



**New York State Skills Competency Requirement
for Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law**

Pathway One Plan

In December of 2015, the New York Court of Appeals adopted [Rule 520.18](#), modifying the requirements for admission to the New York Bar, by creating a Skills Competency Requirement.¹ The requirement, which is applicable to all students who begin their J.D. studies in August of 2016 or thereafter, establishes five pathways by which law students can qualify for admission to the New York Bar. Because we anticipate that the majority of our J.D. students will be certified for admission through Pathway 1, which requires each school to identify and incorporate into its curriculum the “skills and professional values” necessary for its graduates’ “basic competence and ethical participation in the legal profession,” we will first set forth those skills and professional values.

Taking into account a number of factors, including: the career paths of the large majority of our students following graduation; the fact that 90% of our students participate in public interest and government internships in the summer following their first year of law school, and almost all of our students are employed at large corporate firms, smaller private firms, government agencies or public interest organizations in the summer following their second year of law school; the fact that approximately 70% of our students currently take at least one clinic or participate in one externship program in their second or third years; and, the fact that all of our students will be required to take a minimum of 6 credits of experiential learning courses, Cornell Law School has identified in Column A below the skills and professional values which are required for our graduates’ “basic competence and ethical participation in the legal profession.” Column B designates where in the curriculum those skills and professional values are taught and assessed.

¹ Students also are required to satisfy ABA Standard 303(a)(3), which requires that all J.D. students complete at least 6 credit hours of experiential learning classes.

A	B
Skill	Classes Where Skill Is Taught and Assessed ²
Problem Solving	All doctrinal, clinical and skills classes
Legal Analysis and Reasoning	All doctrinal, clinical and skills classes
Legal Research including Use of Technology	Lawyering
Factual Investigation	Lawyering
Communication (Written and Oral)	Lawyering Upper-Level Writing Requirement Professional Development Program
Counseling	Lawyering and other 1L classes
Negotiation	Contracts
Litigation Procedures	Lawyering Civil Procedure
Recognizing and Resolving Ethical Dilemmas	Lawyering Professional Responsibility Required Course Professional Development Program
Collaboration	Lawyering Professional Development Program
Competent Representation	Lawyering Professional Responsibility Required Course
Cultural Competence	Lawyering Professional Development Program

² Cornell Law School requires all students to take the following courses in their first year: Lawyering, Contracts, Civil Procedure, Torts, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, and Property. Students are also required to take one upper-level writing course and a class in Professional Responsibility.

Value	Classes Where Value is Taught and Assessed
Provision of Competent Representation	All doctrinal, clinical and skills classes Professional Responsibility Required Course
Striving to Promote Justice, Fairness, and Morality	Lawyering Professional Responsibility Required Course Constitutional Law The NYS Pro Bono Requirement is also instrumental in promoting this value.
Striving to Improve the Profession	Professional Responsibility Required Course Respect at Cornell (required university program)
Professional Self-Development	Lawyering 1L classes with feedback component Professional Development Program Career-related programming and counseling