



OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Dear Upper-Level Students,

Please read this letter before planning or registering for distance learning courses, which we also call online courses.

***Limit of 44 credits in distance learning courses.*** The ABA limits the number of credits that students can earn in distance learning courses to one-half of the total credits a law school requires for the JD degree. At Western New England, we require 88 credits to earn the JD so we must require that no more than 44 credits be earned in distance learning courses.

***What counts as a distance learning course.*** A distance learning course is one where at least one-third of the classtime is offered in an online format. Most of our courses are either entirely in person or entirely online, but in our part-time evening program, Torts and Civil Procedure are scheduled in two sessions per week in person and a third session online. As the total number of minutes online does not exceed one-third of the classtime, these are not considered distance learning courses. If you are unsure whether a course you have taken or plan to take is considered a distance learning course, you can check your course plan page in self-service for the word "ONLINE" (in lieu of a room number). A distance learning course will also have a section number in the 50s. For example, LAW 748-01 is the course number for the in-person section of Trusts and Estates (as indicated by the -01 section number) while LAW 748-51 is the online section. If you take an online course at another law school or in our LLM program, those will also count as distance learning courses towards the 44-credit cap. With limited exceptions that mostly apply to required courses in our part-time evening program, our distance learning electives are offered on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

***Effect of cap on part-time evening students.*** Part-time evening students will earn at least 10 credits in required classes that are scheduled to meet online. These students should be particularly mindful when planning their electives that a student cannot exceed 44 credits total in online classes. Part-time evening students will have to budget their online credits in their early semesters so that they have some left to use in their last year.

**Limit of 20 distance learning credits for admission to New York Bar.** It is also important to understand that individual states may impose rules that are more restrictive than the ABA's in setting criteria for who is eligible for admission to the bar. The three most popular states for WNE alumni to seek admission to the bar are Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York. Of these three states, Massachusetts and Connecticut do not impose stricter rules about distance learning courses, but New York does. New York [requires](#) bar applicants to have attended a law school that requires at least 83 credits to earn the JD, of which only 15 of those credits may be in distance learning courses. Because we require 88 credits to earn a JD from Western New England, our students may take 20 distance learning credits and still be eligible for admission in New York.

New York also denies eligibility to applicants who took any distance education credits in the first third of their JD program. For this reason, our part-time evening program does not comply with this aspect of the NY Court of Appeals Rules for the Admission of Attorneys.

We recommend that students consult the bar admission requirements in the state where they intend to practice if it is a state other than those mentioned in the letter.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Buzuvis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erin" and last name "Buzuvis" clearly distinguishable.

Erin Buzuvis, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

12/5/23