Chapter Three: Academic Rules, Policies, and Procedures

Section 1: Graduation Requirements (J.D. program)

A. Credits and Minimum Cumulative GPA Required

Students matriculating prior to fall 2015 (except Hybrid Program students) must complete a total of 86 credits with a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0.

Students matriculating in spring 2015 (Cohort 1-Hybrid Program students) or fall 2015 must complete a total of 83 credits with a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0.

Students matriculating fall 2016 or later must complete a total of 83 credits with a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.2.

Students who transfer to MHSL must meet the requirements applicable to their anticipated graduating class.

B. Limitation on Number of Non-Classroom Credits

A minimum of 64 credits must be from courses with regularly scheduled classroom instruction. Thus, no more than 19 credits (or 22 credits under the 86 credit requirement) can be applied toward graduation from field placements (including externships), moot court or other competitions, Law Review or Journal, independent studies, course exchanges or dual-degree courses, or any course for credit that is substantially based upon time expended outside a regularly scheduled class time at MHSL or another ABA-accredited law school. This does not apply to seminars or clinics that require a substantial classroom component, foreign study programs approved by MHSL or another ABA-accredited law school, or courses conducted by MHSL or another ABA-accredited law school in accordance with ABA standards for distance learning.

C. Minimum/Maximum Time to Complete Degree

A student must complete his or her J.D. Degree no earlier than 24 months and not later than 84 months after commencing law school studies, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Students who have not completed their course of study within 60 months must meet with the Dean of Student Affairs and Student Life to develop a graduation plan that ensures completion within 84 months.

D. Minimum Credits Required to be Earned at Mitchell Hamline School of Law

To receive a J.D. degree from Mitchell Hamline School of Law, a J.D. students must earn at Mitchell Hamline a minimum of half of the total credits required for graduation – 43 credits under the 86 credit requirement; 42 credits under the 83 credit requirement. See section E. below for rules on Transfer of Credits Earned at Other Law Schools.
E. Credits Earned at Other Law Schools (Transfer of Credit)

Credit earned at other law schools may be transferred to a student’s Mitchell Hamline School of Law record only with the approval of the Dean of Student Affairs and Student Life. All regulations that apply to credits earned at Mitchell Hamline also apply to transfer credits. No credit is given for course work taken prior to a student’s first matriculation in any law school.

Two types of credits earned at other law schools are regulated by this section: (1) credits earned while visiting another law school and (2) transfer credits earned prior to enrolling Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

1. Regulations applying to all forms of Credit Earned at Other Law Schools

   a. ABA Approval. Credits must be earned at an ABA-approved law school or an ABA approved program sponsored by an ABA-approved law school. In some instances, course credit also may be given for legal study in other countries in accordance with ABA guidelines. See Chapter Three, Section 3.C.

   b. Minimum credits at the College. J.D. students must earn a minimum of 43 credits (if 86 credits required) or 42 credits (if 83 credits required) at Mitchell Hamline to qualify for a J.D. degree from Mitchell Hamline School of Law. Credits earned by legacy students at Hamline University School of Law or William Mitchell College of Law are considered Mitchell Hamline credits for purposes of this rule.

   c. Computation of credits. In most cases, the Mitchell Hamline accepts the number of credits as assigned by the school where the course was taken. Credits for courses taken at law schools on a quarter system are computed as follows: 1 quarter credit = 0.7 semester credit.

2. Regulations applying to Credits Earned while visiting another law school

   a. Advance Permission Required. A student may petition the Dean of Student Affairs and Student Life for permission to visit away (subject to the credit limits below). For spring and fall visits away, approval will only be granted when there is a compelling reason. Compelling reasons include things such as: military commitment, caring for a dependent child or a parent, or employment relocation of a spouse or life partner. The circumstances giving rise to the need to visit must go beyond convenience, financial considerations, or a desire to network in a different geographical area after graduation.

   b. Completed “Transfer of Credit” form required prior to enrolling in courses. Students who wish to receive credit for courses taken while visiting another law school must complete a Transfer Request Form prior to enrolling in courses. A student will not receive credit for a course that substantially duplicates work in a course previously taken at Mitchell Hamline or legacy schools (WMCL or HUSL).

   c. Grades. All grades earned by Mitchell Hamline students who visit other law schools are noted on the transcript under a separate heading, but are not computed as part of the Mitchell Hamline grade point average or class rank (this applies even if
the course is being taught by a Mitchell Hamline faculty member who is a visiting instructor for another law school). All courses taken must be letter graded unless the course description states that the course is only offered on a pass/fail basis. Credit is granted only when a grade of at least C (not C-) or its equivalent is earned.

d. **Required Courses.** All required classes (see Chapter Three, section 2) must be taken at Mitchell Hamline School of Law. No credit will be awarded for courses taken elsewhere that substantially duplicate Mitchell Hamline required courses.

e. **Limits on Visiting Away.** The following limits apply to students visiting other law schools:

1. A maximum of 15 total credits earned at another school may be applied to the Mitchell Hamline J.D. degree. This includes credits earned:
   - While visiting another school during a fall or spring semester;
   - While attending a summer or J-term study abroad program; and
   - At a local law school through the local law school consortium program.

2. A maximum of 7 of the 15 total credits may be earned from J-term and summer courses at another school, including study-abroad programs. For study abroad programs offered through the Consortium of Innovative Legal Education (CILE) the 7 credit limit may be waived, and all credits earned through a CILE school are counted toward the 15 credit cumulative maximum. A program offered by Mitchell Hamline (e.g. Law in London) is a Mitchell Hamline program and is not considered a visit away.

3. No course may be taken at another school if the dates of the course overlap with any portion of a Mitchell Hamline session in which the student is enrolled.

4. **Attending Local Law Schools**
   - fall or spring: contact the Registrar for information about accessing courses at local law schools during the fall or spring under the local law school consortium program.
   - summer: visiting at local law schools in the summer is allowed in very rare circumstances, and in no case shall the number of credits applied to the Mitchell Hamline J.D. exceed 3. Students must submit a written request (e-mail preferred) to the Dean of Student Affairs and Student Life articulating the reason for the request.

f. **Timing of Visit Away.** The law school discourages visiting away in the final semester of law school. When a student visits another law school Mitchell Hamline has no control over when that school posts its grades and releases transcripts. No credit is awarded until an official transcript is received from the law school the student visited. Mitchell Hamline will not certify a student for purposes of bar admission until official transcripts are received and the Office of the Registrar has verified that all degree requirements have been met.
3. Regulations applying to Credits Earned at another law school and transferred to Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

   a. **Grades.** Transfer students must have received a grade of at least C (not C-) or its equivalent to receive credit for a course taken at the previous law school. All grades from another law school are noted on the transcript under a separate heading, but are not computed as part of the Mitchell Hamline grade point average or class rank. If a Mitchell Hamline School of Law faculty member teaches a course for another law school, the course is not subject to the Mitchell Hamline grading standards and is not considered a Mitchell Hamline course. Hence, such grades are not computed as part of the Mitchell Hamline grade point average or class rank.

   b. **All remaining credits must be taken at Mitchell Hamline School of Law.** Students admitted as transfer students must complete all remaining credits at Mitchell Hamline. In rare circumstances the Dean of Student Affairs and Student Life may grant an exception. Students must request an exception in writing and must articulate the compelling circumstances that support approval.

F. Maximum Online Courses Permitted (excluding Hybrid Program)

No more than 15 credits may be earned toward the J.D. degree through courses that are designated “distance learning.”

“A distance education course is one in which students are separated from the faculty member or each other for more than one-third of the instruction and the instruction involves the use of technology to support regular and substantive interaction among students and between the students and the faculty member, either synchronously or asynchronously. Source: ABA Standard 306 (a).

G. Limitation on Maximum Number of Credits Earned

Under no circumstances may a student earn more than 89 credits (if 86 credits required for graduation) or more than 86 credits (if 83 credits required for graduation). At registration, the student should designate any courses that exceed the applicable credit limit as “audits.”

H. Administrative Requirements for Graduation

1. Mitchell Hamline School of Law must have a student’s official undergraduate transcript on file from a student’s degree-granting school. The transcript must reflect the conferral of a bachelor’s degree, unless an exception has been made allowing the student to matriculate without earning a bachelor’s degree. Transcripts reported by the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) will fulfill this requirement if it reflects the conferral of a bachelor’s degree.
2. If a student received Title IV student loans (Federal Perkins, Direct Student loan, or Federal Stafford, Federal Unsubsidized Stafford, and/or Federal SLS programs), the student must complete an on-line financial aid exit interview.

3. If a student received a Federal Perkins or Direct Student loan, the student also must complete an on-line exit questionnaire.

4. All tuition, fees, and other charges owed to the law school must be paid in full.

5. In accordance with the directive from the American Bar Association, the Career and Professional Development Office requires return of an on-line completed employment survey.

6. Completion of the law school’s on-line Graduation Information Form.

I. Note Regarding Diplomas

Approximately 10 weeks prior to commencement students are asked to specify their names as they are to be printed on their diplomas. All tuition and fees due to the college must be paid and all graduation requirements must be met prior to receiving a diploma.