

**NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW**

**ACADEMIC SUCCESS
PROGRAM**

**Guide To Academic and Disability
Services**

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NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
GUIDE TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM RESOURCES AND
DISABILITY SERVICES

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GUIDE TO ACADEMIC RESOURCES AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Introduction

Welcome to Northeastern University School of Law! We hope that your law school experience will be challenging, stimulating and filled with rewards. But, we know from experience that there may be times in every law student's life when the challenges seem overwhelming, the stimulation anxiety-producing, and the rewards just out of reach. The Academic Success Program, the Office of Student Services, and various on-campus resources provide a diverse array of programs to help you through these difficult times. This guide provides you with a brief description of available programs, and key contact people who can help you access them.

The Academic Success Program ("ASP")

We are confident that every student we admit to NUSL has the intelligence, skills, and motivation for a successful law school career. At the same time, we recognize that law school education requires a specific kind of critical thinking that many students have not encountered (or may have encountered long ago) in their undergraduate education, or that may not fit with their natural learning preferences.

Conventional wisdom says that the primary task of first-year law students is learning to "think like a lawyer," but most first-year law professors will not tell you explicitly what that means. You are expected to absorb the lessons of thinking like a lawyer from the hundreds of case opinions you will read and the Socratic method used to frame the discussion in many law school classrooms. For a variety of reasons, this inductive method of learning is more intuitive for some students than for others. Legal writing also has formalistic requirements that come more naturally to some students than to others.

The ASP is designed to demystify legal education and help all students learn the critical skills needed for successful performance on law school exams, papers and co-op. We offer courses, workshops, teaching assistants, and a drop-in resource center where you can speak with a professor or a TA and get individualized help with your questions.

First-Year ASP Program and Workshops

1. The ASP Director, Professor Melinda Drew, conducts weekly workshops throughout the first year. Topics include, among others: close case reading, case briefing, time management, note-taking, course outlining, stress management, exam preparation, and other topics according to student need. The weekly workshops are offered on Wednesday afternoons; the time and place are on your schedule. The workshops are participatory, open to all, and free of any additional charge.

2. Professor Brook Baker teaches an Analytical Skills Workshop (“ASW”) each week. The time and place for this workshop appears on your course schedule. Like the weekly ASP topical workshops, the ASW attempts to demystify the law school learning process by explicit discussion of study skills, conventions of legal analysis, and exam preparation strategies. The workshop is participatory. During the first half of the quarter, students work together in class on problem-solving exercises. During the second half of the quarter, they work both as a group and individually on practice exams for the first-year courses. Approximately 75% of the ASW is devoted to diagnosing exam questions, issue spotting, outlining and organizing the answers.

We encourage regular attendance at the ASW for anyone concerned about his or her academic skills or performance, or anyone who just wants to gain and hone legal analysis skills. Our experience has been that for many students this workshop makes the difference in their ability to excel in their exams and courses. Because the workshop has been so helpful to some students, a student may be specifically referred to one or more of the workshops by a professor, the ASP Director, or the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs). However, even if not specifically referred, any student can attend the workshop at any time he or she thinks it might be helpful. Of course, regular attendance is more helpful than sporadic attendance. This weekly workshop typically begins in mid-September for the first semester and mid-February for the second; watch for announcements on the WEBoard and on the ASP bulletin board about when it will start. The ASW, too, is free of any additional charge.

Participation in the Academic Success Program - Voluntary or Required?

During the first semester of first year, attendance at all ASP programs is encouraged but completely voluntary. However, any student incurring academic deficiencies as a result of first semester, first year courses will be required to participate in ASP programs as follows:

Academic Deficiencies in the First Semester of the First Year

Any student who receives one or more deficiencies in the first semester shall be required to participate in a second semester academic success program. Failure to perform adequately in that program will be considered as an additional deficiency for purposes of placing the student on academic probation, for retaking the first year, or for mandatory participation in certain upper level courses (3-6 credit hours) to be determined by the ASP Director, in consultation with the Assistant Dean and Director of Academic and Student Affairs. A marginal pass in any course equals one (1) deficiency; a fail/no credit in any course equals two (2) deficiencies.

Academic Deficiencies in the Second Semester of the First Year

Any student who receives one or more deficiencies by the end of the first year shall be required to enroll in certain upper level courses (3-6 credit hours) to be determined by the ASP Director, in consultation with the Assistant Dean and Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

Referrals During the First Semester of the First Year

Based on one or more referrals from a professor for poor performance in a first semester course short of a marginal pass or fail/no credit, the ASP Director, in consultation with the Assistant Dean and Director of Academic and Student Affairs, will have the authority to meet with the student and to require participation in a second semester academic assistance program.

Referrals During the Second Semester of the First Year

Based on one or more referrals from a professor for poor performance in a second semester course short of a marginal pass or fail, the ASP Director, in consultation with the Assistant Dean and Director of Academic and Student Affairs, will have the authority to meet with the student and to require participation in certain upper level course (3-6 credit hours).

Upper-Level ASP Courses

Upper-level students who want to continue to refine their research, writing, and analytical skills have a choice of several courses, described briefly below. Please note that these courses which may be required for some students are also open to all students subject to the law school's lottery system.

Seminar: Professional Responsibility

This 3-credit seminar, taught by Professor/ASP Director Melinda Drew, incorporates basic analytical and legal reasoning techniques as well as offers opportunities for students to have their legal writing critiqued. This will be done in the context of Professional Responsibility doctrine with a focus on legal, ethical, and professional dilemmas encountered by practicing lawyers. Through a combination of in-class and take-home exercises, the course examines the role of logic in legal analysis, how to analyze and synthesize statutes and cases, how to construct arguments and counter-arguments based on legal rules and precedents, and how to present those arguments in a clear and convincing manner. This is a workshop style course that emphasizes student participation **and** fulfills the 3 credit Professional Responsibility requirement while refreshing students' basic analytical and writing skills.

Advanced Legal Research

This 3 credit course focuses on advanced research techniques and strategies to enhance the efficient practice of law. Students will learn effective research strategies to consult major electronic and print legal research sources. The course uses a combination of lectures, interactive sessions, exercises, and a final project to teach research in cases, statutes, legislative history, administrative law, finding and updating tools, specialized sources, computer databases, Internet

research, and other sophisticated research technologies. In place of a final exam, students will create a research guide on a topic that interests them and also orally present their project to the class.

Seminar: Advanced Legal Writing

This 3 credit seminar is for students who wish to strengthen their writing and analytic skills. The first part of the course will focus on objective writing. Students will work on an office memorandum analyzing a statute and case law. The classes will focus on large and small scale organization, case analysis, and revising one's own work. The second part of the course will focus on persuasive writing and research. Students will research and draft an appellate brief on a constitutional issue, paying particular attention to persuasive writing techniques. The appellate brief will fulfill the upper level writing requirement. The entire course focuses on writing concisely, using citations accurately, and other skills essential to effective legal writing.

Legal Analysis (A Bar Exam Preparation Course)

This one credit course, taught by Attorney Alfred M. Zappala who has had many years of experience preparing students to take the bar exam, helps third-year students prepare for the bar exam by examining multiple-choice and essay-writing strategies. The course is given in one 3 hour session weekly in both the Winter and Spring quarters. The Winter quarter course is videotaped and the videotapes and course materials are placed on reserve in the law library. **The materials for this course will be paid for by the law school with no additional charge to students.** To obtain academic credit, students must attend a minimum of 80% of the classes and pass the final exam with a score of at least 60%.

ASP TAs For First Year Students

During the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters, third year students are selected to serve as ASP TAs. TAs are chosen on the basis of their academic records and ability to work collaboratively with others and are available to assist first-year students with their analytical and studying skills. TAs also help conduct workshops on basic study skills, and hold office hours for individual consultation on students' work. Their drop-in hours are posted on the WEBoard each quarter, as well as on the door of 14KN, the Academic Success Program office.

ASP Workshops For Upper Level Students

Together with the office of Career Services, the ASP offers informational programs which may include, for instance, strategies and tips for preparing for the bar exam and information on learning/working styles. When such programs are offered, they are offered on both rotations so that all students may take advantage of them.

ASP Web Page

The ASP has useful information on its web page on numerous topics including: bar preparation, citation help, class attendance and note taking, exam-taking strategies, links to other helpful sources, outlining, procrastination, stress management, study groups, study aids, and time management. In addition, all scheduled ASP events are posted on the web page. To access the ASP web page, go to <http://www.slaw.neu.edu/asp/> or go to the Northeastern University home page (<http://www.neu.edu>), click on Law School, then Curriculum (on the left side of the page), then Academic Success Program (on the right side of the page).

ASP Resource Room - 14KN

The ASP has a variety of weekly schedule planners, books, self-evaluation worksheets, study aids, guides to resources on and off campus, and other handouts. These are available in 14KN. ASP staff and TAs will also be available during posted times to talk informally with individuals or groups of students, answer questions, and provide guidance in using the available resources. Additionally, ASP TAs are available to meet with study groups on a regular basis. We encourage you to drop in with specific questions or just to talk about your law school experience.

Joint ASP/Office of Student Services Programs

The first year of law school can feel like visiting a strange new land -- the vocabulary, the teaching styles and even the professors' expectations may seem alien and disorienting. By the end of the rite of passage of the first year, most of you will have assimilated the norms of legal culture, but in the meantime, the Office of Academic and Student Affairs and the ASP offer workshops to help bridge the gap between undergraduate education and law school expectations. Programs may include orientation to the law school environment, workshops to address mental health and substance abuse concerns, and presentations by various student organizations. Workshop panels will include representatives from on-campus resources, such as the University Health and Counseling Center, and, possibly, off-campus groups such as bar associations and

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (an organization that provides free, confidential services for law students, lawyers, and judges). Notice of these workshops will be posted on the WEBoard.

Services For Students With Disabilities

Statement of Policy

NUSL's policies concerning students requesting accommodations for disabilities are set forth in the Student Information Handbook, a copy of which is provided to each incoming first year student by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. Additional copies of the current Student Information Handbook are available from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The information below highlights some portions of the policy and offers additional information concerning procedures. This information is intended to supplement, **not replace**, the policy information.

Students should note that accommodations for disabilities are prospective only. If a student does not disclose a disability, and follow the procedures required to document and assess the need for accommodation, the law school is not required to provide any accommodation. Similarly, a student who has a disability, but does not need or want accommodations, is not required to disclose the disability.

Students should also note that accommodations provided for bar examinations may not be the same accommodations as those provided by the law school. Inquiries concerning accommodations available for bar examinations should be directed to the bar exam authorities for the state(s) in which the student intends to take the bar exam.

Requesting Accommodations

If you think you may benefit from some type of reasonable accommodation, including instructional, courseload, or exam modifications, auxiliary services such as interpreters or note-takers, or other accommodations, please contact Melinda Drew, ASP Director, who is also Coordinator of Disability Services, as soon as possible. You may be referred to the Northeastern University Disability Resource Center ("DRC") for screening and assessment because it is the DRC to which the university has delegated responsibility for documenting disabilities and recommending accommodations. The law school assists in arranging for the accommodations recommended by the DRC. At the DRC's initial intake interview, your medical and/or psychological documentation will be reviewed, information collected, and a letter of introduction prepared for your file. The letter of introduction will list the accommodations recommended for

you, which are worked out on a case-by-case basis. With your permission, this letter of introduction will be provided to the law school's Assistant Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, Bettye Freeman, and her staff in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. It will only go to faculty, staff, and other administrators upon your request.

The Disability Resource Center provides **free** support services, including advocacy, assistance in obtaining interpreters, exam modifications, and other accommodations, to students with disabilities. The DRC can also provide referrals to the Learning Disability Program, an on-campus resource, and/or to private learning disabilities specialists. The Learning Disability Program and private specialists charge for their services and such fees are the responsibility of the student using the resource. For specific details, the DRC should be consulted directly.

Diagnosis, Testing, and Timing

Unfortunately, testing services for students with known or suspected learning disabilities are not available within Northeastern University, although the Disability Resource Center ("DRC") can provide the names of qualified clinicians who can provide testing and diagnosis. If you do have testing done, it is in your best interest to first obtain testing criteria from the DRC to ensure that the private testing conforms to post-secondary education standards and will be acceptable to the DRC in designing accommodations with you. Either the DRC or the ASP Director can provide this information to you. If you have health insurance coverage through a private insurer, you should contact your insurer to determine whether such testing is covered. Private testing will cost approximately \$2,000 to \$2,500 so, if you believe you may have a learning or other disability, it would be best for you to have a screening interview with a specialist at the DRC first. The ASP Director can arrange this for you.

Students should note that because many undergraduate as well as graduate students utilize the DRC's services, the DRC may have a lengthy backlog. However, it is in your best interest to have any necessary diagnostic testing done as early as possible in your law school career so that any reasonable accommodations you may need can be arranged in a timely fashion.. In addition, since any student seeking accommodations for the bar examination will need to document any accommodations prescribed in law school, it is best to do this early. If you wish, you may contact ASP Director Melinda Drew during the summer before you begin school to get the process started before classes begin.

Designing Accommodations

Although it is the Law School's legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations once a student documents a disability and seeks an accommodation, designing the most effective accommodation will frequently require coordination between the student, the student's diagnostic expert, the DRC, and appropriate law school faculty and administrators. Though the DRC designs most accommodations, especially in exam administration and auxiliary aids, some learning disabilities are more complicated and require a greater degree of planning between the student, legal educators, and other disability specialists.

Confidentiality

Information and test results that students provide to the ASP Director or to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs will be kept confidential and separate from the student's academic records. At the student's request, the ASP Director will assist the student in disclosing appropriate information to faculty, administrators, staff, and the offices of cooperative education and career services. Such disclosure will be aimed at receiving reasonable accommodations and will otherwise be confidential. Such disclosure will not adversely affect academic evaluations.

ASP Services for Students with Disabilities

The law school does not provide individual tutorial assistance tailored to the special needs of students with learning or other disabilities. However, students with disabilities may benefit from some of the scheduled ASP courses and workshops, ASP TA assistance, and other services (such as time management skills, stress management/test anxiety workshops, etc.) available to all students. Students are encouraged to discuss their individualized needs for accommodations with the ASP Director and/or the Disability Resource Center to determine whether disclosure and a request for services is appropriate.

For additional information on policies and resources, please see the Northeastern University School of Law Disability Policy And Special Services For Students With Disabilities.

Mental Health/Counseling Resources

Your life isn't suspended when you enter law school. Law students, like others, continue to face family and relationship problems, illnesses, financial dilemmas and other stresses that can interfere with successful law school studies. Northeastern University has many on-campus

resources, including the University Health and Counseling Service (UHCS) and the Disability Resource Center (discussed previously), that can help in times of crisis. The UHCS provides individual and group counseling services, support programs, career counseling and testing, and a variety of other services free of charge for full-time students.

Alcoholics Anonymous ("AA") meetings are held on the NU campus each week. For times and locations, you may call the UHCS at 373-2772.

To make an appointment to see a counselor at UHCS, you may visit the Counseling Center in Room 302 in the Ell building, or call UHCS at 617 373-2772. The ASP Director and/or the Office of Student Services can also provide referrals to on and off-campus resources when appropriate.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY
Academic Success Program

Melinda Drew, Director, 27 CG.....(617) 373-3960

ASP Resource Room, 14 KN.....(617) 373-7525

Fabiola Attime, Faculty Assistant, 51 CG.....(617) 373-3301

Brook Baker, Professor, 60 CG.....(617) 373-3217

Office of Academic and Student Affairs

Bettye Freeman, Assistant Dean, 145D KN.....(617) 373-5148

Bill Greene, Associate Director, 45CG.....(617) 373-3546

Marilyn Hill, Administrative Secretary, 61 CG.....(617) 373-8920

Kristine Morgan, Administrative Secretary, 61 CG.....(617) 373-5147

Disability Resource Center

Dr. Ruth Bork, Dean and Director.....(617) 373-2675
20 Dodge Hall, 360 Huntington Ave.....TTY (617) 373-2730

University Health and Counseling Services

Health Center.....(617) 373-2772

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

Substance Abuse Help Lines: Boston:.....(617) 227-7070

0210

Disability Resource Center
Student Information Sheet
(SAMPLE)

Name:

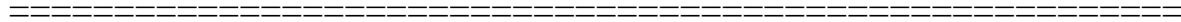
Date:

Course:

Professor:

Meeting Place:

Brief Description of Disability:



Accommodations Needed

Classroom Equipment:

Audio-Taped Lecture Video-Taped Lecture Brailer Computer

Other

Classroom Aides:

Interpreters: ASL Manually-Coded English Oral

Notetakers Scribes Mobility Aides

Other

Classroom Modifications:

Seating in Front of Class Special Seating Special Lighting
 Assistive Listening Devices Accessible Classrooms
 Other

Examinations:

Time: Additional Time Extended Time Untimed

Aides: Interpreters Readers Scribes

Format: Taped No Essay Questions No Multiple- Choice Questions
 No Fill-in-the-blank Questions Braille Large Print

Administration: Can Take Breaks Between Segments Take Home Exam Oral Exam
 Other

Special Situations:

Tutoring Other

Other Relevant Information:

If you need further information regarding _____

please contact _____ at X 2675 (voice) X 2730 (TTY).