

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

SCALE Program Policies

Mixed Faculty and Administrative policy.

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy in August 2022; revised in August 2023; technical edits were made in June 2024 and July 2024; edits made in August 2024 to clarify add/drop deadlines and processes; edits made in April 2025 to refer to the Lawyering Practicum course and quarters, update the academic disqualification process, clarify the academic probation policies, and add maximum unit policy for SCALE (effective immediately); edits made in October 2025 to remove the section called Academic Good Standing given new standalone policy regarding good academic standing; substantive edits made in February 2026 to revise the impact of Credit/No Credit on GPA calculations in SCALE and to remove Lawyering Practicum as a Credit/No Credit class; edits made April 2026 to better align with the Grading and Scholastic Honors Policy and, effective June 1, 2026, to modify when initial SCALE ranking occurs.

Related policies: Academic Disqualification, Academic Probation, and Academic Improvement Program Policies; Attendance Policy; Academic Policies and Procedures; Externship Program Policies and Guidelines; Grading and Scholastic Honors Policy; Criteria for Final Course Grade Policy; Graduation Requirements Policy; Incomplete Grade Policy; Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy; Student's Right to Cancel and Tuition Refund Policy; Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct; Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality; Student Honor Code; Sexual Misconduct Policy; Withdrawing From Southwestern; Good Academic Standing Policy for J.D. Students

Scheduled Review Date: March 2027 (SCALE Office)

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When not explicitly delineated in this policy, SCALE students are governed by all other policies on the [Institutional Policies webpage](#).

A. Attendance

SCALE requires significant student collaborative effort. Students complete assignments and perform roles to benefit themselves and their classmates. A student's failure to complete required assignments disrupts the learning process. Therefore, at the discretion of each SCALE faculty member, students who are unprepared for a class will be marked absent.

If a student in the first year of SCALE (i.e., Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4) is administratively withdrawn from all courses in a given term, that student will be considered as having withdrawn from Southwestern and may return only if admitted following submission of a new application for admission. If a student who has completed the first year of SCALE is administratively withdrawn from all courses in a given term, that student will be considered on an involuntary leave of absence and must return for the next term, or they will be withdrawn from Southwestern.

See *Attendance Policy* for other attendance requirements.

B. Evaluation Terms and Schedules

The SCALE two-year program comprises four evaluation terms in the first year, a mandatory summer session, and four evaluation terms in the second and final year. The SCALE 2.5-year modified curriculum, which is optional, has an added evaluation term during the fall semester of the third year.

At the start of each academic year, the schedule of classes, final examinations for all SCALE courses, and the SCALE Curriculum Charts are posted on the [SCALE – Current Students CANVAS page](#). The SCALE Curriculum Charts specify the units allocated to each SCALE course in the curriculum for the year.

The SCALE schedule is subject to change. The unique curricular construct of SCALE requires the schedule to be flexible and adaptable. Students should expect the SCALE schedule to change as circumstances dictate. Any changes will be communicated to students in a timely fashion via email.

C. Grading

SCALE uses an alphabetical grading system in which the actual grade earned is represented by an alphabetical letter. Grades are assigned from A+ to F. No unit credit is granted when the grade received is an F.

Exceptions to the alphabetical grading system are Foundations of Law & Practice, Trial Advocacy, and the SCALE II Quarter 8 externship, which are graded Credit/No Credit. See *Grading and Scholastic Honors Policy*. Unless otherwise provided in this policy, courses offered on a Credit/No Credit basis are not included in the computation of the GPA.

In courses that span multiple terms, the mark of “M” will appear for each term, other than the final term, where the course grade will appear. The “M” mark does not impact a student’s GPA.

All students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.330. The GPA is a mathematical depiction of a student’s law school grade performance carried out to the first three decimal places. The GPA is derived by multiplying the number of grade points earned in each graded course by the number of units assigned to that course. Those numbers are then added, and the resulting figure is divided by the total number of graded units attempted in the applicable term. The quotient is carried out only to the first three decimal places.

The GPA for each SCALE term is calculated based on the points earned for each grade and the number of units allocated to each course. See *Grading and Scholastic Honors Policy*.

This GPA is comprised of both SCALE and non-SCALE residential courses. All final grades are made available to students on Self-Service.

Official class rankings, provided in 10 percent increments, are based on cumulative GPA and are computed for each class at the end of Quarter 3 and at the end of Quarter 8. SCALE I students also receive an unofficial mid-year class rank based on Quarter 1 and 2 grades.

D. Incomplete Work

An "Incomplete" or "INC" grade is a temporary, non-evaluative grade indicating the student has not yet completed assigned work in the course. The grade may be assigned only with the approval from the Associate Dean for SCALE and Associate Dean for Student Services.

The appropriate use of an Incomplete grade, the process for requesting, converting, or removing an Incomplete grade, and the impact of an Incomplete grade on financial aid, graduation, and class rank, as well as other policies relevant to an Incomplete grade can be found in Southwestern's *Incomplete Grade Policy*. SCALE students are subject to Southwestern's *Incomplete Grade Policy*, with the addition that any policy that requires approval by the Associate Dean for Student Services will also need to be approved by the Associate Dean for SCALE.

E. Externships

1. Summer externships

SCALE students may participate in the Externship Program during the SCALE summer session described below. Please see the [Externship Office](#) portal page for more information. SCALE students who elect to participate in the optional summer session externship must adhere to the *Externship Program Policies and Guidelines*.

A student on academic probation may not apply for externships. A student placed on academic probation while participating in an externship may continue the placement barring extraordinary circumstances.

2. SCALE II Quarter 8 externships

The SCALE II Quarter 8 externship completes the SCALE experience and begins in March, following the completion of Quarter 7. The Externship Office administers Quarter 8 externships. For more information, please visit the [Externship Office](#) portal page.

The Co-Directors of the Externship Program must approve each externship before the commencement of the externship. Externships are graded Credit/No Credit. A grade of Credit or No Credit is not included in the computation of the term grade point average (GPA) or the cumulative GPA. (See Section M(4) (*Academic disqualification and probation*) in this policy for an explanation of the term and cumulative GPA requirements.)

Unlike the elective externships in the non-SCALE residential program, the Quarter 8 externship is required for all SCALE students. Each student must complete 40 hours per week during the Quarter 8 externship, totaling 300 hours.

Each student must attend and complete the required hours for the Quarter 8 externship. A student who fails to complete the Quarter 8 externship with a grade of Credit is not eligible for graduation.

The Co-Directors of the Externship Program may require students to complete additional written or oral assignments in response to absences. See *Attendance Policy* and *Externship Program Policies and Guidelines* for other attendance requirements.

F. Summer Session

The summer session for SCALE students will occur following Quarter 4 and before the commencement of Quarter 5. In addition to taking the multi-term 2-unit course Lawyering Practicum (see Section G below), SCALE students are required to complete a minimum of 4 units during the summer session consisting of one or a combination of the following options:

- enrolling in an externship course;
- taking at least one Southwestern summer session course; or
- participating in a Southwestern summer-abroad program or non-Southwestern ABA-approved summer-abroad program.

In addition to taking the Lawyering Practicum, SCALE students may take a maximum of six units in the summer session, absent special permission granted by the Associate Dean for SCALE. For the purpose of academic standing calculations, grades earned during the SCALE summer session will be part of the SCALE Quarter 5 term GPA. Academic standing calculations are calculated at the end of Quarter 5. Grades earned during the SCALE summer session will also be part of the student's cumulative GPA calculation.

G. Upper-Division Writing Requirement

SCALE students are required to fulfill Southwestern's upper-division writing requirement. Absent extraordinary circumstances and approval by the Associate Dean for SCALE, all SCALE students must enroll in and satisfactorily complete the Lawyering Practicum. The Lawyering Practicum takes place during Quarter 4 and the SCALE summer session. As the Lawyering Practicum satisfies the upper-division writing requirement, SCALE students are not required to enroll in a seminar or equivalent writing course in the non-SCALE residential program.

H. Experiential Requirement

Per ABA Standard 303, Southwestern has adopted an experiential requirement for graduation. SCALE students must complete at least six credit hours of coursework specifically approved and designated as meeting the experiential requirement. Students must take at least one unit in oral communications-focused courses. Select courses in the SCALE curriculum may be eligible to meet the experiential requirement; however, in some cases, students must complete courses in the non-SCALE residential program to fulfill the required six units. The SCALE II Quarter 8 externship provides five units toward the experiential requirement if completed satisfactorily. See the *Experiential Requirement* section of the *Graduation Requirements Policy*.

I. Enrolling in and Dropping Non-SCALE Residential Courses

Subject to course availability, SCALE II students may register for courses in the non-SCALE residential fall and spring semesters and one course in the January intersession (subject to the maximum unit limitations in Section L(1) below). The non-SCALE residential course grades will be averaged with the SCALE grades and become part of the student's cumulative grade point average. The grade in a non-SCALE residential course will be awarded when the non-SCALE residential course grade is awarded. Students will not be charged for the added non-SCALE residential electives.

SCALE students are required to fulfill course attendance requirements as outlined in the *Attendance Policy*. SCALE II students registered in non-SCALE residential courses must abide by the add/drop dates published in the non-SCALE residential academic calendar. If a student wishes to make a schedule change before the add/drop deadline, they can change their schedule via Self-Service. Any schedule changes after the add/drop deadline must be made by (i) filling out a Student Action Report (SAR), (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office.

Any non-SCALE residential course dropped before the non-SCALE residential course “drop” deadline using the correct process will not appear on the student’s transcript.

Any non-SCALE residential course dropped after the non-SCALE residential course “drop” deadline using the correct process will result in a mark of a “W” on the student’s transcript.

Any non-SCALE residential course dropped after the non-SCALE residential course “drop” deadline without the correct process will be recorded as an Administrative Fail (*F) unless otherwise approved in writing by the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE.

J. Graduation Requirements

To be certified for graduation and eligible for the Juris Doctor degree, a student must:

- have satisfactorily completed all required courses in the SCALE curriculum;
- have satisfied the upper-division writing requirement;
- have satisfied the 6-unit experiential course requirement, including the 1-unit oral communication requirement;
- be in good academic standing;
- have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.330 or higher at the end of the 2 or 2.5 years of SCALE;
- have completed 87 units;
- have removed any approved Incomplete grade; and
- have met any other requirements outlined in the *Graduation Requirements Policy* not explicitly delineated in this policy.

K. SCALE Program Honors

Eligibility for the invitation to Law Review, Law Journal, the Moot Court Honors Program, and the Negotiation Honors Program is based on (i) class standing or GPA at the end of the first year of SCALE (i.e., Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4), (ii) participation in the summer write-on competition, intramural competitions, or try-outs, as applicable; and (iii) any other considerations and requirements set forth by the individual honors programs. Students may be invited to participate in the Trial Advocacy Honors Program in their first year of SCALE. Students may be invited to participate in Law Review, Law Journal, the Negotiation Honors Program, and Moot Court Honors Program in their second year of SCALE.

To participate in an honors program, students must be in good academic standing and meet all other requirements required by the individual honors

programs. A student on academic probation may not participate in any Honors Program (e.g., Law Journal, Negotiation Honors Program, etc.). Students on academic probation may not hold or continue in leadership positions in any student organization, including mentoring roles through any student organization. Students on academic probation also may not participate as a Peer Mentor in the SCALE Peer Mentor Program.

SCALE students are eligible for scholastic honors as outlined under the *Scholastic Honors* section of the *Grading and Scholastic Honors Policy*.

L. SCALE Academic Policies

1. Maximum and minimum units

The chart below sets forth the minimum and maximum units per term for SCALE students. If a course takes place over two Quarters, the number of units assigned to each Quarter for the purposes of this policy will be determined by the Associate Dean for SCALE. A student who seeks to deviate from the minimum and maximum units in a term must seek and receive advanced written approval from the Associate Dean for SCALE. Only students in good academic standing may seek permission to deviate.

Term	Minimum Units	Maximum Units	Other Restrictions
Summer	4 units + Lawyering Practicum	6 units + Lawyering Practicum	None
Quarters 5 & 6	5 units (per Quarter)	20 units (over both Quarters)	None
Quarters 7 & 8	5 units (per Quarter)	19 units (over both Quarters)	Students may not take more than one non-SCALE course that has class meetings or assignments due in Quarter 8.

2. Adding and dropping SCALE courses

a. Electives

SCALE I students are not permitted to add or drop an elective SCALE course absent extraordinary circumstances. In extraordinary circumstances, SCALE I students may be permitted to add or drop an elective SCALE course by (i) completing a SAR form, (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office.

SCALE II students may add an elective SCALE course before the SCALE add deadline using Self-Service. SCALE II students are not permitted to add an elective SCALE course after the add deadline without (i) completing a SAR form, (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office. The ability to add an elective SCALE course is subject to enrollment availability, including waitlist order.

SCALE II students may drop an elective SCALE course before the SCALE drop deadline (see Section L(3)) using Self-Service. SCALE II students may drop an elective SCALE course after the SCALE drop deadline only by (i) completing a SAR form, (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office. See Section I for information about dropping a non-SCALE elective.

Any elective SCALE course dropped before the SCALE drop deadline using the correct process will not appear on the student's transcript.

Any elective SCALE course dropped after the SCALE drop deadline using the correct process will result in a mark of a "W" on the student's transcript.

Any elective SCALE course dropped after the SCALE drop deadline without the correct process will be recorded as an Administrative Fail (*F) unless otherwise approved by the Associate Dean for Student Services and the Associate Dean for SCALE.

Students are responsible for ensuring they register for and complete sufficient credits to graduate.

b. Required courses

SCALE I students are not permitted to add or drop a required SCALE course absent extraordinary circumstances. In the event of extraordinary circumstances, SCALE I students may be permitted to add or drop a required SCALE course by (i) completing a SAR form, (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office.

SCALE II students may add a required SCALE course before the add deadline using Self-Service. SCALE II students are not permitted to add a required SCALE course after the SCALE add deadline without (i) completing a SAR form, (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office. The ability to add a required SCALE course is subject to enrollment availability, including waitlist order.

SCALE II students are not permitted to drop a required SCALE course before or after the SCALE drop deadline without (i) completing a SAR form, (ii) obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE, and (iii) submitting the completed and signed SAR to the Registrar's Office.

Any required SCALE course dropped before the SCALE drop deadline using the correct process will not appear on the student's transcript.

Any required SCALE course dropped after the SCALE drop deadline using the correct process will result in a mark of a "W" on the student's transcript.

Any required SCALE course dropped after the SCALE drop deadline without the correct process will be recorded as an Administrative Fail (*F) unless otherwise approved by the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE.

Students are responsible for ensuring they register for and complete all required courses.

3. Add/drop deadlines

The add/drop deadlines for SCALE courses are below. See Section I for add/drop deadlines for non-SCALE residential courses.

a. Deadline to add SCALE courses

The add deadline for SCALE courses is before the start of the second class session of the SCALE course unless a course is subject to the first class attendance policy. See Section L(2) above for the correct process to add SCALE courses.

b. Deadline to drop SCALE courses

The drop deadline for SCALE courses is fourteen calendar days after the start of each SCALE term. See Section L(2) above for the correct process to drop SCALE courses.

4. Academic disqualification and probation

SCALE students are required to abide by the rules governing academic disqualification and academic probation as indicated below. A student who has been academically disqualified from SCALE will be deemed to have been academically disqualified from Southwestern. For the purpose of academic standing calculations in SCALE II, (i) grades earned during the SCALE summer session will be part of the SCALE Quarter 5 term GPA, (ii) grades earned during the fall semester for non-SCALE courses will be part of the SCALE Quarter 6 term GPA, and (iii) grades earned during the spring semester for non-SCALE courses will be part of the SCALE Quarter 8 term GPA.

a. Academic disqualification

A student is academically disqualified when a student fails to achieve the following:

- **A minimum cumulative GPA**

SCALE students are disqualified if they do not maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.330 at the end of each evaluation term, excluding the mandatory summer session and the January intersession. The minimum cumulative GPA requirement is initially calculated at the end of Quarter 3. Thereafter, the minimum cumulative GPA is calculated at the end of each Quarter.

- **A minimum GPA in two consecutive evaluation terms**

SCALE students are disqualified if they do not achieve a GPA of at least 2.330 in each of two consecutive evaluation terms, excluding the mandatory summer session and the January

intersession. The minimum GPA in two consecutive evaluation terms is initially calculated after the completion of Quarters 2 and 3. Thereafter, the minimum GPA in two consecutive evaluation terms is calculated at the end of each remaining Quarter. This provision does not apply if the disqualification occurs in a student's final evaluation term of law school and the student has already completed the minimum requirements for graduation, including, but not limited to, maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 2.330.

The following two exceptions to academic disqualification also apply:

For all SCALE II students: A student will not be academically disqualified based on their Quarter 7 performance if the following two requirements are met: (i) the student's cumulative GPA is at least 2.500 after Quarter 7; and (ii) the student earned fewer than eight graded units in Quarter 7.

For students enrolled in the SCALE 2.5-Year Modified Curriculum: A student will not be academically disqualified based on their Quarter 8 and "Continuing Spring – SCALE" performance if the following two requirements are met: (i) the student's cumulative GPA is at least 2.500; and (ii) the student earned fewer than eight graded units in "Continuing Spring-SCALE" and Quarter 8 combined (including any graded units from Quarter 7 that were included in the Quarter 8 GPA). If both requirements are met, any graded units earned in "Continuing Spring-SCALE" and Quarter 8 will be included in the term and cumulative GPA calculation for the following term.

- **Fail a required course two times:** Students are disqualified if they fail a required course a second time.

b. Academic probation

A SCALE student is placed on academic probation when the student's term or cumulative grade point average (GPA) is less than 2.330 in any evaluation term commencing at the end of Quarter 2 and thereafter, excluding the mandatory summer session and the January intersession, or when the student has been academically disqualified and readmitted. SCALE students with a GPA less than

2.330 after Quarter 1, while not on academic probation, are required to (i) meet with the Associate Dean for SCALE to discuss their academic performance and (ii) fulfill the requirements of an Academic Improvement Program (see Section L(5) below).

Students placed on academic probation must (i) meet with the Student Services Office and (ii) fulfill the requirements of an Academic Improvement Program (see Section L(5) below).

Students on academic probation and students with a GPA less than 2.330 after Quarter 1 may not participate in externships, honors programs, or leadership positions unless and until the student raises their term and cumulative GPA to a minimum of 2.330. This restriction does not apply to the mandatory SCALE Externship in Quarter 8.

The following two exceptions to academic probation apply:

- For all SCALE II students: A student will not be placed on probation based on their Quarter 7 performance if the following two requirements are met: (i) the student's cumulative GPA is at least 2.500 after Quarter 7; and (ii) the student earned fewer than eight graded units in Quarter 7.
- For students enrolled in the SCALE 2.5-Year Modified Curriculum: A student will not be placed on academic probation based on their Quarter 8 and "Continuing Spring – SCALE" performance if the following two requirements are met: (i) the student's cumulative GPA is at least 2.500 after Quarter 8; and (ii) the student earned fewer than eight graded units in "Continuing Spring-SCALE" and Quarter 8 combined (including any graded units from Quarter 7 that were included in the Quarter 8 GPA). If both requirements are met, any graded units earned in "Continuing Spring-SCALE" and Quarter 8 will be included in the term and cumulative GPA calculation for the following term.

5. Academic Improvement Program (AIP)

An Academic Improvement Program ("AIP") is designed to assist students who are on academic probation or at risk of being placed on academic probation by requiring them to participate in structured co-curricular and curricular academic success programs. A student may be required to participate in an AIP when the student's cumulative GPA is 2.700 or below

following any academic term. The duration of AIPs may vary depending on the program, regardless of whether a student's cumulative GPA improves in subsequent terms.

An AIP has three objectives: (1) to require students to attend curricular and co-curricular academic support offerings; (2) to require students to follow a curriculum structured to improve academic performance and the likelihood of passing the bar exam; and (3) to limit a student's involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, when necessary. Various curricular and co-curricular programs are offered to assist students with basic skills, such as time management, reading, and briefing cases, outlining, exam writing, and critical thinking and listening. As part of an AIP, among other requirements, students may be required to participate in bar readiness courses. The details of the AIPs for each year, and the programs that students must complete as part of an AIP, are available from the Academic Success and Bar Preparation Office.

Students with a GPA above 2.330 and at or below 2.700 are not on academic probation. Although a student may be required to participate in an AIP, the student remains in good academic standing; no notation of AIP will appear on the student's transcript. The student is free to participate in externships, student honors programs, and student leadership positions if they do not interfere or conflict with the student's mandatory participation and enrollment in an AIP.

6. Academic disqualification procedure

Southwestern reviews student grades at the end of each SCALE Quarter, beginning in Quarter 3, to determine whether a student has been academically disqualified. The Student Services Office will notify students by letter (via email) if they have been disqualified and withdrawn ("Disqualification Letter").

A student with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.200 who believes their grades do not reflect their academic ability may petition Southwestern's Academic Standards Committee (the "Committee") and the Vice Deans' Office for readmission. A student with a cumulative GPA of less than 2.200 may petition the Committee and the Vice Deans' Office only if one of the following two exceptions applies: (i) the student achieved a term GPA of at least 2.500 in one evaluation term before the disqualification, or (ii) the student has completed at least 40 units.

Procedures following academic disqualification for students who are ineligible to petition are set forth below in the section titled "*Procedures for students who are ineligible to petition or whose petition for readmission is denied.*"

No student, regardless of cumulative GPA, may petition for readmission if they fail to meet the conditions of a previous readmission (see "*Procedures following readmission*" below).

If a student believes their grades do not reflect their academic capability due to possible discriminatory or harassing action on the basis of race (including hairstyle and hair texture), ethnicity, color, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, reproductive health decision-making, pregnancy (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding), sex stereotyping (including assumptions about a person's appearance or behavior, gender roles, gender expression, or gender identity), sexual orientation, parental status, marital status, age, disability (mental or physical), medical condition, citizenship status, military status or service, veteran status, genetic information, or any other classification, or combination of classifications, protected by federal or California law in the educational programs (including retention of students) or activities Southwestern operates, the student may file a complaint under Southwestern's *Policy to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation*.

7. Readmission petition procedure

The Committee and Vice Deans' Office are responsible for considering petitions for readmission. A student seeking readmission following disqualification must file a written petition within ten calendar days of the date of the Disqualification Letter from the Student Services Office. Exceptions to this deadline are allowed solely at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Services and only in emergencies or under compelling circumstances.

A student who is academically disqualified and is petitioning for readmission may continue in Southwestern courses in which the student is currently enrolled, pending notification by the Student Services Office of the decision on the student's petition. If the student is enrolled in an externship and wishes to continue fulfilling the externship course requirements pending consideration of the petition, Southwestern will

notify the placement of the student's academic status and the student's plan to continue in the externship. If the student chooses not to continue in the externship course but continues to work at the externship placement, Southwestern will notify the placement of the student's plan to continue without receiving school credit. If the externship placement asks Southwestern for the basis of the change, the placement will be notified of the student's academic standing.

A petition for readmission must include all requirements set forth in the *Petition for Readmission following Academic Disqualification* (the "Petition"), which will be provided to all eligible students at the time of the Disqualification Letter. The student must email an electronic copy of their Petition (in PDF format) to studentservices@swlaw.edu by the deadline listed in the Disqualification Letter. The Committee and the Vice Deans' Office will only consider Petitions in writing; personal appearances are prohibited.

8. Standards for readmission

The Committee and the Vice Deans' Office will review all timely submitted written Petitions from eligible students. A positive recommendation from the Committee and the Vice Deans' Office is required for readmission. In evaluating Petitions, the following factors will be considered:

- (i) Reasons offered for the academic performance that led to disqualification, including any supporting documentation and any communications with the Student Services Office related to the student's offered reasons;
- (ii) Likelihood that the student will successfully complete law school and be admitted to the bar;
- (iii) Student's participation in Southwestern's academic success programming;
- (iv) Pattern of the student's law school grades that contributed to disqualification;
- (v) Attendance records and attendance warnings;
- (vi) Documented instances of disciplinary warnings and reprimands related to a violation of any Southwestern institutional policy, including but not limited to the Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct, Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality, Student Honor Code, and Sexual Misconduct Policy;

- (vii) Feedback from the student's past professors set forth on the *Faculty Feedback Form*; and
- (viii) Any other factors related to the items listed above.

Petitions from students who were assigned to and failed to participate in any component of a required Academic Improvement Program will be presumptively denied absent exceptional circumstances. Letters of support from faculty will not be accepted as each of a student's past professors will be asked to complete a *Faculty Feedback Form*. A voting member of the Committee is not permitted to share their personal experiences with a student beyond what is stated in the *Faculty Feedback Form*. Letters of support from staff, alumni, or other students will not be accepted.

The following examples provide guidance on circumstances that may support or weaken a Petition for readmission. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive. Including a particular type of circumstance does not guarantee approval or denial, as the Committee and Vice Deans' Office consider the totality of the student's Petition, supporting documentation, and demonstrated readiness to succeed if readmitted. The Committee and Vice Deans' Office will evaluate each Petition on its own merit.

a. Examples of circumstances indicative of stronger Petitions

- **Serious medical condition:** A student was diagnosed with a serious medical condition that directly impacted their ability to complete coursework. The student demonstrates that they are now in a position to complete law school successfully.
- **Unforeseen personal hardship with resolution:** A student experienced the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, resulting in significant emotional and logistical burdens that impacted their studies. The Petition includes an explanation of how the hardship affected their performance and how their circumstances have changed.
- **Temporary and significant financial hardship that has been resolved:** A student faced a temporary and significant financial crisis that severely impacted their ability to focus on coursework. The student demonstrates that their financial situation has stabilized and will not interfere with their ability to succeed going forward.

- **Undiagnosed disability with accommodations in place:** A student struggled academically due to an unknown disability but subsequently received accommodations and significantly improved their academic performance in the following semester.

b. Examples of circumstances indicative of weaker Petitions

- **General difficulty with coursework without mitigating circumstances:** The student's Petition states that they found law school challenging or struggled to keep up; the student indicates they have learned how to manage the workload and overcome challenges but does not provide a compelling external reason for their poor academic performance.
- **Foreseeable work or personal commitments:** The student was balancing work, family responsibilities, or other personal obligations and does not demonstrate why these circumstances were unavoidable. Claims of family responsibilities, work obligations, or extracurricular commitments that existed before a student enrolled in law school are not compelling, even if the responsibilities are significant, as the circumstances are foreseeable.
- **Failure to address the likelihood of future success:** The Petition sets forth circumstances leading to the student's poor performance but does not clearly demonstrate how those circumstances have changed or why the student is likely to succeed if readmitted.
- **Failure to seek academic and other support despite personal hardship:** The student experienced a personal crisis that made it difficult to focus on coursework. However, the student did not take advantage of available academic success programming, seek help from the Student Services Office, attend office hours, meet with Dean's Fellows, or meet with Teaching Assistants, and the Petition does not provide a compelling explanation for why they did not take advantage of programming or reach out for assistance.

Following a decision on a student's Petition, the student will be notified in writing, generally within three weeks of submitting the Petition for readmission, unless unusual or complex circumstances exist. Decisions are final and not subject to further appeal.

Procedures for students whose Petition is granted are set forth below in the section titled, "Procedures following readmission." Procedures for students whose Petition is denied are set forth below in the section titled, "Procedures for students who are ineligible to petition or whose petition for readmission is denied."

9. Procedures for students who are ineligible to petition or whose petition for readmission is denied

A student who is ineligible to petition or whose Petition is denied will automatically be withdrawn from all currently enrolled Southwestern courses and will receive a full tuition refund for any currently enrolled Southwestern courses. No credit will be granted for any courses from which a disqualified student is withdrawn, and no grades will be recorded. A notation will be placed on the student's transcript when a student has been academically disqualified. The grades for courses taken at Southwestern by any academically disqualified student will remain on the transcript as a part of the student's permanent academic record.

A student who is ineligible to petition or whose Petition is denied may apply to Southwestern as a first-year law student through the regular admission procedures and deadlines.

- If the student is disqualified after Quarters 5 or 6, the student may apply during the current or any future admissions cycle.
- If the student is disqualified after Quarters 3, 4, 7, or 8, the student may not apply during the current admissions cycle but may apply in any future admissions cycle.

In evaluating the student's application as a first-year student, the Admissions Committee will consider, among other factors, (i) the student's previous academic performance, (ii) the personal circumstances leading to the academic disqualification, (iii) whether the nature of the student's work, activity, or studies since disqualification indicate a stronger potential for law study, and (iv) the student's overall potential for law study despite the student's previous performance. The student must affirmatively demonstrate that they possess the requisite ability to succeed in law school despite their prior disqualification. Admission as a first-year student is within the discretion of the Admissions Committee. If a student is accepted as a first-year student at Southwestern, no credit will be given for the student's previous coursework. For students who are disqualified and seek admission as a first-year law student, financial aid eligibility may

be impacted. Students should carefully read Southwestern's [Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#) before applying as a first-year law student.

10. Procedures following readmission

The Committee and Vice Deans' Office have broad discretion and can impose conditions for readmission after an academic disqualification. A readmitted student is automatically placed on academic probation, which is typically at least the following evaluation term. However, probation for an extended period may be required as a condition of readmission. Students readmitted after academic disqualification may also be assigned to an Academic Improvement Program.

The Committee and Vice Deans' Office may also base readmission on other reasonable conditions to support a readmitted student's success in their legal studies (e.g., repeating courses, taking a leave of absence, changing academic programs, limiting outside work, meeting with the Student Services Office, engaging in professionalism conferences, etc.). If a student's Petition is granted, the Committee and Vice Deans' Office may allow the student to continue in currently enrolled courses or require the student to drop a course(s). The Committee or Vice Deans' Office may dismiss a student for breaching the conditions of readmission.

If the student is readmitted, a notation of reinstatement will be placed on the transcript. The grades for courses taken at Southwestern by any academically disqualified student who is readmitted will remain on the transcript as a part of the student's permanent academic record. For every admission or readmission of a previously disqualified individual, a statement of the considerations that led to the decision will be placed in the admittee's file per ABA Standard 501(c). For students who are readmitted following disqualification, financial aid eligibility may be impacted. Readmitted students should carefully read Southwestern's [Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#).

Students who fail to meet the reinstatement conditions will be academically disqualified and not eligible to petition for readmission. The academic disqualification will be final, and the student will be withdrawn from the law school.

M. Federal Financial Aid Eligibility Impact

The satisfactory academic progress standards under federal regulations governing federal student aid may differ from Southwestern's academic policies (see *Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy*). Students receiving federal student aid with questions about the potential impact of academic probation and academic disqualification under this policy should contact the Financial Aid Office.

N. 2.5-Year Modified Curriculum

Under the 2.5-year modified curriculum, students will take fewer units during their second year of SCALE. Students will complete the remainder of the units required to graduate during an additional semester of fall courses and be eligible to graduate in December. Additional tuition will not be charged to accommodate the modified curriculum. To participate in the 2.5-year modified curriculum, SCALE students must timely petition the Associate Dean for SCALE. The petition must be made after the completion of Quarter 4 and, absent extraordinary circumstances, before the completion of Quarter 5. Students will only be permitted to participate in the 2.5-year modified curriculum with approval by the Associate Dean for SCALE.

O. Leave of Absence

1. Petition for a leave of absence

A student must have completed Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4 and be in good academic standing to seek a leave of absence. The student must also submit a leave of absence petition for approval by the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE. A leave of absence will be granted for no more than one academic year. A student who fails to return at the agreed-upon time or otherwise fails to meet the leave of absence terms may be withdrawn from the law school. Exceptions to this policy are allowed solely at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE and only under compelling circumstances or as an approved disability, pregnancy, or Title IX accommodation. SCALE students are subject to all leave of absence policies stated in the *Academic Policies and Procedures* when not explicitly outlined in the *SCALE Program Policies*.

2. Involuntary leave of absence

A student precluded from commencing an evaluation term for failure to remove an Incomplete grade may be placed on an involuntary leave of

absence for up to one year. A student placed on such involuntary leave will be notified of the duration of the leave and the reasons for its imposition. A student who fails to return to SCALE at the time specified in such notice may be withdrawn from the law school.

3. Explanatory note

SCALE's continuous scheduling makes it extremely difficult for a student to drop a SCALE course and complete it later without jeopardizing timely graduation from SCALE. Therefore, a student who has been administratively withdrawn from a SCALE course for failure to comply with Southwestern's *Attendance Policy* or who has not satisfactorily completed the work required to progress to the next SCALE course may have to wait until the following year to begin that SCALE course, resulting in a delay in graduation.

P. Admission into a Non-SCALE Residential Program

1. Withdrawing from SCALE

If a student wishes to withdraw from SCALE and enroll in the non-SCALE residential program but is unable to transfer under the *Transfer into non-SCALE residential program* rules below or qualify for a leave of absence pursuant to the *Leave of Absence* section of this policy, the student must re-apply through regular admission channels for admission to the law school for enrollment the following academic year. If admitted, such students are not eligible for unit credit for work completed in the SCALE program.

2. Transferring into a non-SCALE residential program

A student currently enrolled in the SCALE program may petition to transfer into the non-SCALE residential program when the student is in good academic standing and has completed at least Quarter 4. The Associate Dean for SCALE and the Associate Dean for Student Services must approve the transfer decision. If the petition is granted, the transfer will become effective starting with the following non-SCALE residential academic year. Transfer before successful completion of Quarter 4 or when the student is not in good academic standing will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and following approval by the Associate Dean for SCALE and the Associate Dean for Student Services.

Withdrawals from SCALE before the completion of Quarter 4 are governed by the *Leave of Absence* and *Withdrawing from SCALE* portions of this

policy. The Associate Dean for Student Services and Associate Dean for SCALE will make a non-binding recommendation to the Office of the Dean regarding the number of unit credits to be granted and waivers from required courses consistent with the student's academic performance while enrolled in SCALE. A student transferring from SCALE to the non-SCALE residential program must enroll in the law school within one year of their withdrawal to receive unit credit for work completed in SCALE.

Q. Policy Revisions

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