

From: Currier, Barry [mailto:Barry.Currier@americanbar.org]
Sent: Wednesday, April 04, 2018 11:41 AM
To: Mark Johnson Roberts <mjohnson@osbar.org>
Subject: RE: Online law school programs

Mark,

Nice to hear from you and thanks for asking.

Under the ABA Standards, a school cannot be approved if its program is fully online. ABA Standard 306 establishes limits on how much credit toward the J.D. degree can be given for distance learning. Roughly, right now, it's 15 credits, none in the first year for totally online courses and up to 1/3 of every other class can be done outside the traditional classroom setting. So, if a school did the maximum allowed and had 90 credits required for graduation, [15 + 25 (the equivalent of 1/3 of the class time for the remaining credits)] could be done online.

The Council has granted variances to Mitchell Hamline, Southwestern, and Syracuse law schools to do more than this, on an experimental basis, and there are a couple of other proposals in the pipeline. Additionally, the Council has out for notice and comment some proposed changes to Std. 306 that would increase what schools can do, including allowing a small amount of distance learning courses in the 1L.

But, no one - regardless of what label they may use for marketing purposes - that is ABA-approved can offer the J.D. online.

In CA, as you may know, there is a state accreditation/recognition process that allows fully online J.D. degrees under certain conditions. Graduates of those programs can sit for the CA bar exam.

I hope this is responsive. I was the dean of one of those CA online schools for a while. If you want to chat about online law schools/online learning or where law schools may be going, give me a call.

Barry

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Subject: Online law school programs

Barry, we have a committee here looking at alternative pathways to the profession-reading the law and the like. We understand from our discussion that there is at least one law school nationally with an accredited online learning program. Can you point us in the right direction to learn more about this option? Thanks so much. MJR

[cid:image002.gif@01D3CC1A.A223FD80]Mark Johnson Roberts ("he/him/his")

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