

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL

Los Angeles, CA

Registration Policies and Procedures

Administrative policy.

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; technical edits made in May 2024; revised November 2024 to remove procedures for withdrawing from Southwestern, now covered in a standalone policy; revised in November 2025 to add information about registration holds.

Related policies: SCALE Program Policies; Master of Laws Programs Policies; Academic Disqualification, Academic Probation, and Academic Improvement Program Policies; Attendance Policy; Maximum and Minimum J.D. Units Policy; Student's Right to Cancel and Tuition Refund Policy; Religious and Cultural Observances Policy; Leave of Absence and Return Policy; Student Health-Related Leave of Absence and Return Policy; Withdrawing from Southwestern

Related form: Student Action Report (available on the Student Services Office Portal, as noted below)

Relevant accreditation standards: ABA Standard 313

Scheduled Review Date: June 2027 (Student Services Office and Registrar's Office)

A. Actions That Require a Student Action Report (SAR)

A Student Action Report (SAR) form is required for the following registration transactions. This SAR form is located on the Student Services Office [Portal](#) (login required; scroll to the Documents section, then click on "Forms"). In many cases, prior approval is required before the student can take the desired action.

1. Adding a course after the add period;
2. Withdrawing from a course after the drop period;
3. Adding an Honors Program;
4. Adding or dropping an externship;
5. Requesting a credit unit overload or underload;
6. Changing an anticipated graduation date;
7. Cross-registering for courses in a different program;
8. Changing vital data (e.g., address, state of residency, telephone, change of name);

9. Changing program status (e.g., full-time to part-time or online to residential); and
10. Requesting to exceed the Credit/No Credit limit.

B. Registering for Courses

Students should consult the relevant [academic calendar](#) for the start date of classes and other important dates for their specific academic program.

Before the add/drop deadline, students must make course schedule changes via Self-Service. After the add/drop deadline, students must make course schedule changes via the Registrar's Office by completing a Student Action Report (SAR), explained in Section A, and receiving approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services. Add/drop deadlines are listed on each program's academic calendar.

1. Registration priority

Students register for courses under a priority start time system to ensure equitable access to courses during the registration process. The priority system is designed to facilitate course availability based on graduation date to help students with limited enrollment opportunities as they near graduation. In accordance with [ABA Standard 313](#), J.D. students are given priority registration into bar examination preparation courses and courses required for bar admissions over students in other programs, such as the LL.M. programs.

The registration priority start time is a random, computer-generated time. Once assigned, registration priority start times will not be changed. Students will have approximately 15 minutes from the start of their registration priority start time before the next group of students can begin registering.

Students will be able to take all required courses before their scheduled graduation and should not be discouraged by a later priority registration time. However, it is incumbent on each student to comply with their registration priority start time.

2. Adding courses

Deadlines to add courses vary by term and program:

- During the fall and spring semesters and summer sessions, students who have completed the required 1L curriculum may add courses up to one week after the first day of the term as designated on the academic calendar.
- SCALE II students registered in non-SCALE residential courses must abide by the add deadlines published in the non-SCALE residential academic calendar.
- SCALE II students may add SCALE II required courses before the start of the second class session of the SCALE course, unless a course is subject to the First Class Attendance Policy.

- Students may add January intersession, May intersession, and summer mini-term courses until the first class of the term, as designated on the academic calendar.
- Students may not register only for mini-term courses during the fall and spring semesters.
- If a student enrolls in a course after the beginning of classes, the missed class(es) will be counted as absences at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Services.

3. Dropping courses

A student may not drop any required courses. Externships and Clinics may be dropped only with the approval of a Co-Director of Externships or assigned Clinic Faculty Director.

A student is permitted to drop a course after the last day to drop classes only for serious and compelling reasons or as an approved disability or pregnancy accommodation. Approval for a course drop must be obtained from the Associate Dean for Student Services. Southwestern's policy requires that a student submit a Student Action Report (SAR) to the Student Services Office and meet with the Associate Dean for Student Services. Without an SAR, a course drop cannot be completed. If the petition is approved, a notation of "W" will be listed on the student's transcript for the course dropped.

Deadlines to drop a course vary by term and program:

- During the regular fall and spring semesters and summer sessions, a student may drop a non-required course through the first week of classes during the regular academic year and the summer session.
- SCALE II students registered in non-SCALE residential courses must abide by the drop deadlines published in the non-SCALE residential academic calendar.
- During the January intersession, May intersession, and summer mini-terms, students may drop courses through the first day of classes.
- SCALE students are allowed to drop a SCALE course up to 14 calendar days after the start of each SCALE term.

The effective date of the course drop is usually the last day the student attended a class, but the Financial Aid Director will be consulted to ensure the effective date is accurate. Course drops cannot and will not be backdated before the last date of attendance. For information regarding pro-rated tuition refunds, students should consult the *Student's Right to Cancel and Tuition Refund Policy*.

C. **Registration Hold**

A "registration hold" is a restriction placed on a student's record that prevents them from registering for classes. It may be placed for outstanding tuition or unresolved issues. Below is a non-exhaustive list of reasons a student's records may be placed on hold and the action the student must take to remove the hold:

- **Failing to pay tuition or other educational charges by the payment due date:** The Finance Office places this hold on a student's record for failing to pay sums due and owing by the deadline. Southwestern will remove the hold when payment has been made and verified by the Finance Office.
- **Failing to complete mandatory programming:** Southwestern may require students to complete mandatory programs, such as the 1L Professionalism & Civility Program. The Registrar's Office places this hold on a student's record when the student fails to complete the required program by the deadline. Southwestern will remove the hold when the program coordinator confirms that the program requirements have been met, in accordance with the program's terms. The hold release date may be later than the date the student completes program requirements. For example, under the 1L Professionalism & Civility Program, the hold typically will be released after priority registration is completed.
- **Failing to provide residency information:** To register for the upcoming academic year, a student must submit a completed State Residency Questionnaire during the spring term. The Registrar's Office places this hold when the student fails to submit the questionnaire by the deadline. Southwestern will endeavor release the hold within 48 business hours of receiving the form. A student who submits the form less than 48 hours before the priority registration time may forfeit that timeslot.

D. **Ineligibility to Register**

Students are not eligible to register until they complete the Admissions Registration Packet and sign the Enrollment Agreement.

E. **Withdrawal**

In cases where Southwestern deems it necessary, the school will drop a student from their registered courses and initiate an involuntary withdrawal. See *Withdrawing from Southwestern* policy.

F. **Cross-Registration (for Non-SCALE J.D. Students)**

Cross-registration occurs when full-time day or PLEAS/Part-time day students register for courses designated for the evening program or when evening students register for courses designated for the day division. Cross-registration also occurs when a student in a residential or hybrid J.D. program registers for a required course in the Online J.D. Program and when an Online J.D. Program student registers for a required course in a residential program.

At the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Services, certain courses designated for the evening division may be available for registration by day students, and certain courses designated for the day division may be available for registration by evening students. Students wishing to cross-register must complete a Student Action Report (SAR), indicating the reasons for the needed change (e.g., course conflicts, childcare issues, etc.). Cross-registration is allowed only with the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Services. Cross-registration will not be approved due to student preference for a certain professor or schedule. After the Associate Dean for Student Services approves cross-registration, students may enroll in the course via the Registrar's Office.

Students who request cross-registration because of an externship must obtain approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services after receiving written approval from the Externship Office. This request must state why cross-registration is necessary. Cross-registration to accommodate part-time externships is unlikely to be approved.

No approval is required for students to register for electives in the Online J.D. Program, although students in a residential program should consult the limits on online or distance-education courses they may take under Southwestern's *Maximum and Minimum J.D. Units Policy* and determine how taking distance-education courses may impact their ability to sit for a bar examination in their jurisdiction of choice by consulting the [Professional Licensure by Program](#) webpage and the board of bar examinations in that jurisdiction.

G. Auditing Courses

Southwestern students may take courses on an audit basis (i.e., no letter grades will be given; the auditor will not sit for exams or complete other assessments and will not receive professor feedback). Students must obtain permission from the Associate Dean for Student Services to audit a course. Courses that meet the experiential requirement, upper-division writing requirement, required Bar Readiness Curriculum, and other limited-enrollment courses requiring extensive class participation may not be audited. Requests to audit courses with waitlists or high demand will generally not be approved. Courses taken on an audit basis will appear as an "AU" on a student's transcript. Southwestern students are charged the usual tuition rates for audited courses. SCALE students should refer to the *SCALE Program Policies* for the rules on auditing courses in the traditional program.

H. Policy Revisions

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