.

(b) Editors. Each Spring, Journals may appoint no more than the following number of Editors for the next academic year: MLR (39), MJIL (19), L&I (23), MJLST (16), JLE (7).

7. Selection of Staff Members.

(a) Journal membership is open to candidates for the J.D. degree. Students will be selected through a competitive petition process once per year during the Summer.

(b) Petition Process.

(i) The Dean shall appoint a faculty or staff member to serve as the Petition Advisor. Faculty Advisors and Faculty Editors are ineligible to serve as the Petition Advisor. The Petition Advisor shall have final authority, consistent with this Policy, to supervise the petition process.

(ii) A Petition Committee consisting of at least one representative from each Journal shall administer the petition process and may assign responsibility for components of the petition process to particular Journals or Editors. The Committee will distribute written guidelines explaining the petition process to prospective Staff Members.

(c) Eligibility to Petition.

(i) Applicants may petition either as rising 2L or rising 3L candidates.

(A) Rising 2L candidates must have completed at least two and no more than three semesters of law school work and intend to be enrolled in the Law
School and available to work on a Journal during the Fall and Spring of the next academic year and during two semesters of the following academic year.

(B) Rising 3L candidates must have completed at least three semesters of law school work and intend to be enrolled in the Law School and available to work on a Journal during the Fall and Spring of the next academic year. Each Journal may decide whether to consider applications from 3L candidates and whether to cap the number of 3L candidates it selects. If 3L candidates are eligible for selection, their applications must be evaluated under the same standards as, and in competition with, applications from 2L candidates, except that grades may not be considered for 3L candidates.

(C) UMN students who are applying to transfer elsewhere may petition, but must promptly inform the Petition Committee if they accept a transfer offer.

(ii) Potential and admitted rising 2L transfer students from other law schools are eligible to petition as rising 2L candidates through procedures approved by the Petition Advisor.

(iii) Students may submit completed petitions in two different years, but only once as a rising 2L candidate and only once as a rising 3L candidate.

(iv) A student may not apply to join any Journals in the future if he or she: (1) declines an offer to join a Journal to which he or she applied (unless he or she accepts a competing offer); and (2) enrolls in any college or department of the University of Minnesota for the academic year in which he or she would have served as a Staff Member.

(v) Students may apply to more than one Journal. The Petition Committee will establish procedures to determine how to consider student preferences for particular Journals given that all Journals select staff members concurrently.

(d) The Petition.

(i) The petition score shall be based on an anonymously graded petition comprising a case comment (70% of the petition score) and bluebook exercise (30% of the petition score).

(ii) Each Journal shall use the same petition. The Law Review shall grade the bluebook exercise. Each Journal may either grade the case comment on its own or share grading responsibility with other Journals.

(e) Potential Selection Factors in Addition to the Petition. Each Journal may choose to base the overall competition score solely on the petition score or may instead consider additional factors for some or all positions, as follows:

(i) At least 50% of the competition score for each applicant must consist of the petition score.
(ii) In addition to the petition score, the competition score may consider:

(A) the applicant’s cumulative 1L GPA if the applicant is a rising 2L and was a 1L at the University of Minnesota. Grades may be considered to fill no more than half of a Journal’s Staff Member positions, except that there is no limit for faculty/student edited Journals.

(B) an interview, an anonymously graded written statement of interest (which may include responses to written questions from the Journal), or a combination of both, which combined may comprise no more than 35% of the competition score. A written statement may be graded by student editors, but an interview must be graded by the Faculty Advisor, who must be present for the interview and who may rely on such input from student Editors as the Advisor deems appropriate.

(iii) Journals that rely on factors above other than the petition score must provide a written explanation of the selection criteria to potential applicants.

(f) The Law School’s administrative staff shall calculate competition scores based on grades (if applicable), and petition, interview, and statement scores provided by the Journals. Journals will select Staff Members based solely on anonymous competition scores (although they will know whether an applicant is a rising 2L or 3L). The Law School will supply each Journal with the names of its selectees without any information about their absolute or relative petition and competition scores. The Petition Committee may establish procedures for identifying alternate selectees to fill positions that the initial offeree does not accept or that become vacant when a Staff Member is selected as an alternate by another Journal.

8. Selection of Editors.

(a) Selection of Editors shall occur in the Spring of the academic year prior to the year in which the Editor will serve. Each Journal shall develop and distribute to Staff Members written procedures and criteria for selecting Editors.

(b) Except as noted in Section 8(d), all Editors must be enrolled as candidates for the J.D. degree and have satisfactorily served as Staff Members on the Journal for two semesters. Students may apply for editorial positions if they intend to be available to serve on the Journal during the Fall and Spring of the following academic year (or during the following Summer and either the Fall or Spring, if they receive approval for Summer credit under Section 5(c)). Students who return to a Journal as an Editor after an absence of a year or more do not count against otherwise applicable enrollment limits for Editors. A student who applies for Editor positions in a particular year may not reapply in any subsequent year.

(c) Journals may choose to select Editors by any of the following methods (alone or in combination). Journals may use multiple methods concurrently for different types of Editor positions.
(i) appointment by the Faculty Editor (if any), alone or in conjunction with one or more incoming or outgoing student Editors;

(ii) election by Staff Members;

(iii) appointment by a selection board consisting of at least five incoming and/or outgoing Editors (the board may also include the Faculty Advisor(s) and/or Faculty Editor(s)).

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy, a faculty/student edited Journal may select as Editors students who: (i) have served as Staff Members on other Journals or (ii) have not served as a Staff Member on any Journal. If a faculty/student edited Journal plans to select an Editor who is not one of its Staff Members, it must advertise the position to eligible JD students and provide criteria for the selection process. An Editor of a faculty/student edited Journal cannot simultaneously serve on another Journal, earn more than two semesters of credit for serving as an Editor, or earn more than four semesters of credit for serving on Journals.


(a) A student may be dismissed from a Journal at any time (and receive an N grade for the current semester) for misconduct, chronic failure to perform assigned tasks, or persistent unsatisfactory performance.

(b) The Faculty Advisor has sole discretion about whether to dismiss a student. Before dismissing a student, the Faculty Advisor must inform the student in writing about the reasons for potential dismissal and give the student an opportunity to respond in writing. After reviewing the student’s response (if any), the Faculty Advisor may either take no action, dismiss the student from the Journal, or impose a lesser sanction, including but not limited to establishing written conditions for the student’s continued participation on the Journal. In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Advisor may provisionally suspend the student from Journal activities pending a written exchange regarding potential dismissal.

(c) Students dismissed from a Journal will not be eligible to serve on a Journal in the future. Nothing in this Policy precludes additional disciplinary sanctions for the conduct leading to dismissal.

(d) Notwithstanding sections a-c, a student will automatically be dismissed from a journal upon receiving an F grade in a corequisite note writing class.

10. Withdrawal.

(a) In exceptional circumstances and for good cause, if a student is unable to continue serving on a Journal, the Dean of Students, with the endorsement of the Faculty Advisor, may allow the student to withdraw and: (1) receive a W for the current semester; (2) receive an S rather than a W for a prior semester in which the student received an X; and (3) in appropriate circumstances, return to the Journal in a subsequent semester so that the student may receive credit for up to four complete semesters. Students who return to the Journal in a subsequent
academic year do not count against otherwise applicable enrollment limits for their position in that year.

(b) A student who withdraws from a Journal without satisfying Section 10(a) will: (1) receive a grade of N for the semester in which he or she withdraws and for a prior semester (if any) with an X grade; and (2) will be ineligible to serve on a Journal in the future.

11. Effect of Dismissal or Withdrawal on Legal Writing Requirements.

(a) Staff members who are dismissed from a journal will also be withdrawn from the corequisite note writing course. The student will then be responsible for satisfying the second year writing requirement in another manner. In exceptional circumstances, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may allow the student to convert an in-progress note into a faculty-supervised and graded independent research paper that satisfies the second year writing requirement.

(b) A staff member’s withdrawal from a journal has the same effect as dismissal, except that the Dean of Students may for good cause allow the student to remain enrolled in the corequisite note writing course or to reenroll in the note writing course in the future if the student is reinstated to the journal.

(c) An editor who is dismissed from or withdraws from a Journal without subsequent reinstatement under Section 10(a) must satisfactorily complete the upper division legal writing requirement in a manner that does not require consideration of the student’s Journal service.

12. Honor Code. Violations of rules governing eligibility for Journal membership, selection for editorial positions, and the petition process shall be treated as Honor Code violations that may lead to sanctions, including suspension or dismissal from the Law School.

13. Disability Accommodations. All requests for disability accommodations in connection with selection to and service on a Journal shall be submitted to the Dean of Students. The Petition Advisor shall be treated as the instructor for purposes of considering disability accommodation requests for the petition process. Each Journal’s Faculty Advisor shall be treated as the instructor for purposes of all other disability accommodation requests connected with that Journal.

14. Interpretation. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may make interpretations of this Policy.

15. Amendments. Amendments to this Policy require review by the Educational Policy Committee and approval by the Faculty.

16. Transition Provision (to be deleted at the end of the 2014-15 academic year). This Policy takes effect immediately, except that: (1) prior rules governing the number of available credits will apply for the Spring 2014 semester and for all Editors in the 2014-15 academic year; and (2) L&I will retain its three Associate Editors for 2014-15 at existing credit levels. Until the end of the 2014-15 academic year, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may in exceptional circumstances grant variances from the new Procedures to individual students for whom the
transition between the new and old rules creates complications that were not foreseen when the new Procedures were adopted.