

University of Memphis
Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law

Credit Hour Policy

1. Definitions

- a. The Law School adheres to Federal law and ABA definitions of a credit hour. ABA Standard 310(b) provides a “credit hour” is an amount of work that reasonably approximates:
 - i. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
 - ii. 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, independent research, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
- b. The Law School currently operates on 15-week class cycles (14 weeks for regularly- scheduled class sessions and 1 week for the course examination). For Law School purposes, in-class time (including for examinations) is calculated in 50 minute “hours” per credit over 15 weeks, or other equivalent for more-condensed courses, including summer courses. Any direct faculty instruction time is calculated at this rate. All other academic time is calculated in 60-minute hours. This means that at least 42.5 total hours, accumulated through some combination of in-class and out-of-class time, are required for a credit hour.

2. Work Required

- a. Professors are responsible for designing courses that reflect at least 42.5 total hours¹ of work per credit hour, attained through any of the following, alone or in combination:
 - i. Direct faculty instruction in class, mandatory office hours, exercises, practices, rehearsals, or supervision of field placement or clinic work;
 - ii. Reading;
 - iii. Preparing and revising notes, class outlines, and related materials;

¹ Two credit courses will have 85 total hours of work; three credit courses will have 127.5 hours; and four credit courses will have 170 total hours.

- iv. Observing taped materials, podcasts, or live events;
 - v. Preparing for, performing, and reviewing exercises, simulations, competitions, field placement and clinic work, and other assignments;
 - vi. Researching, drafting, and editing writings;
 - vii. Reviewing others' work (as allowed by class policies);
 - viii. Contributing to discussions both orally and in writing;
 - ix. Preparing for, taking, and reviewing performances on quizzes, midterms, exams, and other assessments; and
 - x. All other academic activity.
- b. Professors are responsible for ensuring that simulation, field placement, clinical, co- curricular, independent research, and all other academic work leading to the award of credit hours, reflect at least 42.5 total hours of work per credit hour.
- a. Determination of Credit Hours for New Courses
- i. At the time of recommending a new course to the full faculty, the Curriculum Committee shall determine and recommend the number of credits to be awarded for that course. In doing so, the Curriculum Committee shall adhere to Standard 310 and this Credit Hour Policy.
 - ii. A new course proposal submitted to the Curriculum Committee shall include a statement from the faculty member proposing the new course that provides a justification for the number of credits to be awarded that takes into account classroom or direct faculty instruction, as well as the time to be spent on course-related out-of-class work. The proposal shall include sufficient information to allow the Curriculum Committee to evaluate the justification (e.g., a draft syllabus or schedule of assignments). The Curriculum Committee may ask the faculty member proposing the course to provide additional information, including a workload calculation.
 - iii. If the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is not already participating as a member of the Committee, the Curriculum Committee shall consult with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
 - iv. In evaluating the number of credit hours to recommend for a course, the Curriculum Committee should consider a range of factors, including:

1. The type of course (e.g., first-year doctrinal course, upper-level common law course, upper-level code course, seminar, simulation course, clinical course, and field placement);
 2. The amount and difficulty of the assigned readings;
 3. The number and types of assignments students must complete during the semester (e.g., papers and simulation exercises);
 4. The number and types of assessments (e.g., final examination, midterm exam, research paper, quizzes, and short papers);
 5. Other types of academically-related work (e.g., in the case of law journals, the amount of time spent on the completion of a note or comment, reading and evaluating journal submissions, and editing and cite checking articles; and in the case of mock trial and moot court, the amount of time spent practicing, judging practice rounds, doing research, and writing briefs, and the time spent in actual competition);
 6. Any feedback from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Law School Registrar, and experienced faculty members;
 7. Commonly accepted practice in higher education; and
 8. Any other factors that the Curriculum Committee determines are relevant for determining accuracy and reliability of the credits being awarded.
- v. At the time of approving a course, the faculty shall approve the number of credit hours to be awarded for the course. The faculty shall adhere to ABA Standard 310 and this Credit Hour Policy in determining the number of credit hours to be approved.
- b. Ongoing Compliance
- i. The Law School will publish this Credit Hour Policy on the Law School's website. Additionally, professors are encouraged to include a statement in the course syllabus or other policy documents communicating work expectations in compliance with ABA Standard 310 and this Credit Hour Policy.
 - ii. Consistent with the faculty responsibilities set forth in paragraphs 2.a. and 2.b. above, professors teaching existing courses or supervising other academic work leading to the award of academic credit must review

their course assignments and/or work expectations each semester to ensure compliance with ABA Standard 310 and this Credit Hour Policy.

- iii. Each semester, professors must submit documentation establishing compliance with this Credit Hour Policy to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Consistent with the charge set forth in paragraph 3.a. above, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will determine the documentation required (e.g., the course syllabus, a schedule of assignments if not included in the syllabus, and/or a completed workload calculation). If the requested materials have not changed from a previous semester, the professor may so indicate.
- iv. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will review the documentation submitted. If there is a question concerning compliance with this Credit Hour Policy, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will follow up with the professor as appropriate to establish compliance. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may enlist the assistance of the Curriculum Committee to assist with this review process.
- v. By submitting grades, professors certify that the course or other credit-bearing activity required work reasonably approximating 42.5 hours per credit hour, in compliance with ABA Standard 310.

Adopted by the faculty on February 10, 2017; revised on December 6, 2024.