LL.M. Program Writing Requirement

LL.M. Program in Agricultural & Food Law

University of Arkansas School of Law

2025-2026

All LL.M. candidates are required to satisfy the Program's research & writing requirement by preparing "a written product for graded credit" that "demonstrates rigorous legal analysis, significant academic content, and quality legal writing skills."

Professors Schneider, Kelley and Nuckolls are available to help students develop their topic, outline, and eventually a final product. Other faculty members or outside professionals may be available to provide substantive advice on the topic selected, with drafts reviewed "in house." Students should expect to submit at least one draft before submitting a final version for completion. In very limited instances, a draft may be accepted as a final submission. Deadlines for draft submission and the submission of a final article are set each semester in coordination with grading deadlines.

In most instances, the final writing product will be at least 6000 words in length. At an average of 250 words per page, this translates to a usual minimum of 24 pages of double-spaced text. The article must be concise and well-written. Wordiness and redundancy are not an acceptable way to stretch the length of any product. Many students submit articles that are longer, approximately 30-40 pages, double-spaced. In contrast, occasionally, an article with a complex but highly focused topic can be addressed in a shorter article, if it is exceptionally tightly written. Key is that the article "demonstrates rigorous legal analysis, significant academic content, and quality legal writing skills."

**Options for Fulfilling the Legal Research & Writing Requirement**

There are multiple ways to meet this requirement.

**1) Law Review-style Article**

Students can select a topic to research and prepare a law review-style article that is

"of such quality that it is publishable in a reputable law journal." The article need not be published to meet this requirement. Rather, Professor Manning must determine that it meets this general level. After submission and approval, students are encouraged to submit their articles for publication but are not required to do so.

**2) Practice-Oriented or Other Article Not Written for Law Review Publication**

A student may also request permission to submit an article that is not written in traditional law review format. This might be an article written for a bar magazine, a document written to explain a legal issue to lay audience, or another professional format that is not written in law review style but that nevertheless "demonstrates rigorous legal analysis, significant academic content, and quality legal writing skills." Under law school policies, students choosing this option must have their proposal approved by the Director of the LL.M. Program, but they will then work with Professor Manning to complete it. The same general length requirements as stated above apply, although it may be possible to break the article into discreet sections to have a better opportunity for publication.

**3) Extension of Course Work**

Several classes within the LL.M. Curriculum already require writing projects that end up being of "publishable quality" and that "demonstrate[] rigorous legal analysis, significant academic content, and quality legal writing skills." Students can receive credit for the specific class and subsequently elect to build on their work to develop a longer product that satisfies the legal writing requirement for the degree. Students who pursue this option should notify the Professor Manning and provide her with a copy of the original submission as well as the final product submitted for the writing requirement. Credit cannot be given for both purposes without a significantly different or expanded product.

The combined length of the original writing (for the class) and the product(s) completed for the legal writing requirement is a minimum of 30 pages double-spaced.

**4) Work Related to Employment**

Students with outside employment may be able to build on their job-related work projects in crafting their final article. However, the article submitted must be drafted solely by the student, with no co-authorship allowed. Students cannot simply submit a product that they were paid to do for academic credit to meet their writing requirement. The article should be drafted for academic credit. However, students can build on paid research to draft their article. Moreover, once the article is completed, they are welcome to submit it to their employer for publication, promotion, or other work-related credit. For questions, please consult with the Program Director.

**General Requirements**

Regardless of which option is selected, students must:

* demonstrate thorough legal research, including the ability to search primary and secondary sources of law
* demonstrate good legal writing
* provide a new, original contribution to the legal conversation
* present their analysis in an organized manner
* provide adequate citation to resources relied upon, in current Bluebook format. (Note that for students who publish their work online, linked citations may be provided instead of footnotes, with bluebook citations to sources provided at the conclusion or in an appendix)
* complete all of the LL.M degree requirements, including their final writing requirement within 4 years of matriculation (the first day of enrollment) unless an extension is granted by the Graduate Legal Studies Committee.

Note that the writing requirement is associated with a one-credit class, *Advanced Legal Research & Writing*. While you can begin your work at any time, this class is designed to help you with topic selection, access to research, tips on writing techniques, and what to avoid. You can register for this class any semester, and you need not complete your article that semester. The course has a reserved grade function (R) that will allow you to receive a final grade whenever you successfully complete your work. Regardless of when you are enrolled in this credit, we are available to help. We have expert research librarians that are also available to help you as needed.

The *Advanced Legal Research & Writing* course is not set up in Blackboard (BB) as a regular semester course. If you see it in your BB course selections and go to it, you will either see a blank shell for the course or you will be told that it is not available. Don't worry. Everything that you need is housed in the LL.M. Group Organization tab. These resources and this site will remain to you if you are either enrolled or affiliated with the LL.M. Program.

Other courses close at the end of each semester.