

A Golden Opportunity: Legal Research Simulation Courses

By Leslie A. Street & Shawn G. Nevers. 20 AALL Spectrum 18 (2016).

Article Categories: Advanced & Subject-Specific Legal Research Instruction; Course Creation & Design; Working with External Stakeholders

Keywords: ABA Standards; Advanced Legal Research; Competencies; Course Design; Curriculum; Experiential; Flipped Classroom; Law Schools; Learning; Legal Research Instruction; Research Skills; Pedagogy; Subject-Specific Legal Research

Reviewer's Summary:

Street and Nevers first discuss recent changes to the ABA Standards and Rules for Approval of Law Schools as those changes relate to academic law libraries. They focus, in particular, on Standards 303 and 304, the former of which requires that law students complete six credit hours of experiential coursework. Section 304 provides the more specific requirements for simulation courses, a category of experiential course. They then discuss ways in which law librarians who teach legal research courses can apply these standards to their curriculum. Regarding Standard 303, librarians may wish to orient their course around particular practice environments, they should provide multiple opportunities for performance and self-evaluation, and they should “integrate doctrine, theory, skills, and legal ethics” into their performance opportunities. In a Standard 304 simulation course, librarians should likewise frame their class in a practice setting, avoiding assignments based around research guides or that are heavy on “treasure hunts.”

Summarized by: Meredith Capps, Vanderbilt University Law School, in 2020.