

Credit Hour Policy

The Law School adheres to the federal¹ and ABA² definitions of a credit hour. ABA Standard 310(b) provides:

A "credit hour" is an amount of work that reasonably approximates:

(1) not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction³ and two hours of out-of-class student work⁴ per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in subparagraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including simulation, field placement, clinical, co-curricular, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.⁵

The academic calendar at the Law School includes two fifteen-week semesters, the fall and spring terms, each of which includes a one week reading period/break from classes, and a two-week examination period. The summer term includes one seven week class session and a one-week examination period. The winter session is a one-week term with an examination, paper or project.

Credit for Classroom Instruction

Students are required to complete 90 credit hours to graduate. Each hour of classroom credit is based on at least 50 minutes of direct faculty instruction. For each credit hour of classroom instruction, students shall spend, on average, a minimum of 2 hours (based on a 60-minute hour) on out-of-class work during the semester.

Fall and Spring Terms

A four-credit course will ordinarily meet for 240 minutes, or 4 hours, each week for 12 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 560 minutes, or 9.3 hours, on out-of-class work per week during the semester. Clinics and externship hours are calculated differently. A four unit clinic generally meets for 180 minutes, or 3 hours, per week, and requires 10-12 hours of homework and client work. Four-unit externships range from 15-17 hours per week over a ten week period.

A three-credit course will ordinarily meet for 180 minutes, or 3 hours, each week, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 420 minutes, or 7 hours, of out-of-class work per week during the semester. Clinics and externship hours are calculated differently. A three unit clinic generally meets for 120 minutes, or 2 hours, per week, and requires 8 hours of homework and client work. Three-unit externships range from 12-13 hours per week over a ten week period.

¹ 34 C.F.R. § 600.2 (2015), Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education

² ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools (2016-2017), Standard 310(b)

³ "...fifty minutes suffices for one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction." Interpretation 310-1, ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools (2016-2017).

⁴ "An 'hour' for out-of-class student work is sixty minutes." Interpretation 310-1, ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools (2016-2017).

⁵ ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools (2016-2017), Standard 310(b)

A two-credit course will ordinarily meet for 120 minutes, or 2 hours, each week, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 280 minutes, or 4.7 hours, on out-of-class work per week during the semester. Clinics and externship hours are calculated differently. A three unit clinic generally meets for 120 minutes, or 2 hours, per week, and requires 5 hours of homework and client work. A two-unit externship ranges 7-8 hours per week over a ten week period.

A one-credit course will ordinarily meet for 60 minutes, or one hour, each week, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 140 minutes, or 2.3 hours, on out-of-class work per week during the semester. If a class does not meet every week or does not have an examination, an equivalent amount of time will be allocated during the term to direct classroom instruction and student out-of-class work per week.

Summer Term

A four-credit course will ordinarily meet for 400 minutes each week for 7 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 16 hours on out-of-class work per week during the term.

A three-credit course will ordinarily meet for 300 minutes each week for 7 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 12 hours on out-of-class work per week during the term.

A two-credit course will ordinarily meet for 200 minutes each week for 7 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 8 hours on out-of-class work per week during the term.

A one-credit course will ordinarily meet for 100 minutes each week for 7 weeks, followed by an examination period. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 4 hours on out-of-class work per week during the term.

If a class does not meet every week or does not have an examination, an equivalent amount of time will be allocated during the term to direct classroom instruction and student out-of-class work per week.

Winter Session

A one-credit course will ordinarily meet for 750 minutes during the week. Students are expected to spend, on average, a minimum of 30 hours on out-of-class work during the week or an equivalent number of hours over a longer period of time if a paper or project is due on a date after completion of the winter session class.

Credit for Clinics and Externships

Each Law School clinic and externship placement includes a classroom component. The amount and level of credit awarded in each clinic or externship placement depends on the amount of time allocated to the classroom component and to student clinical and extern work. Depending on the clinic or extern placement, students will spend at least 42.5 hours in out-of-class work during the term for each hour of academic credit earned. Students are responsible for keeping a log of their hours for review by a faculty member at the end of each semester.

Credit for Independent Study

Students enrolled in Independent Study are eligible to receive one hour of academic credit for performing at least 60 hours on the assignment during the term in which the student is enrolled. Students are responsible for keeping a log of their hours and submitting the log to the supervising faculty member at the end of the semester. Academic credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis.

Credit for Student-Edited Law Journals

Student members of law journals are eligible to receive one hour of academic credit per semester for performing at least 60 hours of academically-related work, which may include completion of a note or comment, reading and evaluating journal submissions, and editing and cite-checking articles. Students on the board of editors who are performing editorial functions for the law journals are eligible to receive up to two credits per semester for performing at least 100 hours of academically-related work. Students are responsible for keeping a log of their hours for review by the faculty advisor of the journal at the end of each semester. Academic credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis.

Credit for Moot Court, Mock Trial, and ADR Competitions

Depending on the competition, students who participate in Mock Trial, Moot Court and ADR competitions are eligible to receive up to two hours academic credit per semester for each 45 hours of academically-related work, including brief writing, appellate advocacy, trial advocacy, negotiation, mediation, or arbitration (and excluding time to travel to competitions). Students are responsible for keeping a log of their hours for review by a faculty member at the end of each semester. Academic credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis.

Credit for Teaching Assistants

Students who serve as teaching assistants in the Academic Support Program or the Legal Writing Program are eligible to receive one hour of academic credit per semester for performing at least 50 hours of academically-related work, including mentoring students in study skills, time management, exam preparation, legal writing, or other critical academic skills. Students are responsible for keeping a log of their hours for review by a faculty member at the end of each semester. Academic credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis.