

Credit Hour Policy

A. Scheduling

For courses in which a final exam will be administered, compliance with ABA Standard 310 requires an amount of classroom or direct faculty instruction of no less than 48 hours for four-credit courses, 36 hours for three-credit courses, 24 hours for two-credit courses, and 12 hours for one-credit courses. Courses in which a final exam will not be administered require an additional amount of classroom or direct faculty instruction of no less than four hours for four-credit courses, three hours for three-credit courses, two hours for two-credit courses, and one hour for one-credit courses.

1. To ensure compliance with section A.1, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or his or her designee shall create the academic schedule as follows:
2. Four-credit courses: 52 hours of in-class or direct faculty instruction (i.e., 26 two-hour meetings or 39 1.5-hour meetings).
3. Three-credit courses: 39 hours of in-class or direct faculty instruction (i.e., 26 1.5-hour meetings or 39 one-hour meetings).
4. Two-credit courses: 26 hours of in-class or direct faculty instruction (i.e., 13 two-hour meetings or 26 one-hour meetings).
5. One-credit courses: 13 hours of in-class or direct faculty instruction (i.e., 13 one-hour meetings).

The law school defines an “hour” for classroom or direct faculty instruction as sixty minutes, rather than the fifty minutes required by ABA Interpretation 310-1.

All courses must be structured to ensure two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks for each credit hour awarded, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. This means a minimum amount of out-of-class student work of 120 hours for four-credit courses, 90 hours for three-credit courses, 60 hours for two-credit courses, and 30 hours for one-credit courses. The law school defines an “hour” for out-of-class student work as sixty minutes, which is consistent with Interpretation 310-1.

This policy applies to all academic activities for which the law school awards credit, including experiential learning courses, independent studies, directed studies, Law Review, Moot Court, and Mock Trial.

B. Determining Credit Hours for Proposed Courses

In determining how many credit hours shall be awarded for a proposed course or other academic activity, or in modifying the number of credit hours to be awarded for an existing course or other academic activity, the Curriculum Committee and the faculty shall ensure that the course complies with the law school’s credit hour policy. To assist the Curriculum Committee in determining how many credit hours shall be awarded for a proposed course, every faculty member proposing a new course must complete a worksheet, approved by the Curriculum Committee, which outlines the amount of classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work for the course. When approving a new course or a change to the number of credit hours of a course, the Curriculum Committee shall complete a memorandum to accompany its recommendation to the faculty outlining the reason(s) for the number of credit hours awarded to the course. The Curriculum Committee shall attach to the memorandum any information on the worksheet completed by the faculty member proposing the course along with any other supporting documentation.

C. Compliance with Credit Hour Policy

The Curriculum Committee and the faculty shall ensure continued compliance with the law school’s credit hour policy in the following ways:

1. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or his or her designee shall, prior to each academic semester, shall remind the faculty of the credit hour policy.
2. The syllabus for each course shall include a statement summarizing the law school's credit hour policy and specifying the number of hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction and the number of hours of out-of-class student work required in that course to comply with the policy.
3. The student evaluations for each course shall inquire as to the number of out-of-class hours the students estimate they have spent on course-related work. This out-of-class time shall include all work related to the course, including reading assignments, research and writing assignments, and preparing for the midterm and final exams. Periodically, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Assessment shall evaluate the data gathered in the student evaluations and other sources (i.e., the Law School Study of Student Engagement) to help the Curriculum Committee assess whether courses have been awarded the appropriate number of credit hours.
4. For academic activities without regular class meetings, such as independent studies, some experiential learning courses, and co-curricular activities, students shall keep a weekly time sheet recording the amount of time spent on the activity. These time sheets shall be submitted to and approved by the supervising faculty member on a regular basis to ensure that an appropriate number of credit hours is being awarded for the academic activity.
5. Any other methods which the Dean, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, or the Curriculum Committee shall, in their discretion, deem appropriate.