

CREDIT-HOUR POLICY

approved by the faculty January 11, 2019

This policy shall be included in the Academic Handbook and published on the School's website.

Statement of Policy and Definitions:

In accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Education and the American Bar Association, the School of Law defines a "credit hour" to require at least 45 hours of instructional time over the course of a 15-week semester. A three-hour course therefore requires at least 135 hours of instructional time during the semester and a two-hour course requires at least 90 hours of instructional time during the semester. For the purposes of this requirement, however, an "hour" of class time means 50 minutes of clock time. "Class time" means a period of time in which the student is receiving direct faculty instruction.

"Outside work" includes reading, completing class assignments and assessments, reviewing class material, looking up material in other sources, briefing cases, synthesizing class notes, engaging in group discussion of assigned material, studying for assessments, researching and writing papers and other assignments, writing reflections (e.g. journals), and taking exams or other assessments (e.g., quizzes, other formative assessments, and final exams). Academic work related to simulations, field placements, clinics, and co-curricular activities counts as outside work.

"Instructional time" means class time and outside work.

Methods of Compliance:

Each instructor must ensure that the work assigned in each of his or her courses satisfies the requirement of 45 hours of instructional time per semester. The instructor must calculate the amount of time the class will actually meet, and must assign sufficient outside work to satisfy the credit hour policy. The instructor should use his or her own judgment in determining the amount of time a typical student would spend on an assignment. All the assignments for the semester must be described in sufficient detail, by the end of the semester, to determine the amount of outside work actually assigned.

A typical distribution of the required hours of work for one credit-hour is (a) one 50-minute class session per week over a 14-week semester, (b) a one-hour exam, and (c) at least 28 hours of outside work over the course of the semester. For example, a three-hour course normally meets for 3 "hours" per week for 14 weeks and requires a 3-hour long examination, and should therefore require at least 6 hours of outside work per week for the 15-week semester (although outside work need not be spread evenly across each week of the semester). A class which does not have a final exam or which meets for fewer than 14 weeks must assign correspondingly more outside work or spend more time in class. Classes which do not meet must be made up by make-up class time or by assigning additional outside work.

The following are examples of how the credit-hour requirements might be met. In each case the word “hour” has the meaning described above. “Required” hours refers to the minimum number of instructional hours required by the ABA Standard. Many classes will require more work. The following are intended to be illustrative. Deviations are permitted in every category, as long as the total work assigned complies with the general policy stated above.

Typical Three-Hour Doctrinal Course:

135 hours required

Class meets 150 minutes per week for 14 weeks = 42 “hours” class time

Final Exam (180 minutes) = 3 hours

Each student must complete at least 90 hours of outside work over the course of the semester

Three-Hour Legal Research and Writing Class:

135 hours required

Class meets 150 minutes per week for 10 weeks = 30 “hours” class time

Each student must complete at least 105 hours of outside work over the course of the semester

One-Credit “Pre-mester” Course:

45 hours required

Class meets 180 minutes per day for 5 days = 18 “hours” class time

Final Exam (180 minutes) = 3 hours

Each student must complete at least 24 hours of outside work over the course of the week

Two-Hour Externship:

90 hours required

Class meets 100 minutes per week for 14 weeks = 28 “hours” class time

Each student must log at least 62 hours of outside work over the course of the semester

Four-Hour Clinic:

180 hours required

Class meets approximately 200 minutes per week for 14 weeks = 56 “hours” class time

Each student must log at least 124 hours of outside work over the course of the semester

Documentation:

Each instructor must determine how to allocate course time. The instructor must submit a final syllabus for each course showing the number of actual classroom hours and the outside work assigned. In lieu of a final syllabus, the instructor may submit a Faculty Credit Hour Report for each course taught. (A form of Faculty Credit Hour Report form is attached to this Policy.) New Course Proposals must include preliminary estimates of the work required. (A revised New Course Proposal Form is attached to this Policy.)

Record-Keeping:

The Associate Dean's office shall retain the following information and review it regularly (as appropriate) for compliance with this policy:

New Course Proposals

Syllabi or Faculty Credit Hour Reports

Student reports generated at the request of the Associate Dean

Workload estimates from Course Evaluations

Additional studies performed by the Associate Dean's Office