

Certificate in Public Interest Law

Approved November 2007

The term ‘public interest law’ encompasses many different substantive areas of the law. Public interest work is not confined to any one political ideology. It is the practice of law pursued on behalf of both individuals and organizations not typically served by the for-profit-bar. For purposes of this certificate, ‘public interest law’ includes working for civil legal services organizations, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and other similar entities to advance concepts of justice, fairness, and the well-being of the general public.

Overview

Students qualify for a certificate by satisfying six requirements (described in full below):

- **3 “Level 1” courses** students must take all three
- **3 “Level 2” courses** students may choose from a wide variety of courses
NOTE: courses used for any other certificate *will not count* toward this requirement
- **5 “Level 3” credits** students may choose from a variety of applied skills offerings
NOTE: courses used for any other certificate *will not count* toward this requirement
- **Paper** “A” paper focused on public interest law.
- **GPA** at least a 2.7 grade point average in courses used to qualify
- **Pro bono work** at least 50 hours of pro bono work, as defined below

Other considerations

- **Topical focus**
Students can earn a Certificate notation of a topical focus by either:
 - taking 3 classes from a single Level 2 category
 - taking 2 classes from a single Level 2 category *and* fulfilling the paper requirement with a paper in the focus area written independently of the two focus classes
- **Criminal & Environmental Law**
Students may use only one criminal or environmental class toward this Certificate, as outlined below.

Certificate Requirements and Restrictions

A. **Course Requirements.** To obtain the certificate, a student must complete the following course requirements:

Level 1 - *All of the following:*

- Evidence
- Administrative Law
- Con Law II

Level 2 - *Three of the following courses. You may take all three classes from one topical area, or you may take a mixture from multiple topical areas.*

- *NOTE:* courses used for any other certificate *will not count* toward this requirement
- Students can earn a Certificate notation of a topical focus by either:
 - taking 3 classes from a single Level 2 category
 - taking 2 classes from a single Level 2 category *and* fulfilling the paper requirement with a paper in the focus area written independently of the two focus classes

Health, Disability, and Aging

- Disability Law
- Health, Poverty, and the Law Seminar
- Elder Law
- Health Law: Delivery/Managed Care
- Health Law: Bioethics

Labor and Employment

- Employment Law I
- Employment Discrimination
- Individual Employee Rights Seminar
- Labor Law
- Workers' Compensation

Consumer Law

- Consumer Law
- Bankruptcy & Debtor/Creditor
- Advanced Bankruptcy Seminar

International Law and Immigration

- Public International Law
- International Human Rights Seminar
- International Humanitarian Law: Global War on Terrorism
- National Security Law & Policy
- US Foreign Relations Law
- Immigration Law

Family and Juvenile Law

- Family Law
- Contemporary Issues in Family Law Seminar
- Law and Education Seminar
- Juvenile Justice Seminar
- Children in the Law Seminar

Civil Rights

- Civil Rights Litigation
- First Amendment Seminar
- Sexual Orientation & Gender in the Law Seminar
- Racism and the Law Seminar
- Environmental Justice Seminar
- Comparative Constitutional Law
- Constitutional Theory Seminar
- Reproduction and the Law

Indian Law

- Federal Indian Law
- Federal Indian Law Seminar
- Contemporary Issues in Indian Law Seminar
- Cultural Resources Protection Seminar
- Native American Natural Resources Law

Miscellaneous (relevant to more than one topic group)

- Nonprofit Law Seminar
- Local Government Law
- Federal Courts

Environmental and criminal courses: see special provisions below

Courses not otherwise listed

A student may petition the Certificate Administrator to include 1 course not otherwise listed in the Certificate description. The petition must explain how the course content is substantially relevant to public interest law as defined above or how it may be relevant to that particular student's public interest focus and must be accompanied by a course syllabus or other synopsis provided by the professor; a conclusory statement that the course is relevant to public interest law, standing alone, will not suffice. The student should submit the petition during the semester in which the student is enrolled in the course; students petitioning after the course has ended may encounter difficulty submitting the necessary documentation.

Level 3 - *Five Credits* of the following courses.

NOTE: courses used for any other certificate *will not count* toward this requirement

- Moot Court: Client Counseling
- Moot Court: Jessup International Law Competition
- Moot Court: NALSA

- Moot Court: Mock Trial
- Moot Court: Appellate
- Moot Court: Negotiation
- Mediation/Negotiation Skills Seminar
- CIS: Disability Law
- Street Law Seminar
- Lewis & Clark Legal Clinic
- Small Business Legal Clinic
- Community Development Law Center Clinic
- Appellate Advocacy
- Legislation Seminar
- Advanced Legal Research
- Trial Advocacy
- Externship - must be a Public Interest (non-judicial, non-environmental, non-criminal) Externship. Only three academic credits from your Externship can count towards the certificate. You must get prior approval from the Director of the Externship Program and the Public Interest Law Coordinator.
- Criminal and environmental practical skills courses see restrictions below
 - International Environmental Law Project
 - Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center Clinic
 - National Crime Victims Law Center Clinic

NOTE: Special provisions regarding environmental and criminal courses

In addition to the classes listed for Level 2 and Level 3, students may use one class from the following list to count toward either the Level 2 or the Level 3 requirement:

Classes that might count toward Level 2

- CJ: Victims in Criminal Procedure
- CJ: Criminal Law I
- CJ: Criminal Practice Seminar
- CJ: Comparative Criminal Law & Procedure Seminar
- CJ: Criminal Law II
- CJ: Criminal Procedure I
- CJ: Terrorism & National Security Seminar
- Environmental Law
- Water Law
- International Environmental Law
- Land Use Planning Seminar
- Law Science, and Environment Seminar
- Nuclear Waste Law and Policy Seminar
- Public Lands and Resources Law
- Wildlife Law
- Endangered Species Act
- Animal Law: Legislation / Lobbying / Litigation
- Animal Law
- Wetlands Law
- Legal Ecology
- Environmental Litigation
- Environmental Mediation & Negotiation Seminar

- Pacific Salmon Seminar
- Clean Air Act Seminar
- Clean Water Act Seminar
- Ocean & Coastal Law
- Agriculture / Environmental Law Seminar
- Hazardous Waste Law
- Environmental Enforcement
- Forest law & Policy
- NW Energy Law
- Moot Court: Environmental / Animal Law
- Natural Resources Law & Policy Seminar
- Oil & Gas Law
- Supreme Court & Environment Seminar
- Trade & Environment

Classes that might count toward Level 3

- CIS: Criminal Law
- National Crime Victims Law Center Clinic
- CIS: Environmental / Natural Resources
- CIS: Environmental Prosecution
- CIS Western Resources Legal Center
- Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center Clinic
- International Environmental Law Project

B. **Writing Requirement.** To obtain the certificate, a student must complete one paper that involves substantial independent research and, in addition, satisfies the following criteria:

- The paper must concern one or more topics focusing directly on public interest law.
- The paper must satisfy the criteria for the “A” writing requirement. If the Coordinator certifies that these criteria are met, it is immaterial whether the student actually uses the paper to fulfill the “A” writing requirement.

Students should plan ahead in determining how to meet the writing requirement. The student has the burden of ensuring that the paper topic and scope meet the Certificate requirements. If there is any doubt, the student should initiate a consultation among the student, the supervising faculty member, and the Public Interest Law Coordinator early in the paper process.

C. **Grade Point Requirement.** To obtain the Certificate, a student must maintain a grade point average of B minus (2.70) or better in courses taken and selected as qualifying for the Certificate. This requirement is subject to change depending upon any changes in the grading system or required mean that might be adopted by the faculty.

D. **Pro Bono Requirement.** Students seeking the Certificate must perform 50 hours of pro bono work (legal volunteer work done without pay or school credit) before they graduate. Pro Bono work can be completed during the school year, or during the summer. Pro Bono hours **MUST** be reported to the Public Interest Law Coordinator, and must be verified by the pro bono employer.

For purposes of the Public Interest Certificate *pro bono work is defined* in the following way:

- Assisting attorneys of public service organizations in work directly related to the delivery of legal services to indigent individuals; or
- Work for attorneys employed by organizations, to which donations qualify as deductions under state or federal tax laws (typically 501(c)(3)'s); or
- Law-related work, not including law enforcement, for federal, state, or local government, including government agencies, courts, and judges; or
- Work for an attorney or attorneys directly related to the delivery of legal services to indigent individuals or non-profits, where the retainer agreement specifies the attorney or attorneys are performing the work pro bono; and
- All work by the student is performed without remuneration of any kind, either monetary or for credit. Work performed by a student under a stipend, partial stipend, or work-study is NOT eligible under the Program. Hours volunteered for an organization after a stipend has been used or after full Clinic hours have been completed DO count as pro bono. Volunteer work for on-campus organizations (i.e. PILP, EJA, etc) does NOT qualify as pro bono.

Students should plan ahead in determining how to meet the pro bono requirement. In particular, it is important to consider the following:

- The student has the burden of ensuring that the pro bono work meets the Certificate requirements. If there is any doubt, the student should initiate a consultation with the Public Interest Law Coordinator early in the process.