

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality

Administrative policy approved July 22, 2022.

Revision history: Technical and substantive edits made in August 2023; substantive edits made in May 2024 to address draft submissions.

Related policies: Student Honor Code.

Scheduled Review Date: April 2025 (Director of Legal Analysis, Writing, and Skills; Student Services Office)

A. Overview

Students in law school are expected to learn the law and the tools of legal practice and prepare for the demands and responsibilities of the legal profession. Students must establish habits that will carry them forward as professionals. As measures of learning and preparation, a law student's academic work products must be their own.

B. Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the submission or presentation of any work, in any form, that is not a student's own without acknowledging the source. A student must not appropriate ideas, facts, or language from the work of another, including a machine or generative artificial intelligence tool, without proper attribution. All student work must be original. Any sources used must be fully cited. However, unless prohibited by a faculty member for a particular class or assignment and subject to section C.4, students may use spell-checking and grammar-checking tools on the content the student created for a submission without providing a citation. Plagiarism is a serious Student Honor Code violation that may result in expulsion; even lesser punishments may result in career-limiting consequences.

C. LAWS Collaboration Policy

All LAWS assignments must be "original works of authorship." To clarify when a work is no longer "original," this policy sets forth specific examples of inappropriate conduct. It is impossible, however, to anticipate and list every possible example of improper conduct.

Therefore, the absence of a particular act from this document does not prevent appropriate discipline under the Student Honor Code.

A violation of this policy may result in an "F" on the affected LAWS assignment and an "F" in the course. Faculty may refer violations of this policy to the Honor Code Committee as

misconduct under Southwestern's Student Honor Code.

This policy does not override or revise the school's plagiarism policy set forth above and in the Student Honor Code.

1. Collaboration with other LAWS students

Unless otherwise restricted by your professor, students may discuss thoughts and ideas with other students in the LAWS course. Students may not, however, share their notes (other than class notes), case lists, printouts, charts, drafts, or any other materials that contain the students' thoughts on the problem and may not work together beyond general thoughts and ideas except as expressly permitted by the professor. Students may not read written materials out loud to another student, as this activity counts as impermissible collaboration.

Students enrolled in SCALE may not discuss thoughts, ideas, or written information with any student enrolled in the LAWS course in the full-time day program, PLEAS, part-time day program, or the Online J.D. Program. Students enrolled in SCALE may discuss thoughts and ideas only with students currently enrolled in the SCALE LAWS course.

Students enrolled in the full-time day program, PLEAS, part-time day program, or the Online J.D. Program may not discuss thoughts, ideas, or written information with any student enrolled in SCALE. Students enrolled in the full-time day program, PLEAS, part-time day program, and the Online J.D. Program may discuss thoughts and ideas only with students currently enrolled in a LAWS course in the full-time day program, PLEAS, part-time day program, or Online J.D. Program.

2. Collaboration with anyone other than a LAWS student

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from their LAWS professor and their teaching assistant, the research faculty, and the Writing Center staff. These sources will know how to give students appropriate assistance.

Students may not seek any assistance outside of these sources. For example, a student may not seek assistance from other faculty members, staff outside the Writing Clinic, family members, acquaintances, mentors, or tutors, regardless of whether the individual is an attorney or has attended law school. Assistance of any kind is prohibited, including substantive guidance and help with grammar and citation.

3. Using court documents prepared by attorneys

A student can review court briefs and other documents written on their issue in actual cases. Keep in mind, however, that not all briefs prepared by attorneys are well-written, and the availability of briefs online does not indicate their quality.

Students must never copy or paraphrase another's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source. Students must never use someone else's idea without citing the source. Using another's words, thoughts, and ideas without proper citation is plagiarism.

4. LAWS generative AI policy

All submissions in a LAWS I or LAWS II course, whether in draft or final form, including papers, projects, exams, reflections, and oral presentations, must be the student's own work. To avoid plagiarism, cheating, or improper collaboration, when a submission includes or relies on content borrowed from other sources or authorities, the submission must cite the sources appropriately. Each LAWS professor will instruct students on how to cite sources appropriately for their assignments. Students may use spell-checking and grammar-checking tools on the content the student created for a submission. However, students may not use generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Jasper, Lex, GrammarlyGO, CoPilot, or any other chatbot or generative AI tool) to generate, revise, or edit the content of any assignment unless their LAWS professor gives explicit written permission. If a student is unsure whether they are permitted to use a specific tool or platform for an assignment, they should ask their LAWS professor in advance. A violation of this policy may result in an "F" on the affected LAWS assignment and an "F" in the course. Faculty may refer violations of this policy to the Honor Code Committee as misconduct under Southwestern's Student Honor Code.

5. Consequences of academic dishonesty in draft submissions

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, and improper collaboration, in preparing a draft or other initial work of an assignment compromises the integrity of the initial work and all subsequent submissions of the work. Thus, using content or ideas derived from a draft tainted by academic dishonesty in subsequent submissions will subject a student to discipline for both the initial draft and the subsequent submissions. Each submission of an assignment tainted by academic dishonesty may be treated as separate and additional honor code violations. If Southwestern detects academic dishonesty in a draft, and the student is permitted to continue in the course, the student may be required to submit a new paper on an alternative topic, in addition to facing other penalties.

D. Policy Revisions

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