JD Program Overview

Mission:

The mission of the University of Cincinnati College of Law is to educate and inspire leaders who pursue justice and advance the role of law in society. The JD program prepares legal scholars and professionals to enter the work world armed with the theoretical and practical knowledge to be successful and be leaders where the law impacts the world of business, the handling of disputes, and all of society.

Vision:

We are a community of learners, led by a faculty committed to excellent teaching, scholarship, and service. We strive to create a learning environment that inspires the pursuit of justice, cultivates diverse and innovative ideas about law in society, fosters collaborative relationships, and imparts the knowledge, values, and competencies needed to excel in a changing world.

Program:

A Distinctive Legal Education

As the nation’s fourth oldest continuously operating law school, our students and alumni carry on a long tradition of reaching far and wide across both the legal spectrum and the map. With an enviable 9:1 student-to-faculty ratio, strong bar passage and placement outcomes, accomplished, award-winning faculty, and a dynamic campus recently noted as one of the most beautiful in the world, Cincinnati Law is moving ahead in the 21st century with boldness and vision.

Being in the heart of a vibrant city, students have many opportunities to learn about law and practice their lawyering skills through our programs in conjunction with local courts, law firms, and businesses. Cincinnati is the seat of both the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, and home to more than 800 law firms. The opportunities in business and industry are equally rich. The Cincinnati region is home to ten Fortune 500 companies and a host of new startups in the technology, health care, manufacturing, and financial service sectors.

The College also has opportunities for students to connect to the world. Through internships offered by the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, students have worked in London, Austria, Ireland, Bolivia, Botswana, Costa Rica, and many other parts of the world.
The Curriculum

The JD program trains students who wish to enter the legal profession and others who enter fields where legal knowledge is an advantage. Students must complete 90 credits and be in residence at the law school for three years. Most students seek professional credentials after graduation that usually includes taking a bar exam. Such exams are administered and regulated in each state. The College of Law is accredited by the American Bar Association which can be reached at 321 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60654 and at (312) 988-6738. The College of Law is also a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

The program begins with all students taking a set curriculum in the first year that builds a solid foundation in legal doctrine and professional skills. In the first semester, all students take these classes: Constitutional Law I, Civil Procedure I, Contracts, Torts, and Lawyering I – Legal Research and Writing. In the second semester, all students take these classes: Constitutional Law II, Civil Procedure II, Criminal Law, Property, and Lawyering II – Advocacy.

In the second and third years, students take required classes aimed at developing an ethical sensitivity, strong client relationship skills, and strong writing skills. The required classes are Legal Ethics and Client Counseling. Students also select from a menu of writing options. To ensure that students each have at least one experiential learning opportunity involving actual legal work, students are also required to participate in a clinic, externship, summer internship, or paid work experience.

In addition, our College offers strong co-curricular and extracurricular activities that help students build a professional identity and leadership skills. Many of these programs are offered by the Center for Professional Development (CPD). CPD offers programs that prepare students to enter the professional world along with intensive individual coaching that takes place each year of law school.

Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Largely through selecting from over 100 upper-level elective courses, students build a depth and breadth of knowledge. Students select from courses that help them learn about the doctrine, procedure, and ethics of law. They also have many opportunities to build professional skills.

Upper-Level Professional Skills Offerings

Upper-level students avail themselves of a rich variety of elective classes that enhance students’ skills development, many of which include simulations of legal practice. To further hone their professional skills, the College offers a significant number of competition teams and journals. In addition, the College has a growing number of experiential opportunities to serve real clients through externships, clinics, and fellowships.
Journals and Competition Teams

The College has a large number of journals and competition teams that not only allow students to build professional skills, but also offer many student leadership opportunities:

Moot Court team

Trial Practice team

University of Cincinnati Law Review

Human Rights Quarterly

Immigration and Nationality Law Review

Freedom Center Journal

Intellectual Property and Computer Law Journal

Upper-level Simulation Courses

The College offers a rich variety of elective skills courses in the second and third years. Courses are offered about the skills of pretrial, trial, and appellate practice, alternative dispute resolution, decision analysis, legal drafting, complex litigation, electronic discovery, advanced legal research, intensive practical lawyering, representing entrepreneurs, business basics for lawyers, and corporate transactions – deal sheet to closing.

A recent curricular innovation is the Practice One. These courses are designed as an optional, one-credit course taught in conjunction with a traditional course. The Practice One focuses on skills, strategies, and tasks that arise in the area of practice covered by the traditional course and that a student is likely to encounter within the first year of practice. These classes have been offered related to the topics of International Business Transactions, Health Law, Intellectual Property, Corporations I, Environmental Law I, Family Law, Tax Law, and Wills.

Externships

The College offers both Judicial and Legal Externships. Judicial externships offer students the opportunity to work directly with judges and court personnel while performing tasks similar to those performed by judicial clerks. Legal externs work in a wide variety of governmental, not-for-profit, or corporate offices. All of the externships help students develop professional skills, begin the process of professional role development, and provide experiential learning opportunities.
Clinical Offerings and Fellowships

Clinics and fellowships give students hands-on experience with real clients while being supervised by experienced attorneys:

- **Ohio Innocence Project** – Students have helped exonerate 18 wrongfully-convicted and incarcerated prisoners.

- **Domestic Violence and Civil Protection Order Clinic** – In partnership with Legal Aid, students work on civil protection orders for victims of domestic violence.

- **Indigent Defense Clinic** – In partnership with the Public Defender’s Office, students represent indigent criminal defendants.

- **Sixth Circuit Clinic** – This clinic introduces third-year students to the basics of appellate advocacy by working on cases on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

- **Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic** – Students represent local small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs on transactional legal issues critical to their success.

- **Brandery Fellowship Program** – Students provide legal services to potential business start-ups at the Brandery and other business accelerators.

- **Summer Public Interest Fellowship Program** – Students work at placements with public interest law agencies and governmental offices during the summer.

Centers and Institutes

Our centers and institutes attract scholars and experts from around the globe. Headed by Cincinnati Law faculty, these programs offer students opportunities to participate in symposia, talks, and workshops, work on important social justice issues, and conduct in-depth research:

- **Rosenthal Institute for Justice/Ohio Innocence Project** - Including one of the most active and successful Innocence Projects in the country, the OIP not only works to secure the release of individuals wrongfully convicted, but also works to improve laws and policies to reduce and prevent wrongful convictions.

- **Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights** – The Institute works to protect international human rights.

- **Glenn M. Weaver Institute of Law and Psychiatry** – The Institute promotes scholarship and learning in the areas of mental health law and psychiatry.
• **Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice** – The Center provides experiential learning, research, and other opportunities for interdisciplinary inquiry in the areas of gender, race, and sexuality issues.

• **Corporate Law Center** - The Center focuses on substantive issues in corporate securities and business law.

• **Center for Practice** – The Center works to further develop the professional communication and decision-making skills of both law students and practicing lawyers.