

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Attendance Policy

Faculty policy approved May 12, 2023. This policy takes effect for SCALE I students in June 2023 and for all other students as of August 1, 2023. Until August 1, 2023, continuing students should continue to abide by the attendance rules in Section E of the [Academic Policies and Procedures](#) and Section B of the [SCALE Program Policies](#), as appropriate.

Revision history: Substantive revisions made May 12, 2023 and June 2, 2023. As of July 1, 2023, the Dean of Students Office will be renamed the Student Services Office.

Related policies: Academic Policies and Procedures (Sections B and C); Administrative Withdrawal Policy; Federal Financial Aid Eligibility Policy; Religious & Cultural Observances Policy (Section 5); SCALE Program Policies; Tuition Refund Policy; Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy; Return of Title IV Funds Policy

Scheduled Review Date: January 2025 (Student Services Office and Academic Standards Committee)

A. ABA Standard

Law schools approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) must require regular class attendance per ABA Standard 308(a). Students at Southwestern Law School are expected to attend all scheduled classes for the courses in which they are enrolled.

B. Maximum Absences

Southwestern recognizes that some absences may, in rare instances, be unavoidable. Students may need to miss an occasional class because of illness, personal and family emergencies, job interviews, law school activities and functions, religious and cultural observances, and for other compelling reasons. Although students are encouraged to keep faculty informed, students do not need to submit documentation to support an absence. As a professional school, Southwestern will assume absences are for compelling reasons and will be taken only when necessary. Students who are absent for more than 20% of regularly scheduled class sessions in a course will not have attended sufficient class to earn credit and may be administratively withdrawn (WA) and may appeal under the Administrative Withdrawal Policy.

Unless otherwise approved as a disability or pregnancy accommodation, or absent a successful appeal under the Administrative Withdrawal Policy, students who are absent for more than 20% of the class sessions will not earn academic credit for the course. An absence for any reason counts toward the maximum of the 20% absences permitted.

C. January Intersession and Summer Mini-Terms

Students enrolled in any January intersession or summer mini-terms that Southwestern offers must attend all class meetings to receive unit credit.

D. LAWS I

Attendance in LAWS I classes during Week One is part of the attendance policy. Week One is the first week of school for non-SCALE J.D. first-year students before they begin their full course load. In addition, missing more than two LAWS I classes during Week One can result in an administrative withdrawal from LAWS I, subject to review by the Associate Dean for Student Services and the LAWS professor. An administrative withdrawal from LAWS I will result in an administrative withdrawal from LAWS II, and the student will be required to take both courses during their second year. A student's failure to complete LAWS I and II during their first year will impact enrollment in other courses and programs, such as externships and honors programs, and could delay graduation.

E. Externships

Students enrolled in an externship course are subject to the attendance requirements provided in the externship course syllabi.

F. First-Day Attendance

Southwestern monitors class attendance, including first-day attendance. If a student does not attend the first class and does not inform the professor or the Students Services Office before the absence, the student may be dropped from the course.

In addition, select courses may have a first-day attendance policy that requires students enrolled in the course to attend the first class session. The first class session of these courses involves detailed planning that is necessary to the format for the entire semester. This policy ensures fairness to student on the waitlist and to students in these courses who depend upon their classmates' attendance and participation. Students who fail to attend the first class session of a course that has a first-day attendance policy will be dropped from the course automatically and without advanced notice. Students must check the course description in Self-Service to determine if a course has a first-day attendance policy.

For purposes of this policy, the first Friday in a semester or term is considered the first day of class for online classes. It is also considered the first day of a blended or hybrid course, if the live portion of the class has not yet convened by that day. Thus, a student must participate in the online class no later than the first Friday to comply with this policy. Students should note that online course pages open on the first day of the

semester and that individual course professors will set the specific schedule for work to be completed.

G. Attendance in Asynchronous Online and Hybrid Courses

A student attends an online course (or the online portion of a hybrid course) by participating in a synchronous class or otherwise engaging in an academically related activity, per the course syllabus or professor's instructions. Examples of asynchronous academically related activity include but are not limited to contributing to an online discussion or chat session; submitting an assignment or working draft; working through exercises; taking a quiz or exam; viewing or completing an interactive tutorial; participating in an online study group; and initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.

Discussing matters other than the course's subject matter does not count as attendance, even if the student contacts the course instructor to discuss them. Examples of topics whose discussion would not qualify as attendance would include plans about submitting assignments, requests for extensions on deadlines for assignments, notifications of illness, or inquiries about purchasing course materials.

Academically related activities are readily tracked and documented through Canvas, Southwestern's learning management system, and Southwestern's email system.

Documenting that a student has logged into an online synchronous or asynchronous class on Canvas is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance. For example, if a student simply logs into an online course on September 15 and logs out, without any further activity, the student did not attend the online class that day.

H. Attendance Tracking

Attendance for in-person and remote classes will be taken during class through Qwickly, a digital attendance tracking software. If a student does not check in at the appointed time during class, they are considered absent. Students may not check in other students; violations will be referred to the Honor Code Committee.

Students who receive advanced approval from a faculty member to watch an in-person class session via Zoom due to illness or another compelling reason are not considered to be present for purposes of attendance, may not check into class via Qwickly, and will be marked absent. These absences count toward the maximum numbers of absences a student may accrue before being administratively withdrawn from the class. Students who check-in without being physically present during an in-person class will be referred to the Honor Code Committee.

Lack of preparation, early departure, or inappropriate behavior may result in a student being marked absent. Professors may take class attendance into account when determining course grades in the manner stated in course syllabi.

Students must keep track of their absences. The Student Services Office is unable to provide students with ongoing attendance totals. Students may view their attendance in Qwickly at any time.

I. Course Roster Verification by Faculty

Each semester, faculty must verify the accuracy of attendance rosters on the first day of class and again after the end of the add/drop period for each term. The purpose of verifying attendance is to prevent problems associated with tuition refunds, federal financial aid relative to Title IV refunding rules, and issuing grades such as "WA" for students who never attended class.

Faculty should take attendance for each class session and the Student Services Office should check the class roll weekly.

J. Federal Financial Aid

Students who receive federal financial aid should consult the Related Policies for more information related to attendance requirements. Specifically, federal regulations require financial aid recipients to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress toward a degree program to continue receiving federal financial aid. Federal regulations also require Southwestern to return federal financial aid under certain circumstances when the student withdraws or is on a leave of absence. These regulations are complex and any student who has questions or concerns should contact the Financial Aid Office.

K. Policy Revisions

Southwestern reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without prior notice.