

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

L O S A N G E L E S

Determination of Credit Hours for Coursework

Faculty policy approved December 2021. Effective immediately.

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annual revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy August 2022. London Program added and other technical revisions made in March 2023.

Related policies: Academic Policies and Procedures and SCALE Program Policies

Scheduled Review Date: Vice Deans, January 2024

A. Credit Hours to Graduate

J.D. students are required to complete 87 credit hours to graduate.

With one exception for the first-year Legal Analysis, Writing, and Skills course (LAWS), each unit of credit is equivalent to 14 (60-minute) hours and totals 840 minutes of instruction. The LAWS course is based on a 50-minute hour with a total of 750 minutes per credit hour, which still complies with ABA Standard 310.

For each hour of direct instruction, students will spend a minimum of 2 hours on out-of-class work for 14 weeks, plus an additional 2 hours or more on end-of-term exams or other assessments, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. For example, in a 3-unit course in the full-time day program, meeting a total of 3 hours per week for 14 weeks, the student would be expected to spend a minimum of 6 hours per week on out-of-class work during the course plus a minimum 6 hours preparing for and completing an exam or other required assessment (for a total of 90 hours of out-of-class work). In SCALE, a 3-unit course may meet 4 hours per week to accommodate the different structure of the term, and the SCALE student would be expected to spend the same amount of time on out-of-class work as the student in the traditional 3-unit course but distributed appropriately within SCALE's shorter term.

The full-time Law Faculty, upon the recommendation of the Curriculum Committee, establishes the number of credit hours allotted for each course. To assess whether a course proposal meets these requirements, the Curriculum Committee normally looks at

the number of credit hours suggested in the course proposal and reviews the course syllabus, reading assignments, and assessments to determine compliance with the accreditation requirements for instruction time and out-of-class preparation time. If it appears the contact hours or out-of-class preparation time may be insufficient, the Curriculum Committee will request that the course proposal or syllabus be modified to comply with the applicable standards prior to approval.

The Vice Dean's Office is responsible for monitoring this Policy to ensure consistency and compliance with ABA accreditation standards. Southwestern will not offer a course that does not meet the minimum minutes of instruction per credit hour or does not involve the appropriate combination of in-class instruction, direct faculty instruction, and out-of-class student work as required by ABA Standard 310.

B. Traditional Courses: Fall and Spring Terms

A 4-credit course will ordinarily meet for 240 minutes each week for a total of 3,360 minutes of direct instruction over the 14-week semester. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 8 hours on out-of-class work per week during the semester, plus an additional 8 hours or more on end-of-term exams or other assessments.

A 3-credit course will ordinarily meet for 180 minutes each week for a total of 2,520 minutes of direct instruction over the 14-week semester. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 6 hours on out-of-class work per week during the semester, plus an additional 6 hours or more on end-of-term exams or other assessments.

A 2-credit course will ordinarily meet for 120 minutes each week for a total of 1,680 minutes of direct instruction over the 14-week semester. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 4 hours on out-of-class work per week during the semester, plus an additional 4 hours or more on end-of-term exams or other assessments.

A 1-credit course will ordinarily meet for 60 minutes each week for a total of 840 minutes of direct instruction over a 14-week semester. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 2 hours on out-of-class work per week during the semester, plus an additional 2 hours or more on end-of-term exams or other assessments.

C. Summer Term

A 3-credit course will ordinarily meet for 360 minutes each week for a total of 2,520 minutes of direct instruction over the 7-week summer session, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend 90 hours on out-of-class work during the term.

A 2-credit course will ordinarily meet for 240 minutes each week for a total of 1,680 minutes of direct instruction for 7 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend 60 hours on out-of-class work during the term.

A 1-credit course will ordinarily meet for 120 minutes each week for a total of 840 minutes of direct instruction over 7 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend 30 hours on out-of-class work during the term.

D. SCALE Courses

A 4-credit course includes 14 hours of direct instruction per credit for a total of 3,360 minutes of direct instruction. For each hour of classroom instruction, students will spend a minimum of 2 hours (based on a 60-minute hour) on out-of-class work plus an additional 2 hours on end-of-term exams or other assessments for a total of 30 out-of-class work hours per term per credit.

A 3-credit course includes 14 hours of direct instruction per credit for a total of 2,520 minutes of direct instruction. For each hour of classroom instruction, students will spend a minimum of 2 hours (based on a 60-minute hour) on out-of-class work plus an additional 2 hours on end-of-term exams or other assessments for a total of 30 out-of-class work hours per term per credit.

A 2-credit course includes 14 hours of direct instruction per credit for a total of 1,680 minutes of direct instruction. For each hour of classroom instruction, students will spend a minimum of 2 hours (based on a 60-minute hour) on out-of-class work plus an additional 2 hours on end-of-term exams or other assessments for a total of 30 out-of-class work hours per term per credit.

A 1-credit course includes 14 hours of direct instruction for a total of 840 minutes of direct instruction. For each hour of classroom instruction, students will spend a minimum of 2 hours (based on a 60-minute hour) on out-of-class work plus an additional 2 hours on end-of-term exams or other assessment for a total of 30 out-of-class work hours.

E. Intersession Courses

An intersession course will require a total of 840 minutes of direct instruction per credit, and students will be expected to spend a minimum of 30 hours of out-of-class work per credit.

F. London Summer-Abroad Courses

A 2-credit course will ordinarily meet for 210 minutes each day, over 8 days, for a total of 1,680 minutes of direct instruction, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 60 hours on out-of-class work during the term.

A 1-credit course will ordinarily meet for 120 minutes each day, over 7 days, for a total of 840 minutes of direct instruction, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 30 hours on out-of-class work during the term.

G. Clinics, Externships, and Independent Studies

For clinical courses, externships, and independent studies, an equivalent amount of work with an appropriate combination of in-class instruction, direct faculty instruction, and

out-of-class student work is included in the following calculation as required by ABA Standard 310:

1. Clinical placements

Clinical placements require 3.5 hours per week of work for each credit granted.

A 3-credit clinical placement requires 10.5 hours of work per week over 14 weeks for a total of 147 hours of work.

A 5-credit clinical placement requires 17.5 hours of work per week over 14 weeks for a total of 245 hours of work.

2. Externship Placements

Externship placements require approximately 60 hours of work per credit.

3. Independent Studies

Independent studies require 90 hours of work per credit, with a maximum of 2 credits awarded.