



Public Service Policy

Faculty policy. Effective immediately.

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

Related policies: None.

Scheduled Review Date: August 2025 (Public Service Program Law Clinic)

Pro bono legal services are an integral component of legal education and the practice of law. Per the California Bar resolution and American Bar Association Model Rules, which calls for fifty hours of pro bono service annually, Southwestern encourages pro bono participation by all members of the Southwestern community in the collective effort to defend equal access to our judicial system for persons of limited means and advance the public interest.

Southwestern's Public Service Program ("PSP") recognizes students' efforts to address systemic and poverty-related needs through pro bono service. For PSP purposes, "public interest" is broadly defined to encompass interests underrepresented by the private sector, including the interests of people experiencing poverty and ethnic minorities, and broad-ranging advocacy interests of public concern, such as the environment, animal welfare, and the welfare of future generations.

Public service is law-related work in the broader public sector category, which does not otherwise meet the definition of pro bono.

Southwestern students are asked to commit to and perform 75 hours of service by the April deadline in their final year of study. Graduating students who meet their 75-hour pledge will be recognized at commencement ceremonies, and a notation of Public Service Program distinction will be placed on their academic transcripts.