

WMU-COOLEY LAW SCHOOL
JURIS DOCTOR PROGRAM OUTCOMES
APPROVED BY FACULTY NOVEMBER 5, 2013

Cooley's mission explicitly states its educational goals:

The Mission of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School is to prepare its graduates for entry into the legal profession through an integrated program with practical legal education as its guiding principle and focus. This mission includes providing broad access to those who seek the opportunity to study law, while requiring those to whom that opportunity is offered to meet Cooley's rigorous academic standards.

Preparation for practice means that Cooley graduates must:

- (1) Master the fundamentals and basic skills required for the competent practice of law and representation of clients;*
- (2) Demonstrate the substantive knowledge and skills required for passage of the bar examination and admission to the bar; and*
- (3) Understand and embrace the legal, moral, ethical, and professional responsibilities of lawyers.*

The school derives its Juris Doctor Program Outcomes from these clearly articulated educational goals. Every Cooley J.D. graduate should achieve the Program Outcomes by graduation. The school has for many years measured student achievement against legal education's well-recognized knowledge, skills, and ethics dimensions. The school recognizes that each of these dimensions integrates with the others, so that a student can only learn the knowledge dimensions in the context of skills and ethics, skills in the context of knowledge and ethics, and so on. However, each dimension serves as a lens for focusing important aspects of the total lawyering program. The Program Outcomes formalize the school's mission-centered educational goals while describing them in measurable terms. Adopting these Program Outcomes enables the school to measure student achievement at appropriate curriculum stages. Course-level learning outcomes will map to Program Outcomes. Sub-outcomes are explained under each Program Outcome, and the school will map them to course outcomes at a later date.

JD PROGRAM OUTCOME 1: KNOWLEDGE

Graduates are able to apply substantive legal knowledge and procedure using general lawyering skills (legal analysis and reasoning, case reading, legal research, legal writing, policy analysis and synthesis) in the analyses necessary to pass the bar exam and practice as competent new attorneys.

This Program Outcome requires that students know, understand, articulate, and apply core legal principles and procedures.

Core Legal Principles and Procedures include:

- the jurisdiction, authority, and procedures of legal institutions, including constitutional law and judicial review;
- the law of contracts and torts, including parties' obligations, rights, and remedies;
- criminal law and procedure;

- the range of legal protections available to the individual in society in civil matters, criminal matters, matters relating to human rights and the interplay between fundamental liberty and governmental action;
- the legal concept of property and the protection, disposal, acquisition, and transfer of property interests;
- equitable rights, titles, and interests;
- the regulatory frameworks within which lawyers and clients conduct business and other legal transactions;
- the formation and operation of various business structures;
- the values and principles on which the profession constructs norms and conduct rules; and
- the rules of professional conduct;

Knowing, understanding, articulating, and applying means that students can:

- acquire, assemble, and organize material facts, data, and information into coherent patterns, enabling evaluation of presented matters;
- recognize missing material facts, data, and information while identifying probable reliable sources from which to acquire the missing information;
- research, recall, and define applicable law, rule, regulation, principle, and concept to construct sound frameworks for addressing law and fact issues;
- apply legal frameworks to analyze the presented matter, reaching and justifying sound conclusions supported by law and fact; and
- evaluate conclusions and outcomes of the presented matter from multiple perspectives, identifying policy implications.

JD PROGRAM OUTCOME 2: SKILLS

Graduates acquire the specific law practice skills necessary to represent clients competently and effectively in service of lawful objectives.

Lawyer skills are diverse and develop over time.

Each student should demonstrate the ability to solve problems by:

- Communicating effectively with clients, colleagues, and other professionals from a range of social, economic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, including the ability to present in both oral and written form, and to listen perceptively;
- recognizing clients' financial, commercial, and personal constraints and priorities, and counsel clients on how they may best meet their lawful objectives in light of those constraints and priorities;
- discerning common and competing interests and objectives of interested persons and entities;
- advocating on behalf of others, participating in at least one legal process (simulation or live-client) to resolve a dispute;
- effectively managing client relationships, including discerning client goals and knowing how to act if a client is dissatisfied with the advice or service provided;
- assessing risk and employing strategies to minimize risk for clients and for themselves;
- acting with civility in all professional encounters; and
- working collaboratively when warranted.

Each student should demonstrate the ability to organize and manage legal work by:

- effectively using current technologies and strategies to organize, store, retrieve, and analyze information and to undertake factual and legal research;
- recognizing and resolving ethical dilemmas;
- managing personal workload so as to efficiently and effectively manage a number of concurrent client matters; and
- recognizing one's personal and professional strengths and weaknesses, identifying the limits of personal knowledge and skill, and developing strategies for professional growth and development that will enhance professional performance.

JD PROGRAM OUTCOME 3: ETHICS

Graduates embrace the legal, moral, ethical, and professional responsibilities of lawyers, embodying the responsibilities of an honorable member of the profession.

Professionalism in the practice of law requires lawyers to demonstrate appropriate behavior and integrity in a range of situations. To embrace and incorporate professionalism in the practice of law, graduates must:

- embody honor, integrity, and fair play while being truthful and candid;
- strive to seek justice, promote access to justice, and support pro bono work;
- foster respect for the rule of law;
- maintain independent judgment;
- recognize the broader implications of their work;
- show courtesy and respect towards others;
- deal sensitively and effectively with diverse clients and colleagues;
- exhibit diligence and punctuality and meet deadlines;
- provide high-quality services at fair cost;
- regularly engage in professional reflection, self-assessment, and professional development; and
- recognizing choices that affect quality of life for themselves and others.