

Senior Research Guidelines

The Owen L. Coon/James A. Rahl Senior Research Program allows third-year law students to conduct in depth, supervised legal research leading to a paper of publishable quality and length. Students work one-on-one with a faculty member on developing the research topic, researching the topic, and writing the paper.

To participate in the program, you must find a professor to work with and obtain approval from the Director of Senior Research. For more details, see section 3.02 of the Northwestern Law Rules at <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/private/rules-regs/part2.PDF>.

Please review these details in preparing for a Senior Research project.

Choosing a Faculty Supervisor. Senior Research is intended to foster a close working relationship between the student and one or more member of the Law School faculty. Every Senior Research project is supervised by at least one primary faculty member throughout the semester, and the final paper is read by the primary faculty supervisor and a second faculty member (the “second reader”). Adjunct faculty members are eligible to supervise Senior Research projects as long as the second reader is a member of the residential clinical or research faculty.

You are responsible for finding a supervising professor, and we recommend that you pursue faculty members with whom you already have a working relationship and/or who have expertise or interest in your proposed area of research. If you need assistance choosing a supervising professor, please make an appointment with the Assistant Dean for Curriculum, Professor Lesley Kagan.

Conduct of the Work. Senior Research is a student-driven experience in which you are responsible for taking the first steps to find a research topic and draft a proposal for submission to the supervising faculty member and Director of Senior Research. Once you have secured a faculty supervisor, participating in the Senior Research program entails:

- **Student-Professor Meetings.** You must attend frequent, individual meetings of a substantial nature with the supervising professor to discuss the student’s work. These meetings should occur on a weekly basis, and may be conducted remotely (e.g. via teleconference or videoconference) if the advising professor agrees in advance to this arrangement. A minimum of twelve meetings should be held each semester a Senior Research project is in process.
- **Final Project.** You complete one of the following:
 - A paper of at least law review comment or article length which has gone through a minimum of three drafts (including the final submission), two of which were critically reviewed by the supervising professor and revised by the student after such review.
 - A program of supervised field study of substantial scope and difficulty, with a detailed written report of findings and conclusions, reviewed critically by the supervising professor and revised at least once by the student after such a review.

Due Date. Senior Research project papers or reports are due on the date established by the supervising professor, but not later than three days before the grade due date of the semester in which the credit is earned.

Number of Credits. The number of credits you will receive for your project is dependent on the nature of the work and scope of the research/writing involved in the project. Thus, please be sure to describe the nature of your project in detail when submitting your proposal. Please remember that the Rules and Regulations limit your total number of Senior Research credits. For more details, consult section 3.02 of the Rules and Regulations. The minimum number of credits for a single semester Senior Research project is 4 if you want the Senior Research project to satisfy the graduation writing requirement.

Multiple Semester Projects. The maximum number of semesters in which you can earn credit for Senior Research is 2. Thus, if you earn credit for Summer Senior Research, you may pursue additional Senior Research credits, in certain circumstances and subject to approval, in either the Fall or Spring semester, but not both. If you pursue a multiple-semester Senior Research project, you must earn a minimum of 2 credits in each semester in which you are working on the project and a minimum of 6 total credits.

Separate Senior Research Projects. You may not enroll for more than one Senior Research project in a single semester. You may pursue two separate Senior Research projects in two separate semesters with the prior approval of the Director of the Senior Research.

Intensive Research Semester Option. Students doing Senior Research may apply to spend an entire semester doing academic research under the supervision of a faculty member. Students may receive a maximum of 12 credits for the project and must follow the guidelines set forth in this document. Students interested in applying for this intensive semester experience should contact Professor Lesley Kagan.

Proposal Submission Date and Review Process. The Intensive Research Semester proposal is due to the Director of Senior Research, Dean Lupo, in hard copy or via e-mail at [j_lupo2@law.northwestern.edu](mailto:lupo2@law.northwestern.edu), by **Wednesday, August 11, 2010**.

All other Senior Research project proposals are due to the Dean Lupo in hard copy or via e-mail at [j_lupo2@law.northwestern.edu](mailto:lupo2@law.northwestern.edu) by **5 p.m. on the first day of class in the semester for which the student proposes the project**.

The Senior Research proposal form is posted on the Registration page of the Law School website. *Note: Your supervising faculty member must sign the proposal form prior to submission for approval by the Director, so please plan accordingly.*

Enrollment. We will enroll you in the Senior Research Program after Dean Lupo approves your proposal. You will be charged 25 bidding points per credit hour of Senior Research conducted in the fall and/or spring semester.