

From: [Smith, Randy](#)
To: [Ralph, Anne](#); [Winters, Kelsey](#)
Cc: [Williams, Valarie](#); [Smith, Randy](#); [Griffiths, Rob](#); [Reed, Katie](#); [Miriti, Maria](#); [Bittner, Brandi](#); [Lemon, Jason](#); [Duffy, Lisa](#); [Hunt, Ryan](#); [Simmons, Ric](#); [Barnett, Kent](#)
Subject: Proposal to establish an online certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2026 12:02:07 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Anne and Kelsey:

The proposal from the Moritz College of Law to establish an online certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution was approved by the Council on Academic Affairs at its meeting on September 2, 2026. Thank you for attending the meeting to respond to questions/comments.

No additional level of internal review/approval is necessary. This action will be included in the Council's next Annual Activities Report to the University Senate (July 2027).

The Office of the University Registrar will work with you on any implementation issues.

Please keep a copy of this message for your file on the proposal and I will do the same for the file in the Office of Academic Affairs.

If you have any questions please contact the Chair of the Council, Professor Val Williams.1415, or me.

I wish you success with this important program development.

Randy



W. Randy Smith, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

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TO: Randy Smith, Vice Provost for Academic Programs

FROM: Graduate School Curriculum Services

DATE: June 4, 2026

RE: Proposal to establish a Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Moritz College of Law

The Moritz College of Law is proposing to establish a certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution.

The proposal was received by the Graduate School on May 4, 2026. The combined GS/CAA subcommittee first reviewed the proposal on June 1, 2026, and supported its review by the Council on Academic Affairs.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
MORITZ COLLEGE OF LAW

Anne E. Ralph
*Associate Dean for Academic Affairs &
Strategic Initiatives*
Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law
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May 4, 2026

Graduate School-CAA Committee
250 University Hall | 230 N. Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Committee Members:

The College of Law seeks approval for a new stackable Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution, presented in conjunction with applications for a certificate in Intellectual Property and Technology Law. Students may combine any two of our certificates towards earning the College of Law's Master in the Study of Law (MSL) degree.

The development of the certificate began in the Summer of 2024, and stems from a strategic review aimed at broadening the range of educational offerings at the College of Law. The design of the certificate is based on a pre-existing concentration in the MSL program, and the integration of existing MSL degree courses into the certificate program ensures a clear educational path with minimal additional resource requirements.

The proposed certificate, with its completely online, asynchronous format, is a response to a market demand for more adaptable, professional-focused education, as evidenced by a market study from Ohio State Online. This study encouraged the College to adapt its offerings to fill existing skills gaps and to concentrate on high-demand fields such as alternative dispute resolution. The certificate aims to address these needs by providing a program that supports workforce development for individuals in law-adjacent roles. The certificate offers specialized knowledge through courses focused on negotiation, mediation, and contracts/business law, preparing professionals to manage legal challenges effectively in a range of professional roles. Notably, the certificate leverages the expertise of our top-ranked dispute resolution program (*U.S. News & World Report* 2026 Best Dispute Resolution Law Programs), to prepare students with high-demand conflict management expertise.

The certificate was reviewed and approved by the Moritz College of Law's Graduate Studies Committee on April 23, 2026. We appreciate the committee's time and attention in reviewing this proposal, and welcome the opportunity to answer questions or provide additional information that would be helpful to the committee.

Very truly yours,

Anne Ralph
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives
Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law
The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law
ralph.52@osu.edu / 614-247-4797

Proposal for a 3a Stackable Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution

Submitted by the Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University

I. Introduction

The College of Law requests a 3a stackable Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution. The request is being submitted concurrently with the request for a 3a certificate in Intellectual Property and Technology Law. These two new certificates are the final certificate proposals for the desired total of five certificates that can be used towards the completion of the College of Law's Master in the Study of Law (MSL). The other three certificates that were approved in 2025 include the Business Law Certificate, the Compliance Certificate, and the Health Law Certificate. Any two of these certificates could be stacked and used towards completion of the MSL (subject to completing additional requirements).

The College of Law developed the certificates as a key component of the strategic planning process that focused on expanding the range of educational offerings provided. Because the curriculum for all proposed and existing certificate programs uses courses already developed for the College of Law's MSL degree program, the certificates will provide a tailored, focused course of study for students with only minimal additional teaching and administrative impacts.

II. Background and Rationale for the Certificate

As the MSL degree program has grown over the last five years, the College of Law has shifted its MSL program to an entirely online, asynchronous program with courses that fit more easily into the schedules of working professionals in law-adjacent careers. This change to an online program happened in early 2025, with the approval of the first three online certificate programs happening in mid-2025. Market analysis by Ohio State Online continues to support the need for working professional programs that optimize flexibility and create additional pathways for student learning. Continued analysis also recommends that the College fill skills gaps in the current workforce and prioritize program concentrations to meet market demand. This certificate directly answers this need, providing a flexible workforce development program tailored to professionals working in law-adjacent fields.

A stackable certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution can be a valuable asset for working professionals across various industries. This specialized credential equips students with the comprehensive understanding and mastery of alternative dispute resolution techniques and implementations in the workforce. By acquiring expertise in areas such as legal negotiation, mediation, and business law strategy, professionals can effectively navigate legal challenges and make informed decisions within their organizations. Students in the certificate will complete coursework from the top-ranked dispute resolution program (*U.S. News & World Report* 2026 Best Dispute Resolution Law Programs), preparing themselves with high-demand conflict management expertise relevant to their specific industries. A certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution empowers working professionals to develop a unique and highly sought-after skillset, fostering career advancement and professional value.

III. Certificate Objectives

The College of Law intends the certificate program to provide a flexible, practical suite of courses designed for working professionals whose careers interface with the law on a regular basis, for individuals who are interested in transitioning into a career involving dispute resolution, or professionals seeking to broaden their understanding of the laws and practices involved in dispute resolution. Professionals completing the certificate will develop their understanding in the following areas:

1. Basic Understanding of the Legal System Relating to Dispute Resolution:

- Understand the laws and practices related to common methods of dispute resolution, including negotiation and mediation.

2. Legal Doctrine and Substantive Knowledge in Alternative Dispute Resolution:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the law, procedure, and skills relevant dispute resolution, to ensure compliance and ethical practices. Analyze legal precedents and case studies in dispute resolution in a variety of contexts.

3. Use of Law-Related Materials and Process:

- Effectively utilize legal research methods, including statutes, regulations, and legal databases. Develop an understanding of legal processes such as litigation and alternatives to litigation.

4. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:

- Apply critical thinking skills to identify possible mechanisms for resolution of complex legal issues. Develop problem-solving strategies to mitigate risk and resolve challenges.

5. Communication:

- Communicate complex legal concepts clearly and concisely to diverse audiences. Collaborate with professionals, legal experts, and stakeholders to convey information effectively.

IV. Curriculum

The certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution is entirely online, and requires that students successfully complete 4 courses (12 credits) as outlined below:

Core Courses: Students **must** take the two core courses below:

Course	Semester	Modality	Credits	Required
LAW 7106: Legal Negotiation	Fall	Online	3	YES
LAW 8560: Mediation	Spring	Online	3	YES

Elective Courses: Students may complete the remaining credits to meet the 12-credit requirement in ADR coursework from among the elective courses below:

Course	Semester	Modality	Credits
LAW 6121: Contracts	Fall	Online	3
LAW 7113: Dispute Resolution in Employment	Summer	Online	3
LAW 8889: Business Law & Strategy	Spring	Online	3

The curriculum allows students to complete this program in a fully online format over the course of up to a year. After completing the certificate, the student could then apply to the MSL degree program and use the credits from the certificate to satisfy 12 of the required 30 credits for the MSL degree. It is important to note that the courses in the certificate program are the same courses that a student would take if they were enrolled in the MSL program. Certificate students will be enrolled alongside MSL program students. This would allow for a fluid transition to the MSL degree program and accelerate the completing of the MSL degree for these students.

Additionally, because there is no requirement for a capstone or thesis in the MSL degree program, there is no requirement for a capstone experience or thesis in the certificate program.

V. Stackable Certificate Option

This certificate was designed so that it can be stackable towards the MSL degree program when paired with either the Health Law Certificate, the Business Law Certificate, the Compliance Certificate, or the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Certificate. Students will be advised at time of certificate application, as well as again at time of MSL degree program application, that for two certificates to successfully stack towards the MSL program, no one course can count twice. The flexibility of this certificate's curriculum gives room for elective course choice to ensure that students are selecting their coursework so that their 12 credits are unique to this certificate and the coursework for the other chosen certificate is unique to that program.

If a student chooses to stack two certificates towards the MSL degree, then after successfully applying to the MSL program, their certificate credits (24 or 27 credits depending on which certificates they chose) would count toward the required 30 credits for the MSL degree. In addition to those certificate credits, students would then need to complete the two MSL foundational courses (6 credits): Legal Research and Writing and Introduction to US Legal Systems.

VI. Market Assessment

The creation of this and the other certificate programs for the College of Law is the result of a growing MSL program that has more than doubled its enrollment in three years and shown there is a need for law programs for the non-lawyer. With this growth came the desire to specialize in area-specific topics through targeted certificate programs, beginning with the first certificates approved in 2025 - Health Law, Business Law, and Compliance. Continued interest in area-specific credentialing necessitates this proposal in Alternative Dispute Resolution.

To assess the viability of the proposed certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution, a market assessment was conducted by Ohio State Online. Their findings indicate a steady growth in the national labor market for jobs with a certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution.

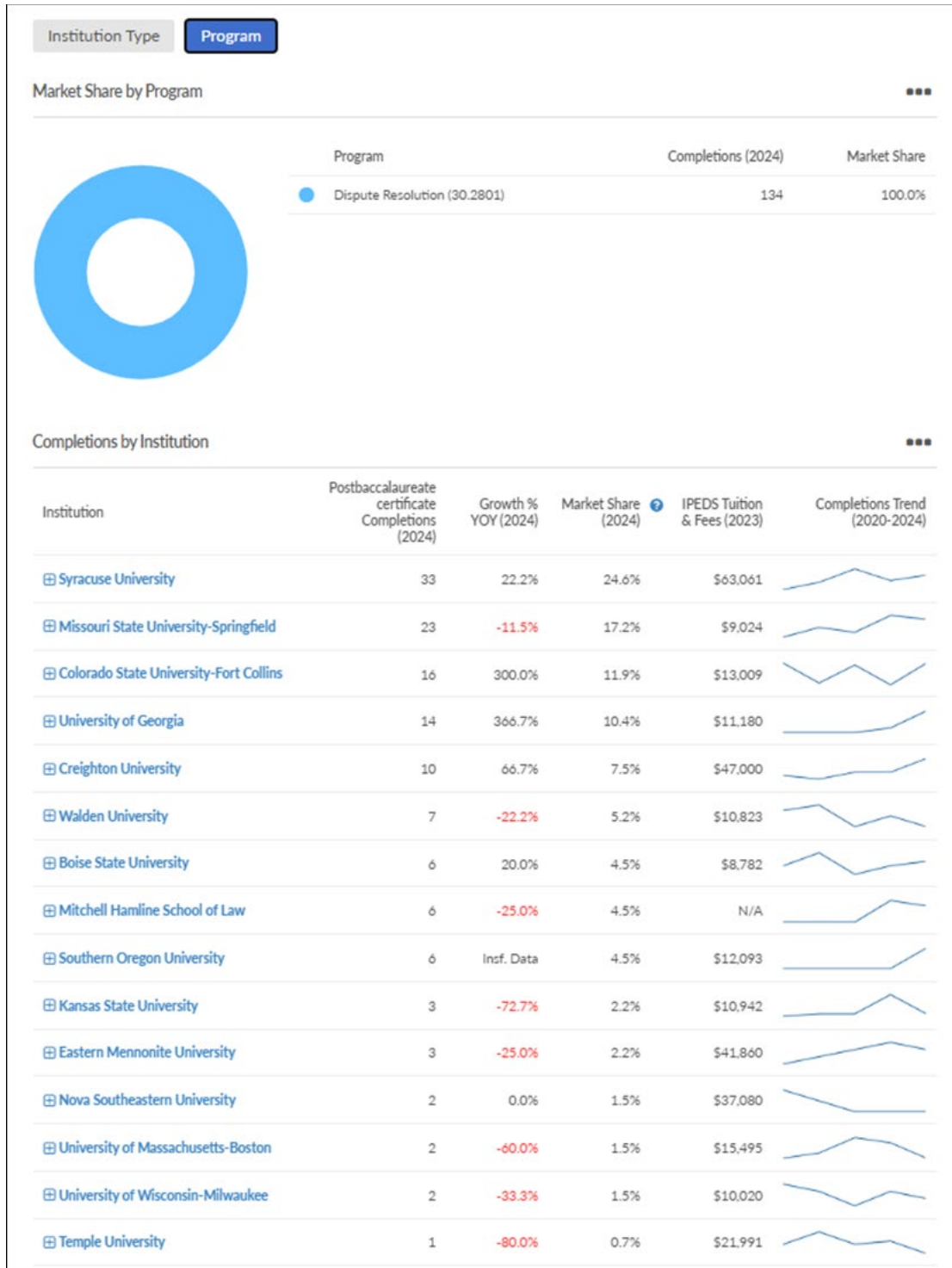
National Occupational Trends



Ohio Occupational Trends



Additionally, when assessing market supply, Ohio State Online has noted that there are no other law schools in the state of Ohio that offer an online certificate program in Alternative Dispute Resolution. Nationally, the number of universities that offer similar certificates is strong and growing. Direct competitor schools that offer certificates in Alternative Dispute Resolution include Syracuse University, Missouri State University, Colorado State University, and University of Georgia. Though there are these strong competitor programs across the country, the interest in Alternative Dispute Resolution is high and our online program will reach a large audience of prospective students nationally.



Lastly, based on the interest and performance of the three current certificates, it is anticipated that this certificate will perform equally well. With the official launch of the three certificates in January 2026, we already have one student who will complete their

program at the end of the summer 2026 semester, a combined lead total of close to 100 perspective individuals for the fall semester 2026, and multiple new admits for the fall 2026 semester.

VII. Program Eligibility

Admission to, performance in, and exit standards for the certificate are consistent with the Graduate School's standards for admission and progression. Admission requirements include a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale or equivalent) for the last bachelor's or advanced degree earned. Personal statements require articulation of how the certificate is consistent with the applicant's professional and career goals. Students from international undergraduate institutions are recommended to score at least a 100 in the TOEFL iBT. Resumes and transcripts are required of all applicants.

A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to receive the certificate.

VIII. Assessment

Students who graduate with a certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution must demonstrate proficiency in the following learning objectives:

- Basic Understanding of the Legal System Relating to Dispute Resolution.
- Legal Doctrine and Substantive Knowledge in Alternative Dispute Resolution.
- Use of Law-Related Materials and Process.
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving.
- Communication.

A. Direct assessment

Students in the certificate program will be assessed through examinations, course projects, and other course exercises. The learning outcomes for each class will be mapped onto the certificate learning objectives, and instructors will assess whether students exceed/meet/do not meet the objectives. A review of the achievement of the learning objectives will be performed at least once a year, and based on these results, the College's Graduate Studies Committee will determine whether to make changes to individual courses or to the program as a whole.

B. Indirect assessment

The College examines student feedback from the Survey of Student Learning Experience (SSLE) instrument used by the law school. Each year College staff will also solicit individual feedback from students in order to improve the programming and counseling provided to students, and College staff will also track the careers of certificate alumni and will conduct post-graduate surveys to investigate areas for improvement in the curriculum. The learning outcomes from the certificate mirror the outcomes from the MSL program, except that they are more narrowly focused on legal knowledge and understanding of alternative dispute resolution processes. The courses for the certificate are the same courses offered through the MSL program, and certificate students would be taking the course alongside MSL students. The certificate coursework, when combined with other coursework offered through a full MSL program (including the two required in US Legal Systems and Legal Writing and Analysis), will enable students to satisfy the learning objectives of the MSL program.

IX. Administration of the Proposed Program

A. Marketing

Ohio State Online assists the College of Law in marketing the certificate as part of its MSL program marketing arrangement. Ohio State Online will help develop a strategic marketing plan, and additional marketing efforts will be conducted by the College of Law's Office of Communications and Public Relations. Ohio State Online has already provided the marketing plan and materials for the other three certificate programs offered by the College of Law.

B. Recruitment and Admissions

Ohio State Online will provide recruitment services for the certificate as part of its arrangement with the College. Ohio State Online already provides recruitment services for the MSL degree program and other three certificate programs.

Additionally, the Director of MSL and Undergraduate Programs at the College of Law reviews all application materials and provides admission decisions for the certificate to Ohio State's Graduate and Professional Admissions Office.

C. Advising and Student Support

Advising and student support for the certificate is primarily provided by the Director of MSL and Undergraduate Programs at the College of Law. However, Ohio State Online

also provides student support post matriculation through regular student communications and individual meetings.

D. Career Advising

The Director of MSL and Undergraduate Programs at the College of Law is the primary resource for specific career guidance for certificate students. Certificate students may also utilize the professional development resources offered through Ohio State's Graduate School.

E. Tuition and Student Fees

Tuition and student fees were determined based on the assumption that the certificate could be a stackable certificate within the MSL program. Consistent with the 30-credit/\$30,000 tuition structure of the MSL program (\$1,000 per credit hour), the standalone cost of the 12-credit hour certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution will be \$12,000.