

**Certification Criteria for GW Law Graduates to Satisfy  
the NY Court of Appeals Skills Competency Requirement  
for Admission to the NY Bar**

*(Posted per Mandate of the NY Court of Appeals)*

Pursuant to Rules of the Court of Appeals for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law, Part 520.8, the New York Court of Appeals has identified five pathways through which applicants for admission to practice may satisfy the requirement to "demonstrate that the applicant possesses the skills and values necessary to provide effective, ethical and responsible legal services in this State."  
<https://www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/520rules10.htm#B18>.

This requirement applies to:

- J.D. students commencing their studies after August 1, 2016 primarily through Pathways 1 and 2. (NY exempted the Class of 2020 from the skills requirement due to COVID pandemic conditions).
- LL.M. students commencing their studies after August 1, 2018 (Pathways 4 and 5).

Prior to applying to the New York Bar, all students should review carefully the information provided by the [New York Court of Appeals](#) as well as the [FAQs](#).

**Skills Competency Requirement for J.D. Candidates  
Pathway 1**

Pathway 1 allows applicants to satisfy the skills competency requirement by submitting a certification from their law school confirming that (1) the school's curriculum incorporates the teaching of skills and professional values required for participation in the legal profession, and (2) that the applicant has acquired sufficient competency in those skills and sufficient familiarity with those values.

**Fulfillment of Requirement:** GW Law School Juris Doctor candidates are introduced to a core set of skills and professional values as part of the standard required curriculum. Students will be certified under Pathway 1 as having basic lawyering competence and the ability to practice ethically if the student satisfactorily completes credits and experience from among the several options below that in combination exceed the goals and expectations of the NY Court of Appeals.

**First-Year Juris Doctor Curriculum**

1. The new first-year curriculum with skills emphasis in the following three courses contributes to Pathway 1 status for the graduating classes of 2022 and beyond:

### 6209 Legislation and Regulation (3)

This course introduces students to the modern legislative and administrative state and is designed to build students' skills in working with statutes, regulations, and other similar sources of law. The course also examines the roles of legislatures, agencies, and courts in interpreting and applying such sources of law.

### 6216 Fundamentals of Lawyering I (3)

Introduction to core skills required to be an effective attorney, including legal writing and analysis; research in primary, secondary, and specialized sources of law; communication with clients and supervisors; active learning; and professional identity formation and development. The fall semester focuses on objective writing and problem solving. The course is graded on a letter-grade basis.

### 6217 Fundamentals of Lawyering II (3)

A continuation of the fall semester Fundamentals of Lawyering I (6216) course, the spring semester shifts focus to persuasive writing and oral advocacy, while maintaining a focus on efficient research and analysis; client interaction; strategies for dispute resolution; and professional development. Experience working in teams and providing effective feedback continues, as does becoming a self-directed learner. The course is graded on a letter-grade basis.

2. Students acquire analytical skills in addition to the subject matter knowledge from their other required first-year foundation courses: Civil Procedure, Contracts, Criminal Law, Property, Torts and Constitutional Law.
3. Students participate in the Inns of Court – Foundations of Practice Program for a full academic year/two-semesters of supplemental skills training sessions designed for first-year students. <https://www.law.gwu.edu/inns-of-court> The program is designed to focus on the skills necessary for successful practice and for ongoing career development. A transcript notation reflects successful completion of this ABA award-winning skills development program since GW Law was the [recipient of the 2018 E. Smythe Gambrell Professionalism Award](#).

## **Upper Level Juris Doctor Curriculum**

1. Students must earn at least six experiential or skills credits for upper level students from an extensive menu of courses that comply with ABA standards. This is a graduation requirement independent of the NY Bar skills competency rules.
2. Students in the upper level years must complete a mandatory course in Professional Responsibility, and must also complete an upper level writing requirement for 2 credits.
3. Students in the upper level years also choose among a variety of experiential offerings that build upon the skills introduced in the first-year, and immerse students in an additional set of core skills and professional values.

Such options may include academic credit and are partially listed below as a representative sampling:

Law Review/Journal participation (4 credits)

Writing Fellow or Deans Fellow (2-4 credits)

Internships (for credit with a co-requisite course, or non-credit bearing)

4. Students have opportunities to engage in pro bono service in excess of the 50 hours NY mandates for admission to the bar. Pro bono service exposes students to oral and written communication, problem solving, fact investigation, research and writing and case theory/planning.

5. Pathway 1 skills competency is also enhanced via the upper level Foundations of Practice supplemental skills training program for second and third-year students, also for a transcript notation.

6. Summer legal work that would qualify under Pathway 2 for conversion from hours of service to course credits, at a ratio of 50 hours per one credit, is also eligible to qualify under Pathway 1 for skills competency.

NOTE: Graduates from the years 2019 and 2021 (NY exempted 2020 graduates from compliance) earn Pathway 1 skills competency status from all categories listed above except the revised first-year course curriculum.

## **Pathway 2**

Pathway 2 allows applicants to satisfy the requirement by enrolling in and successfully completing 15 credit hours of practice-based experiential coursework designed to foster the development of professional competencies. Such experiential coursework is defined by the American Bar Association Standards for the Approval of Law Schools, and the Rules of the NY Court of Appeals

The GW Law School *Bulletin* clearly indicates courses that qualify as “Experiential” or “Skills.” The Dean of Students Office and the Records Office also maintain a list of all current courses that are deemed eligible for skills or experiential learning credits. Students can easily earn the 15 required credits through 6 mandatory ABA skills credits, and additional 3 skills credits of their choice, and up to 6 converted credits from 300 hours of qualifying summer work.