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Professional Identity Formation: Practical Tips for Complying with Standard 303

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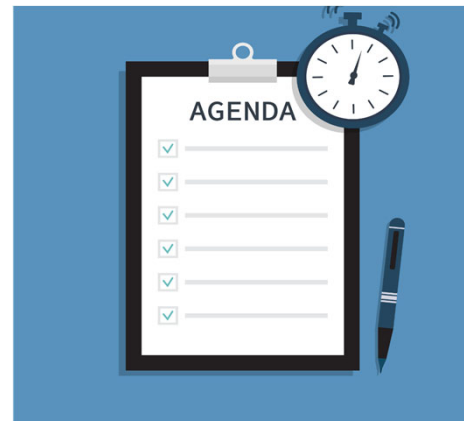
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Agenda

1. Provide an overview of the regulatory environment regarding new ABA Standard 303(b).
2. Share examples regarding some schools' efforts to comply with this standard.
3. Invite audience members to share information about their programs.



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Overview of Regulatory Structure



Process for standards revision in general includes the following:
 Standards Committee Recommendation>Council Revision>Notice and Comment>Further Revisions (if needed)>to ABA House of Delegates for Concurrence

**303(b) also included working group and roundtable*

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Overview of Regulatory Structure

Standard 303(b): “A law school shall provide substantial opportunities for . . . the development of a professional identity.”



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Overview of Regulatory Structure: Interpretation 303-5, Standard 303

“Professional identity focuses on what it means to be a lawyer and the special obligations lawyers have to their clients and society. The development of professional identity should involve an intentional exploration of the values, guiding principles, and well-being practices considered foundational to successful legal practice. Because developing a professional identity requires reflection and growth over time, students should have frequent opportunities for such development during each year of law school and in a variety of courses and co-curricular and professional development activities.”

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Overview of Regulatory Structure: Implementation

*SEQ/SRT: “Describe how the Law School provides substantial and frequent opportunities to law students for the development of a professional identity. Describe how each of these opportunities provides for the development of a professional identity in compliance with Interpretation 303-5.”

*SITE TEAM TRAINING

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Overview of Regulatory Structure: Implementation

- Considerations regarding “nature and frequency” of PIF opportunities
 - Who is coordinating or involved in the program development and teaching/mentoring in the program?
 - When are the opportunities for reflection and growth provided? And how many opportunities for students before graduation?
 - Are they curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular? Credit or non-credit bearing?

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Conclusions

1. Standard intends flexibility and range of programs.
2. Standard is a foundational requirement. Schools can do more than what is required consistent with their mission, goals, community, etc.

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Overview of the PIF Landscape

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Professional Identity Formation

- Law schools have been very engaged in developing first-year courses focused on professional identity formation or professional development
 - 2017 – 30 schools
 - 2019 – 62 schools
 - 2022 – 77 schools
 - 2023 – Over 90 schools
 - More on the way

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Professional Identity Formation

- Variety of Approaches in First-Year –
 - Nearly a quarter have Zero-Credit course/program – graduation requirement
 - Generally not taught by full-time faculty
 - Plurality are One-Credit courses – some fall, some spring, some full-year – some pass/fail, some graded
 - Generally taught by full-time faculty or co-taught with administrators
 - Nearly as many are Two-Credit Plus courses – some integrated into lawyering skills

[Professional Development Database | School of Law | University of St. Thomas](#)

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Professional Identity Formation

- Some Key Questions to Consider
 - Credit/No-credit?
 - Graded/Ungraded?
 - When? Fall, Spring, Both Semesters?
 - What is emphasis?
 - Well-Being, Growth Mindset, Relationship Competencies, Self-Awareness and Self-Direction, Cultural Competence, Teamwork, Exploration of Practice Areas

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Professional Identity Formation

- 2L/3L Years
 - Upper-Level Courses – tend to be elective not required although Professional Responsibility creates opportunities for reflection
 - Externships/Clinics provide a great opportunity to emphasize professional identity formation – learning by doing and having opportunity for guided reflection
 - Re-Orientation Opportunities
 - Competition Teams and Journals and Student Organizations
 - Mentoring Programs
 - Career Planning Efforts

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Program Examples

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CSU | **LAW**
CLEVELAND STATE
UNIVERSITY

**Cleveland State University
College of Law**

1. Student and Career Services
2. 1L Yearlong Course
3. Self-Evaluation Opportunities
4. Upper-Level Leadership Course
5. Leaders in Residence
6. 1L Alumni and Peer Mentoring

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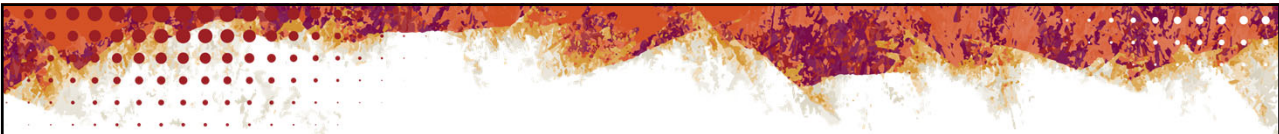


**Cleveland State University
College of Law – Mission
Driven PIF**

1. Learn Law. Live Justice.
2. Cross-Departmental Collaboration
3. Holistic Support for All Students
4. Alumni and Community Engagement
5. Empowering Student Engagement

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**University of Illinois
College of Law**

1. Fundamentals of Legal Practice course
2. Anderson Center for Advocacy and Professionalism
3. Externship Program
4. Social Justice Practicum
5. Corporate Counsel Practicum

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University of Illinois College of Law

6. Leadership Project
7. Student organization programming
8. Career planning professionals
9. Alumni mentoring program
10. Clinics
11. Professional Responsibility courses

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University of Illinois College of Law – Common Threads

1. Multiple senior administrators are involved.
2. Opportunities are curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular
3. Opportunities are widely available.

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University of St. Thomas

1. First-Year Courses
 - A. Moral Reasoning
 - B. Serving Clients Well
 - C. Business Basics
2. Mentor Externship Program
3. Professional Responsibility
4. Robust Experiential Learning Opportunities

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Turnabout: Tell us about YOUR Section 303(b) programs!



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