

Third Year Intensive

In Spring 2014 the UC Irvine School of Law faculty overwhelmingly adopted a Third Year Intensive (TYI) as an “encouraged” element of the 3L curriculum. The TYI went into effect in Fall 2014. As explained below, completion of the TYI is voluntary and does not change any of UCI Law’s graduation requirements.

Completion of the TYI will be noted in the Memoranda section of the Law School’s official transcript. Third year students may complete the Intensive in either the fall or spring semester, or through a year-long project.

Background

Call for Reform in Legal Education

The single most persistent call for reform of legal education focuses on increasing the amount and rigor of actual (or simulated) law practice involving representation of clients. The ABA is considering requiring 15 credit hours of experiential and skills learning as part of its accreditation standards. The New York Bar now requires and California is in the process of implementing a requirement of 50 hours of pro bono or clinical practice during law school as a requirement for admission.

Practice-ready Skills at UCI Law School

Many innovative, practice-ready aspects of 3L curricula are already offered at UCI, including an array of clinics and externships, an ambitious pro bono program, and a few practicums.

UCI Law students engage in a substantial amount of law practice while in law school, and the clinical faculty are continuing to expand and improve the program. Experiential learning for academic credit at UCI Law takes five forms: the required (or core) clinic, the advanced core clinic (for students who have already completed a core clinic and want to continue in the clinic for an additional semester to engage in more sophisticated legal practice), externships, elective clinics, and Alternative Field Placements (AFPs). Anecdotally, a large number of classroom or doctrinal courses in the 2nd and 3rd years include some element of skills training and other kinds of pedagogy that aim to prepare students for practice rather than just to demonstrate doctrinal mastery on a written exam.

UCI Law’s Third Year Intensive

Consistent with call for reform in legal education, the TYI is designed to engage 3L students through a focused project that places less emphasis on mastery of doctrine and instead emphasizes skills (ranging from particular types of writing to general skills like negotiation and counseling to more abstract skills like problem-solving).

The faculty encourage completion of the TYI rather than mandating it to accommodate the wide variety of student needs without creating an additional graduation requirement.

Third Year Intensive: Strengthening Student Competencies to Practice Law

The goal of the TYI is to encourage every student to pursue some form of intensive experience in the third year to enable him or her to develop and demonstrate the following crucial competencies:

- expertise in an area of law
- the capacity for strategic thinking gained when the student is in the active position of solving problems rather than in the passive position of learning law in a lecture/discussion format
- problem solving abilities
- project management skills gained by handling multiple or complex projects with deadlines
- sophisticated writing

Third Year Intensive: Requirements

- The TYI is equivalent in work to a 3-unit course. That is, it must require at least 210 hours of work (the equivalent of at least the hours of class time, class preparation, and time spent preparing for a final or writing a final paper).
- A TYI need not be done for academic credit.
- A member of the faculty or administration must approve the TYI project.
- The TYI must include some written product reflecting legal knowledge, analysis, and problem-solving skills.
- A practicum or capstone course will satisfy the requirement, as will an advanced clinic, externship, directed research resulting in a substantial paper, or a note/article written for publication in a law review or other journal. Faculty are encouraged to consider teaching intensive practicum or capstone courses open only to third year students.
- The TYI MUST be completed in the third year.

Third Year Intensive: Mechanics

- The Course Catalogue will denote classes that can fulfill the TYI.
- Students may design an independent project in consultation with a faculty supervisor.
- Students are responsible for delivering the instructor's certification of completion of the TYI form to the Law School Registrar's office by the second Friday after the end of

exams in the semester in which the student is graduating. Forms are required for all projects, including completion of a class designated as fulfilling the TYI. No notation will be made on the student's transcript if the form is received after the deadline. No exceptions will be made to the deadline.