

# SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

## L O S A N G E L E S

### **Administrative Withdrawal Policy**

**Administrative policy approved August 5, 2022. Effective immediately.**

**Revision history:** This policy clarifies information about administrative withdrawals that had been included in the Student Handbook (before the 2022–2023 academic year) and referred to in other policies.

**Related policies:** Attendance Policy; Religious and Cultural Observances Policy.

**Scheduled Review Date:** June 2023 (Dean of Students Office)

#### **1. Definition and Overview**

Under Southwestern’s Attendance Policy, a student enrolled in a course at Southwestern Law School may be administratively withdrawn from that course when they are absent for more than 14% of regularly scheduled class sessions in that course. Students enrolled in a January intersession course or a mini-term course must attend all class sessions to receive academic credit.

Being administratively withdrawn means that the student will not receive academic credit for that course. The administrative withdrawal will appear as “WA” on the student’s transcript. Students who are administratively withdrawn from a required course must repeat that course during the next possible term, unless the Dean of Students approves the student taking the course in a different term for a compelling reason.

As noted in the Attendance Policy, an absence for any reason counts toward the maximum of 14% absences permitted.

#### **2. Process**

When a student has exceeded the number of permissible absences for a class, the Dean of Students Office notifies the student in writing that they have been administratively

withdrawn from the course and gives the student five business days to appeal the administrative withdrawal.

During the appeal period, the student should continue attending the class and checking in via the Qwickly attendance app.

A student who wishes to appeal should prepare a detailed written explanation demonstrating compelling circumstances granting the appeal. The student should submit the appeal to the Dean of Students Office.

More specifically, the student should provide specific information about the reasons they missed each class session—not just the reason for the absence that triggered the administrative withdrawal. Although supporting documentation is not required, it will be weighed heavily.

Compelling circumstances may include missing classes for illness, medical treatment, a student's religious or cultural observances, or a school-sponsored activity (e.g., attending a moot court competition or attending a hearing as part of a clinical course). Other reasons also may qualify. Although students are not required to report these types of absences to the Dean of Students Office in advance or contemporaneously, they are encouraged to do so and to provide any supporting documentation they may have.

When a student provides written notice to the Dean of Students in the first week of the term about anticipated absences due to religious or cultural observances, those will be regarded as constituting compelling circumstances. Any appeal the student files later needs to address only the other absences. A student who provides pre-class or contemporaneous information about an absence to the Dean of Students Office should attach that information to any appeal they may later submit.

Following receipt of an appeal, the Dean of Students will determine whether to grant the appeal, deny the appeal, or request additional information to evaluate the appeal. Factors considered include, but are not limited to, the number of absences; the circumstances underlying each absence, not just the absence triggering the administrative withdrawal; whether any absences were reported in advance or contemporaneously; the nature of the documentation provided (if any); steps the student took to learn what they missed in each session (e.g., listening to a recording, seeking notes from a classmate, attending a faculty member's office hours to ask clarifying questions, etc.).

The Dean of Students, in consultation with one or both Vice Deans, has discretion with regard to the outcome of the appeal. The determination is final and not subject to further review.