

Assessing Your First Year of Law School

Many second year students enter their 2L year not having looked back at the progress they made during their first year. In order to continue to succeed in law school, students must learn from their mistakes and their successes. This guide is designed to help individual students assess their academic performance during their first year, and develop a plan for future success.

Study Habits

1. What was your study schedule during the week?
2. Did you stick to your study schedule or did other things get in the way of you keeping to it?
3. Did you study with friends, a study group, or by yourself?
 - a. If studying with others, how effective do you feel those study sessions were?
4. What's the one thing that kept you from having more study time than you wanted last year?

Preparation for Class

5. When did you finish your reading for class?
 - a. A day or two before class?
 - b. The night before?
 - c. The hour before?
 - d. Did you generally finish your reading before class?
6. Did you draft a separate brief for each case? Did you book brief?
 - a. When you were in class, were the notes you had prepared prior to class helpful?
 - b. Is there anything you feel would have been more helpful to you in preparing for class?

Class Attendance

7. For each course you took last year, think about how many classes you missed in each course. If you missed more than two in each course, why?
 - a. If you missed a class, did you get notes from a classmate? Did you talk with your professor about the absence?
8. Did you feel that going to class was valuable? Why or why not?
9. Did you have anxiety going to class, thinking you might be called on?
 - i. If yes, how did you deal with that anxiety?
 - ii. Overall, how did you do when called on in class?
10. Which class did you attend the most? Why?

Note-taking

11. During class, did you take notes on your computer or did you hand-write them?
 - a. In general, were you able to focus on the class discussion and still take notes?
 - b. If you normally take notes on your computer, have you tried taking notes for an entire class on paper?
12. What types of information did you put down in your notes?
 - a. Comments from the professor on cases?
 - b. Hypotheticals created by the professor in class?
 - c. Conversations the professor had with students about the subject matter?
 - d. If you were called on during class and unable to take notes, did you get notes from someone else?
13. Did you go over your notes after class? On the weekend? At all before your started to outline?

Outlining

14. Did you create your own outline for each of your courses?
 - a. If so, what did you use to help guide the content?
 - i. Notes from class? Syllabus? Casebook table of contents? Commercial outline? Student outline? LSA outline? Other supplements?
 - b. If no, what did you create to help prepare for exams?
15. When did you complete your outline?
16. How did your outline help you study for exams?

Exam Preparation

17. Did you review examples, hypotheticals, or practice exams in preparation for final exams?
 - a. If yes, when did you start working with these practice materials?
 - b. Did you take practice exams under timed conditions? Did you share your answer with a friend? Did you "grade" practice exams for other students in your class?
18. How did you memorize the material in each course? Did you use flashcards or flowcharts? Did you say the rules of law out loud or write them out on paper?
 - a. Do you feel that you knew enough law going into the exams to do well?

Taking Exams

19. Did you arrive early to your exams, find a good seat and feel you had enough time before the exam began?
20. Did you read through the exam question three times before you began to outline?
21. Did you outline your exam question before writing?
22. Did you use some sort of IRAC formation when organizing your exam?
23. Did you use almost every fact given to you in the fact pattern in your answer?

General

24. What was your favorite class last year? Why?
25. What was your least favorite class last year? Why? When did it become your least favorite?
26. What was your best academic moment last year?