

# J.D. CHILD & FAMILY LAW EMPHASIS AREA REQUIREMENTS

## UMKC School of Law Emphasis in Child and Family Law

The UMKC School of Law Emphasis in Child and Family Law prepares students to serve the whole family – from infants to elders – and maintains a unique collaborative and interdisciplinary framework. The emphasis program requires that students master the basic doctrine and legal theories involved when the legal system interacts with families. In addition, however, students undertake study exposing them to the perspectives of other disciplines such as psychology and social work. Students study the unique ethical dilemmas of this area of law and gain hands-on experience in representing children and families in the program's clinical components. Finally, all students in the emphasis complete an in-depth capstone research and writing project and a portfolio presentation.

## Admission Requirements

Students may apply after completing their second semester (or 29 credit hours). Students who are close to completing the hourly requirements may petition for early admission for good cause shown.

An application form will be available and must be submitted by the deadline announced by the Child and Family Law Faculty. Decisions as to whether a student will be admitted to the Emphasis in Child and Family Law will be made in the semester in which the student applies.

Procedure and Criteria for Selection:

The Child and Family Law Faculty will select the students to be admitted to the program. Criteria to be considered may include previous general academic performance in law school, previous academic performance in courses seen as particularly relevant to the emphasis area, level of interest in serving children or families, and availability of an advisor to advise and supervise the student.

The Child and Family Law Faculty is authorized to make appropriate adjustments in the deadlines for part-time students or other students whose schedules do not substantially conform to the six-semester paradigm.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from this program will:

- Students will demonstrate mastery of core doctrinal knowledge.
- Students will demonstrate mastery of the skills necessary for objective legal analysis
- Students will demonstrate mastery of the skills necessary for effective legal research.
- Students will demonstrate mastery of legal writing across formats
- Students will demonstrate mastery of the duties of attorneys as members of the legal profession
- Students will demonstrate ability to work with people in a professional environment.
- Students will demonstrate competency in professional work habits
- Students will demonstrate entry-level proficiency in lawyering skills

## First Year Required Courses

Full-time students complete the following required courses during the first year.

### Full-Time Progress

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Typical Fall Semester</b>		
LAW 8501	Contracts I	3
LAW 8634	Criminal Law	3
LAW 8531	Lawyering Skills I <sup>1</sup>	3
LAW 8541	Property I	3
LAW 8511	Torts	3
<b>Typical Spring Semester</b>		
LAW 8521	Civil Procedure – Pleadings, Motions, and Related Matters	3
LAW 8631	Constitutional Law	4
LAW 8502	Contracts II	3
LAW 8532	Lawyering Skills II <sup>1</sup>	2
LAW 8542	Property II	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

- 1 **Lawyering Skills I and II:** These two first-year courses introduce students to legal reasoning; analytical and critical thinking; case research and analysis; legal writing, including office memoranda, briefs and letters to and on behalf of clients; advocacy; and all forms of legal research. They offer education in many of the fundamental skills and processes of legal practice through a combination of lecture classes and small group sessions. They are required of all first-year law students in order to supply a strong foundation of thinking, research and writing skills upon which all later, advanced courses will depend.

## Part-time Progress

Students enrolled on a part-time basis typically take three of the required courses, including Lawyering Skills, in their first year. The remaining courses must be completed in their second year of study.

## Other Required Courses

Students must complete the following courses as a condition of graduation:

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required to be Taken During the Summer Preceding or During the Fall of the Second Year</b>		
LAW 8601	Business Organizations	3
LAW 8552	Federal Taxation	3
LAW 8522	Civil Procedure - Jurisdiction	2
<b>Required to be Taken During the Summer Preceding or During the Second Year</b>		
Evidence		3
<b>Required to be Taken Prior to Graduation.</b>		
LAW 8635	Criminal Procedure I	3
LAW 8731	Professional Responsibility	2
Experiential Course or courses (see below)		6
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>22</b>

## Experiential Course Requirement

A student must take 6 credit hours in a course or combination of courses that meet the school's experiential course requirement. These courses are primarily clinical, internship, or skills simulation courses. Courses fulfilling the requirement will be designated by the faculty.

## American Bar Association (ABA) 303(c) Course Requirement

A student must take 1 credit hour in a course that meets the school's ABA 303(c) course requirement. These courses provide education to students on bias, cross-cultural competency, and racism. Courses fulfilling the requirement will be designated by the faculty. This requirement applies to students who matriculated in or after Fall 2023.

## Requirements for the J.D. Degree

1. Completion of 91 credit hours, 75 of which must be classroom credits.
2. A cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (see Administrative Rules and Regulations, Scholastic Probation and Dismissal, in this section)
3. Completion of all required courses (see Required Courses in this section).
4. Fulfilling the school's research and writing requirement. This requires students to have a rigorous writing experience evidencing legal analysis resulting in a paper of professional quality.
5. Regular and punctual class attendance.
6. Successful completion of all coursework within five years from the day students began their course of studies leading toward the degree. A student will not be allowed to enroll in any course after the five-year period, unless an exception is granted by the Student Affairs Committee.

## Policy on Certification of Completion of Graduation Requirements for Bar Authorities

The Law School will certify to a state's bar authorities (such as a board of law examiners) that a student has completed degree requirements and is eligible to take a bar exam only if the following conditions have been met.

1. **Graduation Date:** A student will not be certified to take a bar exam prior to the date the student's degree has been awarded. This means that:
  - a. A May graduate's first bar exam cannot be before July of the graduation year.
  - b. An August or December graduate's first bar exam cannot be before February following the graduation year.

2. **Papers:** A student writing a paper for any course (including seminars, independent studies, and all other courses) must submit a complete, finished version of the paper by the following dates. The deadlines apply to papers written to fulfill the Research & Writing (R&W) requirement, but the deadlines also apply to all other papers.

- a. A student graduating in May and taking the bar exam in July must have every paper completed and submitted to the professor by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the graduation year.
- b. A student graduating in December and taking the bar exam the following February must have every paper completed and submitted to the professor by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the graduation year.
- c. A professor may set an earlier deadline for a particular course, independent study, paper, or R&W requirement.
- d. These deadlines are not waivable.

3. **Incompletes:** A student who has an Incomplete for any credit or credits from a previous semester must have all work required to earn the credits completed by the following dates.

- a. A student graduating in May and taking the bar exam in July must have all work required to earn the credits completed by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the graduation year.
- b. A student graduating in December and taking the bar exam the following February must have all work required to earn the credits completed by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the graduation year.
- c. A professor may set an earlier deadline for the completion of any work for an Incomplete.
- d. These deadlines are not waivable.

These deadlines will not apply where the student has an Incomplete for credits from a previous semester only because the student was in a course involving a commitment to do something (such as for a law journal, clinic, or field placement) for multiple semesters and credit is not awarded for the prior semester until the full commitment has been completed.

#### Program Requirements

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from this program will:

- Research, identify issues, analyze, and apply core legal doctrines relating to families and children
- Prepare professional letters, pleadings, agreements, and other legal documents necessary for child and family law practice
- Speak and listen respectfully and effectively with families and children, counsel their clients competently, and interact effectively on their behalf with lawyers and other professionals
- Identify and resolve ethical issues and act in conformity with the rules of professional regulation
- Demonstrate entry-level proficiency in client counseling, and courtroom advocacy.

## General Requirements

#### Curriculum Requirements

Of the 15 hours required for the emphasis, the student must complete

Code	Title	Credits
LAW 8751	Family Law	3
LAW 8752S	Child & Family Services Clinic	1-6
LAW 8733	Children In The Law	2-3
LAW 8751S	Family Violence	2-3

The remainder of the required credit hours from other core curriculum courses or a list of elective courses (listed below)

### Prerequisite Course

All students in the emphasis must take Family Law. Because this foundational course is a prerequisite for most other courses in the emphasis, students accepted for the emphasis will be given a priority in enrollment in the course.

Code	Title	Credits
LAW 8751	Family Law	3

## Clinical Requirement

All students in the Child and Family Law program must successfully complete the Child & Family Services Clinic.

Code	Title	Credits
LAW 8752S	Child & Family Services Clinic	1-6

## Elective Courses

The remaining hours to be satisfied from the following:

Code	Title	Credits
LAW 8590	Special Topics	
LAW 8617R	Elder Law For Estate Planners	
LAW 8733E	Elder Law	
LAW 8733R	Juvenile Offenders & The Law	
LAW 8734	Mediation	
LAW 8738	Immigration Law And Process (if approved by Child and Family Law advisor)	
LAW 8746R	Independent Study	
LAW 8752G	Guardian Ad Litem Workshop	
LAW 8752R	Family Law Practice	
LAW 8778	American Academy Matrimonial Lawyers Board	
LAW 8815R	Disabilities And The Law	
LAW 8815S	Leadership In Disability Studies: A Multidisciplinary Approach	
LAW 8870R	Education Law: Government & Legal Aspects Of Education	
LAW 8908	Family Tax Law	
LAW 8714R	Adoption and Assisted Reproduction	
LAW 8611	Estates And Trusts	
LAW 8613I	Estate Planning and Drafting Lab	
LAW 8609	Ethical Issues In Family Law Representation	
LAW 8714	Gender and Justice	
LAW 8602	International Field Experience	
LAW 8761M	Law, Medicine & Bioethics	
LAW 8662F	Family Court Internship	
LAW 8656C	Jackson County Prosecutor Internship-Family Law Prosecution	
LAW 8790	Legal Aid Internship	

Field Placement courses with the permission of the Child and Family Law Faculty

Miniterm courses if approved by the Child and Family Law Faculty. In the past, these have included: Poverty Law, Violence Against Women Act, Law & Human Trafficking, and Family Law and Film

Any other law school course if, before beginning the course, the students obtains written approval from the Child and Family Law emphasis director. Such approval shall not be granted unless the Child and Family Law emphasis director find that, in light of the student's other courses and the student's goals in the emphasis study, the course will advance the student's study of Child and Family Law to an extent equivalent to other Child and Family Law electives.

Courses may be added or deleted from the lists contained in the sections above with approval of the Child and Family Law Faculty.

## Writing Requirement

A paper on a Family Law related topic satisfied through:

A seminar course, R & W (LAW 8746), Independent Study (LAW 8746R) or a Journal note/comment for Law Review or the Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

## Ethics Requirement

Satisfied through separate assessment focused on ethical issues in family representation

## Portfolio Requirement

Each Child and Family Law emphasis student must satisfactorily complete a portfolio, including a skills and experience chart, a professional biography, a statement of career objectives and attorney philosophy, and a portfolio defense.

## Graduation Requirements

For a student to be recognized as having graduated with an Emphasis in Child and Family Law, students must have

- timely completed all emphasis requirements
- made application at the time of graduation
- received the approval of a member of the Child and Family Law faculty of the student's portfolio, and
- earned a 3.0 grade point in emphasis course work (required and elective courses). This grade-point average shall be computed considering all Required and Elective Courses in the emphasis taken by the student, including any that exceed the minimum hour requirements for the Emphasis

**Important Note:** Because the School is committed to keeping up with changes in the practice of law, the requirements for emphasis areas may change during the course of a student's enrollment at the School. The requirements at the time a student is granted admission into the emphasis area are the requirements that govern completion of the student's emphasis requirements. For possible revised requirements that will take effect with the next academic year, ask the emphasis area advisors for the most recent iteration of requirements.

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