

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL

Los Angeles, CA

Transfer and Visiting Students Policy

Administrative and faculty policy, formerly part of the annually revised Student Handbook.

Revision history: established as a standalone policy in August 2022; substantive edits made in April 2024.

Related policies: Student Honor Code; Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Scheduled Review Date: January 2025 (Student Services Office)

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A. Scope

This policy applies to (1) Southwestern Law School students who seek to visit at another ABA-approved law school or foreign law school and have credits transferred back to Southwestern, (2) students from another ABA-approved law school seeking to transfer to Southwestern and have credits from their prior institution accepted by Southwestern, (3) students from another ABA-approved law school seeking to visit at Southwestern during an academic year or study-abroad program, and (4) students seeking to transfer from Southwestern to another law school.

Except as provided for in this policy, to earn a J.D. degree from Southwestern, a student must complete the final 44 hours of course credit at Southwestern. Students who take courses (1) as part of an official dual-degree program of Southwestern or (2) at a foreign institution with which the Law School has an official exchange program are considered to be taking Southwestern courses.

B. Southwestern Students Visiting Another ABA-Approved Law School

1. Semester-long study-abroad and semester/year-long visit to another ABA-approved law school

Under compelling circumstances, the Associate Dean for Student Services or Vice Dean may grant permission for a Southwestern student to participate in a semester-long study-abroad program or complete one or two semesters of their second, third, or fourth year at another school and receive a degree from Southwestern. Students will be required to document the compelling circumstances on which the request to visit is based.

Examples of compelling circumstances include a significant change in the student’s family situation (e.g., a spouse/partner transfers to another state; serious illness of a close family member that requires the student’s ongoing physical presence as a caretaker); an extended military assignment more than 50 miles from Los Angeles; a student’s serious medical condition that requires treatment at another location; or for one semester only, a student demonstrating that they will sit for the bar in another jurisdiction and will benefit from visiting a law school in that state to take state-tested bar examination topics. An additional example of compelling circumstances for a semester-long study-abroad program

is a student's demonstrated educational interest in studying the law in the region where the program is located.

Visits for reasons of career exploration or personal convenience at another U.S. law school will not be approved. If a leave of absence can address the situation, the student will be placed on leave of absence. If a switch to the Online J.D. Program can address the situation, that option will be considered before a visit to another law school. A visit to a law school within 50 miles of Southwestern typically will not be approved.

Students who have already transferred 30 or more credit hours from another law school to Southwestern are not eligible to visit at another ABA-approved law school.

Requests to visit another law school must be made in writing and directed to the Associate Dean for Student Services. The Associate Dean for Student Services must approve all courses for which the student registers. Requests typically could be submitted at least one month before a term or semester begins.

Grade requirements outlined in Section C.6, Minimum Performance Required for Transfer Credit, apply.

2. Limited visit to another school for select coursework

The Associate Dean of Student Services may grant permission for a Southwestern student to visit another ABA-approved law school for up to six units of select, elective coursework (e.g., electives that Southwestern does not offer) following the student completing their first year at Southwestern. Students will be required to document the circumstances on which the request to visit is based.

C. Visiting-Out Logistics

1. Good standing

Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible to visit another law school.

2. Transcript request

To request a transcript for purposes of visiting another law school, the student must submit a Transcript Request form available via the Registrar's Office and pay the required fees to the Registrar's Office. The student must also submit a [Visiting Out Request form or ABA-Approved Study Abroad Request form](#), along with the following information to the Student Services Office:

- The name of the school or program the student is considering visiting;
- A detailed reason for why the student is requesting to visit another school;
- The duration of the visit request;

- The name and detailed description of each course the student is requesting to take;
- The number of units for each course the student is requesting to take;
- The other school's grading system; and
- Confirmation that each course is graded (if Credit/No Credit, confirmation that the non-letter grade is equivalent to at least a "C" on the other school's grading scale).

Please allow at least 10–15 business days to complete the request. If the request to visit is approved, Southwestern will mail a letter of good standing to the registrar of the host law school. The letter will state certain conditions with which the student must comply. A letter of good standing will not be issued when the student is on probation or when a student is facing an Honor Code Committee determination regarding an alleged Student Honor Code violation.

3. Coursework

Required courses, including the Bar Readiness Curriculum, and courses that might satisfy Southwestern's writing and experiential course requirements, will not be approved absent a compelling circumstance. In addition, for students who request to visit another school for select coursework under Section B.2, elective courses that Southwestern offers will not be approved absent an extraordinary circumstance (e.g., the elective is not scheduled to be offered before the student's graduation) as determined by the Vice Dean.

4. Enrolling at the host school and course changes

Students should be aware that visiting students often are not permitted to register for classes at the host school until all of that school's continuing students have registered. Popular and small-enrollment courses, therefore, may not be available. The student should speak with the Registrar or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the host school to determine the likelihood that the student will be able to register for the classes they have been approved by Southwestern to take.

The Associate Dean for Student Services must approve any changes to the student's schedule. Southwestern reserves the right to refuse to accept transfer credits for each unapproved course.

5. Maximum units accepted

In general, for students who started their J.D. at Southwestern, Southwestern will not accept more than six credit hours from another law school toward the Southwestern J.D. degree. This six-unit maximum includes all coursework, including work completed in study-abroad programs, summer sessions, or intersessions.

Students approved to visit out for a semester or a year, whether domestic or abroad, should refer to Section B.1.

Southwestern will accept up to ten credit hours from the Drucker School of Management for students participating in the J.D./M.B.A. concurrent degree program.

6. Minimum performance required for transfer credit

Courses taken by Southwestern students at other law schools with prior approval can earn credit toward a Southwestern degree only if the student earns a minimum grade of "C." Except for situations approved in advance by the Vice Dean, Credit/No Credit (including Pass/Fail or other non-letter graded) courses will not be accepted for transfer credit. If approved by the Vice Dean, a student must earn Credit for a Credit/No Credit Course, Pass for a Pass/Fail course, at least an S in an S/U course, or a passing non-letter grade equivalent to at least a "C" on the other school's scale for the credit to transfer. The Vice Dean may accept the representation of an authorized official from the other school about what designation would be equivalent to at least a "C" grade at that school.

Any credit accepted from another ABA-approved law school, foreign school, or the Drucker School of Management will not be included when computing the student's grade point average for a Southwestern degree. The units are transferred with a "Credit" designation but without a grade-point entry on the Southwestern transcript.

7. Refunds, scholarships, and financial aid

Students approved to attend study-abroad, summer sessions, or intersession programs at another law school, whether domestic or foreign, should contact that school to ascertain that school's refund policy. While it is up to each school to decide how it wishes to handle refunds, many schools do not issue full refunds when students withdraw after the program begins.

Scholarships awarded by Southwestern will not apply to credits taken at another law school or other institution, even if Southwestern accepts transfer credits from that school.

If a student depends on federal financial aid for tuition, fees, or living expenses, the student must visit with the Southwestern's Financial Aid Office before registering at the other law school so that the student and Southwestern can determine what steps must be taken, and when, for the student to qualify for financial aid while visiting at the other law school. The student must also contact the Financial Aid Office at the other law school to determine that school's policy concerning financial aid for visiting or transient students.

Information regarding financial aid eligibility and procedures for study-abroad, summer sessions, or intersessions at other law schools can be found at the following link: [Visiting Out – Financial Aid Information.pdf \(swlaw.edu\)](#).

8. Status at Southwestern during the visit

A student who is visiting at another school during a fall or spring semester (or the SCALE equivalent) will not be permitted to participate in an Honors Program, hold office in a student organization, or apply for any travel or similar funding to be used during the period the student is away. A student visiting at another school remains subject to the Law School's Honor Code and likely will also be subject to the other school's disciplinary policies. The student is also not eligible for Dean's List honors for the semester spent away from Southwestern. They typically will retain their Southwestern email address and access to Career Services and some Library resources. Access to legal research databases like Westlaw and Lexis, may be impacted; students should contact Southwestern's law librarians to review their situations.

9. Official transcript from host school

After the visit, the student must request that an official transcript from the host school be sent to Southwestern's Registrar's Office. Visiting during a student's last semester could delay the determination of whether the student has met all graduation requirements, issuance of a diploma, and certification to sit for a bar examination.

D. Approval for Study-Abroad Programs Sponsored by Other Law Schools

Southwestern will accept credit for study-abroad programs completed through other law schools only if the Associate Dean for Student Services has approved the program before the student's departure.

Only programs approved by the ABA that fulfill all [Criteria for Programs Offered by ABA-Approved Law Schools in a Location Outside the United States](#) are eligible for approval by the Associate Dean for Student Services. In accordance with ABA requirements, no study-abroad programs will be approved that does not comply with the following: (1) the educational program must provide adequate time for class preparation, reflection, and intellectual maturation similar to that provided in the regular semester, (2) the number of credits a student may receive in the program must comply with [ABA Standard 310](#) regarding credit hours, and (3) in no event will a student receive more than 1.5 semester credit hours for each week of the program.

A maximum of six units of credit earned at non-Southwestern institutions may be approved and applied toward completing the J.D. degree. In the case of students who attend both a Southwestern-sponsored study-abroad program and a study-abroad program sponsored by another ABA-approved law school, a maximum of eight units from study-abroad programs of any kind, whether Southwestern-sponsored or otherwise, may be applied toward the J.D. degree. A Southwestern-sponsored study-abroad law program director and the Associate Dean for Student Services must approve any deviation from the eight-unit maximum requirement in writing. Deviations are rarely granted and will be granted only for Southwestern programs.

Studying abroad should be an experience in which students gain learning and appreciation for the law as it functions and is taught in a foreign culture. Studying abroad should not be an experience where students study the same law that could be learned in the United States. Programs should include curricula that focus on some study of the law in the region in which the study-abroad program is located.

Students participating in study-abroad programs must adhere to all provisions of Southwestern's policies and applicable policies of the host school, including those related to the Student Honor Code and sexual misconduct policies.

Students should be aware that there might be a limitation on financial aid for study-abroad programs. Students are strongly advised to consult the Financial Aid Office as early as possible before registering for any study-abroad program or paying any program fees.

E. Transfer to Southwestern

Southwestern welcomes transfer applications from students who (1) are in good academic and disciplinary standing at an ABA-accredited law school and (2) have completed their first year of legal education at their current ABA-accredited law school. The Associate Dean for Student Services, in collaboration with the Vice Dean where appropriate, will determine courses that may be accepted as transfer credit for admitted transfer students. Applications and all other required application materials listed at <https://www.swlaw.edu/admissions-financial-aid/admissions-jd/transfer-visiting-students> must be submitted to the Admissions Office. Southwestern's general policy regarding transfer students is as follows:

1. Southwestern will accept up to 43 semester units toward the 87 units required for graduation.
2. Transfer credit will be granted only for courses completed as a J.D. student with a letter grade of at least "C."
3. Unless approved by the Vice Dean, Credit/No Credit (Pass/Fail or other non-letter graded) courses will not be accepted for transfer credit. If approved by the Vice Dean, a student must have earned Credit for a Credit/No Credit Course, Pass for a Pass/Fail course, at least an S in an S/U course, or a passing non-letter grade equivalent to at least a "C" on the prior school's scale for the credit to transfer.
4. Transfer students will receive unit-only credit at Southwestern approved transfer credits.
5. Southwestern may need to review a course syllabus to determine course equivalency for required courses completed at a transfer student's prior school.
6. A course required by Southwestern for graduation will be deemed fulfilled if the equivalent course has been completed with a letter grade of at least "C" at a transfer student's prior school.
7. Transfer credit will not be granted for any course not reflected on the official transcript from the transfer student's prior school.

8. Transfer students will receive enrollment term credit at Southwestern commensurate with the equivalent number of terms the student completed at their prior school.
9. A student's class rank and grade point average at Southwestern are computed solely based on grades achieved while enrolled in courses at Southwestern. Official class rankings by percentage in ten-percent increments are based on cumulative GPA and are computed for each class level (e.g., 2L, 3L) at the end of each academic year. Students in the part-time Online, Evening, and PLEAS/Part-Time Day programs are ranked together. Students in the full-time Online and residential Day programs are ranked together. SCALE students are ranked by cohort (i.e., SCALE I and SCALE II and 2.5).
10. Southwestern does not give advanced standing or award transfer credit toward completing a J.D. degree for coursework completed at a foreign law school.

F. Visiting Students at Southwestern

Students from other ABA-approved law schools visiting Southwestern must complete an application for admission. To be eligible to visit Southwestern, an applicant must be in good academic and disciplinary standing at an ABA-accredited law school. Approval is based on receipt of a letter of good standing granting permission to attend from the student's home school and all other required application materials listed at <https://www.swlaw.edu/admissions-financial-aid/admissions-jd/transfer-visiting-students>. Admission of visiting students will be considered and approved on a semester-by-semester basis.

Visiting students are responsible for checking with their home school regarding acceptance and transfer of units, including acceptance and transfer of Credit/No Credit units.

After receiving all grades for a term, the Registrar's Office will send one free official transcript to the home school designated by the student on their application form. The visiting student must complete a transcript request form and pay the appropriate fee for additional transcripts.

All visiting students must abide by Southwestern's academic and general law school [policies](#). Visiting students are responsible for ascertaining that these policies, including the time frame for Southwestern to provide an official transcript to their home school, are acceptable to the home school, as Southwestern cannot deviate from its customary policies to meet other schools' deadlines.

G. Transfer from Southwestern

Students wishing to transfer from Southwestern to another law school must notify the Student Services Office of their intent to transfer. Typically, letters of good standing are required for admission to another school. Information regarding the student's current standing, whether they are in good standing with the law school, and whether there are open disciplinary matters (e.g., open matter under the Sexual Misconduct Policy, Student Honor Code, etc.) at the time of transfer will be included in the letter.

Some law schools will not accept transfer credit for courses taken as part of an online or two-year J.D. program. Accordingly, students should check in advance with the schools they are considering about which credits the new school might accept.

H. Policy Revisions

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