

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

SCALE® Program Policies

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy August 2022; revised in August 2023.

Related policies: Attendance Policy; Academic Policies and Procedures; Externship Program Policies and Guidelines; Grading Policies, Honors, and Specialized Courses; Graduation Requirements Policy

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When not explicitly delineated in this policy, SCALE students are governed by all other policies on the [Institutional Policies webpage](#).

A. Individual Assignments

1. Materials for evaluation and grading criteria

The faculty members teaching each SCALE course will advise students in writing of the nature of the materials upon which they will be evaluated during the course and the grading criteria.

2. Submitting assignments

a. *Unexcused late papers*

Timeliness in submitting assignments is essential to professionalism; therefore, students are expected to turn in assignments on or before the due date. When specified by the assigning faculty member, students should submit written assignments to the SCALE Office, on the 4th floor of the Bullocks Wilshire Building, before the first scheduled class meeting on the due date. Students should turn in the original of each assignment. The original paper will be stamped with the time and date of receipt, and a time-dated receipt will be returned to the student. A student who disputes the SCALE Office records as to the timeliness of submission has the burden of proving that the paper was received on time.

Points will be deducted from unexcused late papers. Unless otherwise stated by the faculty member who made the assignment, when the assignment is to receive a raw score, one point will be deducted for each hour or part thereof during which the assignment remains outstanding, up to the maximum number of raw points for the assignment.

b. *Postponement of due date*

Any request for an extension to submit an individual assignment within an evaluation period must be in writing and directed to the faculty member who made the assignment. Subject to legal requirements for accommodations, faculty members will have the discretion to approve or deny the request and to set terms for an extension. The faculty member's decision will be in writing and final. The faculty member may require the student to supply supporting documentation. Supporting documentation related to disability accommodations should be submitted to the Accessibility/504 Coordinator in the Student Services Office.

c. *Completion of assignments*

A student must perform all assigned work during a SCALE course. An unapproved Incomplete on an assignment during a SCALE course will

result in an Administrative Fail (*F) for the course. A student who does not complete all assigned work during an evaluation period may be precluded from commencing work during the next evaluation period and may be placed on an involuntary leave of absence unless the student has received an approved Incomplete under the *Incomplete Work* in Section J of this policy.

B. Attendance

1. Class attendance

Regular and punctual class attendance is necessary to satisfy class hour requirements.

SCALE requires significant student collaborative effort. Students complete assignments and perform roles to benefit themselves and their classmates. A student's failure to fulfill attendance obligations disrupts the learning process. Therefore, at the discretion of each SCALE faculty member, students who are unprepared for a class will be marked absent.

If a student in the first year of SCALE (Periods 1, 2, 3, and 4) is administratively withdrawn from all courses in a given period, that student will be considered as having withdrawn from the law school and may return only if admitted following submission of a new application for admission. If a student who has completed the first year of SCALE is administratively withdrawn from all courses in a given period, that student will be considered to be on an involuntary leave of absence and must return for the next period or will be withdrawn from the law school.

2. Externship attendance

Attendance and completion of the required hours for the SCALE II Period 8 externship are mandatory. The Co-Directors of the Externship Program have sole authority to excuse absences from externships and, where appropriate, to require the completion of additional written or oral assignments as a condition of excusing such absences. SCALE students who elect to participate in the optional summer session externship must also adhere to the [Externship Program Policies and Guidelines](#).

C. Externships

1. Summer externships

SCALE students may participate in the Externship Program during the SCALE summer session. Please see the [Externship Office](#) portal page for more information.

2. Period 8 externships

The SCALE II Period 8 externship completes the SCALE experience and begins in March after the completion of Period 7. The Externship Office administers Period 8 externships. Please see the [Externship Office](#) portal page for more information. Unlike the elective externships in the traditional program, however, the Period 8 externship is a SCALE requirement. All SCALE students are required to extern 40 hours per week during the Period, for a total of 300 hours.

Externships are graded Credit/No Credit. A grade of Credit is not included in the computation of the period grade point average (GPA) or the cumulative GPA. (See *Academic Probation* and *Academic Disqualification* in this policy for an explanation of the period and cumulative GPA requirements.) A grade of No Credit is computed as a SCALE course with a grade of F. The Director of the Externship Program must approve each externship before the commencement of the externship.

D. Evaluation Periods and Grading

1. Evaluation periods

The SCALE two-year program is comprised of four evaluation periods in the first year, a mandatory summer session, and four evaluation periods in the second and final year. The SCALE 2.5-year program, which is optional, has an added evaluation period during the Fall semester of the third year.

2. Schedule

At the start of each academic year, the schedule of classes and final examinations for all SCALE courses and the SCALE Curriculum Charts are distributed to all SCALE students and posted on [SCALE – Current Students CANVAS page](#). The SCALE Curriculum Charts specify the applicable units allocated to the various SCALE courses in the curriculum for the year.

The SCALE schedule is subject to change. The unique curricular construct of SCALE requires the schedule to be flexible and adaptable, and students should expect the SCALE schedule to change as circumstances dictate. Changes are communicated in a timely fashion to students, mainly via email.

3. Grading

SCALE course grades are assigned on an alphabetical system, except for Foundations of Law & Practice, Trial Advocacy, Independent Study on the Profession, January intersession course(s), and externships, which are graded Credit/No Credit. See [Grading Policies, Honors, and Specialized Courses](#). A student who receives a grade of F or No Credit in a course must demonstrate basic

competence in the area by performing alternative or additional assignments as determined by the course's faculty member. The grade in that course will not change depending on the performance of such assignments.

The GPA for each SCALE period is calculated based on the points earned for each grade and the number of units allocated to each course. See [Grading Policies, Honors, and Specialized Courses](#). This GPA is comprised of both SCALE and Traditional courses.

Official class rankings, provided in 10 percent increments, are based on cumulative GPA and are computed for each class at the end of each academic year. SCALE I students also receive an unofficial mid-year class rank based on Period 1 and 2 grades.

4. Writing requirement

SCALE students are required to fulfill Southwestern's upper-division writing requirement. This requirement can be satisfied by satisfactorily completing the independent study paper on the profession during the SCALE summer session. As a result, SCALE students need not enroll in a seminar or equivalent writing course in the Traditional program.

5. Experiential requirement

SCALE students must complete at least six credit hours of coursework specifically approved and designated as meeting the experiential requirement. Select courses in the SCALE curriculum may be eligible to meet the experiential requirement; however, in some cases, students must complete courses in the traditional program to fulfill the required six units. The SCALE Period 8 Externship provides five units toward the experiential requirement if completed satisfactorily. See the *Experiential Requirement* section of the [Graduation Requirements Policy](#).

E. Summer Session

The summer session for SCALE students will occur following Period 4 and before the commencement of Period 5. SCALE students are required to complete a minimum of 6 units during the summer session comprised of a 2-unit independent study paper based on the legal profession and an additional 4+ units consisting of at least one of the following options:

- participate in the traditional summer externship program;
- take at least one Southwestern summer session course; or
- participate in a Southwestern summer abroad program or non-Southwestern ABA-approved summer abroad program.

A maximum of eight units may be taken in the summer session by a SCALE student,

absent special permission granted by the Associate Dean for SCALE. Grades earned during the SCALE summer session will be part of the SCALE Period 5 term GPA and included in any academic standing calculations completed at the end of Period 5. These grades will also be part of the student's cumulative GPA calculation.

F. Academic Status

1. Academic Good Standing

A student is in good academic standing unless the student:

- a.** is on academic probation, as defined in *Academic Probation* of Section H of this policy; or
- b.** has been academically disqualified under *Academic Disqualification* in Section H of this policy; or
- c.** has failed to complete any assignment by the due date unless a postponement has been approved under *Postponement of Due Date* in Section A of this policy.

2. Graduation Requirements

To be certified for graduation and eligible for the Juris Doctor degree, a student must:

- a.** have satisfactorily completed all required courses in the SCALE curriculum;
- b.** have satisfied the 6-unit experiential course requirement;
- c.** be in good academic standing;
- d.** have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.330 or higher at the end of the 2 or 2.5 years of SCALE;
- e.** have completed 87 units;
- f.** have removed any approved Incomplete under *Incomplete Work* of this section; and
- g.** meet any other requirements outlined in the [Graduation Requirements Policy](#) not explicitly delineated in the *SCALE Program Policies*.

G. SCALE Program Honors

Eligibility for the invitation to Law Review, Law Journal, the Moot Court Honors Program, or the Negotiation Honors Program is based on class standing or GPA at the end of the first year of SCALE (Evaluation Periods 1, 2, 3, and 4), and participation in the summer write-on competition, intramural competition, or try-outs, as applicable. Students may be invited to participate in the Trial Advocacy Honors Program in their first year of SCALE. Continued participation in TAHP is contingent on the student's academic good standing at the end of the first year of SCALE.

SCALE students are eligible for scholastic honors as outlined under *Scholastic Honors*

section of [Grading Policies, Honors, and Specialized Courses](#).

H. SCALE Academic Policies

SCALE students are required to abide by the rules governing academic disqualification and academic probation as indicated below:

1. Academic disqualification

A student is academically disqualified when a student fails to achieve the following:

a. *A minimum cumulative GPA*

SCALE students are disqualified if they do not maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.330 at the end of Period 3 and thereafter. The minimum cumulative GPA requirement is initially calculated at the end of Period 3.

b. *A Minimum GPA in Two Consecutive Evaluation Periods*

SCALE students are disqualified if they do not achieve a GPA of at least 2.330 in two consecutive evaluation periods commencing in Period 3, excluding the mandatory summer session and the January intersession.

2. Academic probation

A SCALE student is placed on academic probation when the student's grade point average is less than 2.330 in any evaluation period commencing in Period 2 and thereafter, excluding *Part H.1a* above; the mandatory summer session, or when the student has been academically disqualified and readmitted. Students can be placed on academic probation after their second evaluation period because their term grade point average or cumulative grade point average is less than 2.330. Students on academic probation may not participate in externships, honors programs, or leadership positions. This restriction does not apply to the mandatory SCALE Externship in Period 8.

3. 2.5-Year modified curriculum

Before the commencement of the second year of SCALE, SCALE students may petition the Associate Dean for SCALE to participate in the 2.5-year modified curriculum. Under the modified curriculum, students will take fewer units during their second year of SCALE. Students will complete the remainder of the units required to graduate during an additional semester of fall courses and be eligible to graduate in December. Additional tuition will not be charged to accommodate the modified curriculum.

I. Issuing Final Grades

All final grades are made available to students on Self-Service.

J. Incomplete Work

1. Petition for approved incomplete evaluation

In exigent circumstances or as approved disability or pregnancy accommodation, a student may be granted an approved Incomplete for work not completed during an evaluation period. An approved Incomplete may be granted only upon a prompt written petition setting forth the circumstances which prevented or will prevent the timely performance of the assignments. The petition will be accompanied by appropriate evidence of the exigent circumstances and will be submitted to the faculty member who assigned the work not completed. A petition for an approved Incomplete may be granted only upon written approval of the assigning faculty member and concurrence by the Associate Dean for SCALE and Associate Dean for Student Services. The decision upon such a petition will be final. A petition for an approved Incomplete may be denied, on that ground alone, if not timely filed. The timeliness determination will be based on the facts upon which the petition for Incomplete is based and the student's promptness in filing the petition after becoming aware of the facts.

Notice of a student's inability to take an exam as scheduled **must** be received in the Student Services Office **before** the scheduled exam time. Failure to do so may result in a grade of Administrative Fail (*F).

2. Removing an incomplete evaluation

A student whose petition for an approved Incomplete has been granted must submit the postponed work in accordance with the schedule approved by the assigning faculty member, the Associate Dean for SCALE, and the Associate Dean for Student Services. All postponed work must be completed to the satisfaction of the faculty member who assigned it. Upon completion, the student's overall evaluation will be computed per the SCALE policies.

3. Failure to remove an incomplete evaluation

If any work is not completed according to the approved makeup schedule, the approved Incomplete will be automatically changed to an Administrative Fail (*F). Such a change will not relieve the student of the obligation to demonstrate competency in the assignment by completing the work to the satisfaction of the faculty member who assigned it. A student who has not removed an approved Incomplete may be placed on an involuntary leave of absence under Part K below.

K. Leave of Absence

1. Petition for a leave of absence

A student must have completed Evaluation Periods 1, 2, 3, and 4 and be in good academic standing to seek a leave of absence. The student must also submit a leave of absence petition for approval by the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE. A leave of absence will be granted for no more than one academic year. A student who fails to return at the agreed-upon time or otherwise fails to meet the leave of absence terms may be withdrawn from the law school. Exceptions to this policy are allowed solely at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE and only under compelling circumstances or as an approved disability or pregnancy accommodation. SCALE students are subject to all leave of absence policies stated in the *Leave of Absence* section of the Academic Policies and Procedures when not explicitly outlined in the *SCALE Program Policies*.

2. Involuntary leave of absence

A student precluded from commencing an evaluation period under *Completion of Assignments* and *Failure to Remove Incomplete* of this section may be placed on an involuntary leave of absence for up to one year. A student placed on such involuntary leave will be notified of the duration of the leave and the reasons for its imposition. A student who fails to return to SCALE at the time specified in such notice may be withdrawn from the law school.

3. Explanatory note

SCALE's continuous scheduling makes it extremely difficult for a student to drop a SCALE course and complete it later without jeopardizing timely graduation from SCALE. Therefore, a student who has been administratively withdrawn from a SCALE course for failure to comply with Southwestern's Attendance Policy or who has not satisfactorily completed the work required to progress to the next SCALE course may have to wait until the following year to begin that SCALE course.

L. Readmission Following Academic Disqualification

A student who has been academically disqualified from SCALE will be deemed to have been academically disqualified from Southwestern Law School.

Any SCALE student who is academically disqualified for failing to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.330 or for failing to achieve a GPA of at least 2.330 in each of two consecutive evaluation periods under Part H.1a or b commencing in Period 3 (excluding the mandatory summer session) may petition for readmission according to the rules and procedures of the Academic Standards Committee as stated in Academic Disqualification, Academic Probation, and Academic Improvement Programs Policies. Any SCALE student

who is disqualified under *Section H.1a or b* and is permitted to petition may continue in courses in which they are currently enrolled pending notification by the committee of its decision. If the petition is denied, the student will be withdrawn from all courses, and no credit will be granted, even if courses have been completed before the denial of the petition. A student whose petition is denied and currently enrolled in on-campus courses at Southwestern will automatically receive a full tuition refund for the period in which the student is enrolled.

Per the *Academic Disqualification, Academic Probation, and Academic Improvement Programs Policies*, students who have been disqualified and fail to meet the conditions of readmission will be automatically disqualified and will not be eligible to petition a second time to the Academic Standards Committee. The disqualification will be final, and the student will be withdrawn from the law school.

M. Admission to Traditional Program

1. Transfer into traditional program

A student currently enrolled in the SCALE program may petition to transfer into the traditional program only when the student is in good academic standing and has completed at least Period 4. The Associate Dean will make the transfer decision for SCALE, and the Associate Dean for Student Services. If the petition is granted, the transfer will become effective starting with the following traditional academic year. Transfer before successful completion of Period 4 will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and following approval by the Associate Dean for SCALE and the Associate Dean for Student Services.

Withdrawals from SCALE before the completion of Period 4 are governed by the *Leave of Absence* and *Withdrawal from SCALE* portions of this policy. The Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE will make a non-binding recommendation to the Office of the Dean regarding the number of unit credits to be granted and waivers from required courses consistent with the student's academic performance while enrolled in SCALE. A student transferring from SCALE to the traditional program must enroll in the law school within one year of their withdrawal to receive unit credit for work completed in SCALE.

2. Withdrawal from SCALE

If a student wishes to withdraw from SCALE and enroll in the traditional program but is unable to transfer under the *Transfer into Traditional Program* rules above or qualify for a leave of absence pursuant to the *Leave of Absence* section of this policy, the student must re-apply through regular admission channels for admission to the law school for enrollment the following academic year. If readmitted, such students are not eligible for unit credit for work completed in the SCALE program.

N. Enrollment in Traditional Courses

Second-year SCALE students in good academic standing may register for no more than two courses in the traditional fall and spring semesters and one course in the January intersession instead of certain designated SCALE courses and subject to course availability. Students who desire to take more than two traditional courses in a semester will require permission from the Associate Dean for SCALE. The traditional course grades will be averaged with the SCALE grades and become part of the student's cumulative grade point average. Students will not be charged for the added traditional electives.

SCALE students are required to fulfill course attendance requirements as outlined in the *Attendance Policy*. SCALE students registered in traditional courses must abide by the add/drop dates published in the traditional academic calendar. If a student wishes to make a schedule change before the add/drop deadline, they can change their schedule via Self-Service. Any schedule changes after the add/drop deadline must be made by filling out a Student Action Report (SAR), obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office. Students wishing to add a traditional course after the traditional "add" deadline date of the semester may do so only after obtaining written approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE.

Traditional courses may be dropped through the "drop" deadline date published in the traditional academic calendar. Students wishing to drop a traditional course after the traditional "drop" deadline may do so only after obtaining written approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE. If the course is dropped after the traditional program's semester "drop" deadline date, a notation of "W" will be listed on the student's transcript for that course. After the traditional "drop" deadline date, any course not dropped and not completed by the student will be recorded as an Administrative Fail (*F) unless otherwise approved in writing by the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE.