

Albany Law School Pro Bono Scholars Program Fact Sheet¹

The Pro Bono Scholars Program (PBSP), started in 2015 by the New York Court system, allows students to take the bar exam in February during the final semester of study and then devote the next 12 weeks to providing pro bono legal assistance full-time through an approved field placement or clinic, on behalf of individuals who might not otherwise have access to the justice system. The goal of the PBSP is to assist students in preparing for the actual practice of law while providing much-needed help to those of limited means in our state. See www.nycourts.gov/probonoscholars.

Scholars participate in a seminar that accompanies their public interest practice experience. Pro Bono Scholars earn 12 credits for the semester --2 graded seminar credits plus 10 P/F field credit (about 45 hours per week during the 12-week period for a minimum of 520 hours). **As of October 4, 2023, Pro Bono Scholars can complete up to 42.5 hours in the fall semester immediately preceding the program participant's final semester of law school study.**

A. Guidelines for Student Participation

The guidelines below are in addition to the rules and policies set forth for participation in the Pro Bono Scholars Program by the New York State Courts.

To apply to the Pro Bono Scholars Program (PBS) students should:

1. Be in good academic standing and have not been on academic probation during law school.
2. Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above at the end of the third semester.
3. Have successfully completed all required first- and- second- year courses.
4. Have successfully completed at least two electives tested on the bar exam prior to the start of the Fall semester immediately preceding the program participant's final semester of law school study. Bar electives include:
Sales, Secured Transactions, or Commercial Law Survey;
Criminal Procedure Adjudication or Criminal Procedure Investigation;
Matrimonial Law or Family Law;
Trusts & Estates;
Business Organizations;
Conflicts of Law.
5. Have completed or have plans to complete Legal Profession or Professional Responsibility Seminar, the international and administrative law

¹ Program requirements may change depending on the Pro Bono Scholar Program year.

requirements, and the upper-class writing requirement by the end of the Fall semester immediately preceding the program participant's final semester of law school study.

6. Have completed a minimum of 59 academic credits prior to the start of the Fall semester immediately preceding program participant's final semester of law school study.
7. Have enrolled in (or intend to enroll in) and commit to complete a commercial bar preparation course for the February bar exam.

We recommend that you consult with the Director of Bar Success professor regarding bar preparation options and related fall semester course selection.

8. Have completed the Albany Law School Pro Bono Scholars application. The application will be emailed to all current 2L students, along with this fact sheet, and must be returned ***on or before the application due date.***
9. Selection of Pro Bono Scholars will be made by a committee comprising the Academic Dean, the Director of Bar Success, the Registrar, and the Faculty Director of the Pro Bono Scholars Program. *Interested applicants will be interviewed by the committee. Selection will be guided by the applicant's commitment to pro bono or public service work. In addition, consideration will be given to commitment to bar preparation and the likelihood the applicant will successfully complete the entire program, including passing the February bar and managing the significant work commitment during the 12-week period directly after the bar exam.*
10. **Note: If you do not meet all the above criteria, please include a statement in your application as to why you should be considered for the PBSP.**

B. Required Courses

1. **Fall Semester (semester immediately preceding program participant's final semester of study)**

Pro Bono Scholars must register for the following Fall Courses:

- a. Advanced Legal Analysis II.
- b. Any additional classes deemed necessary by the Dean for Academic Affairs for completion of graduation requirements (including the completion of 87 total credits), and success on the February bar exam.
- c. **NOTE:** 42.5 hours can be completed prior to the start of the Pro Bono Scholar Program semester.

2. Spring Semester- Pro Bono Scholar Semester

The Pro Bono Scholars Program is 12 credits: 10 pass/fail credits for supervised public interest fieldwork in the placement assigned, and 2 letter-graded credits for a related pro bono scholar weekly seminar.

C. Academic Standing and Graduation Implications:

Students must be in good standing to take a bar exam prior to graduation. Students selected for the Pro Bono Scholars Program who fall below a 2.5 at the end of their 5th semester or have outstanding incomplete grades cannot sit for the bar exam. Any student in this position must return to school in the spring in the regular academic program and return to good academic standing.