

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;
 - 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);

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.

- 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.
- 3. Policy and Procedures for Assuring the Law School Adheres to and Enforces the Credit Hour Policy
 - a. Responsibility for Assuring Adherence to Standard 310 and the Credit Hour Policy.
 - i. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is charged with assuring that the Law School adheres to ABA Standard 310 and this Credit Hour Policy. This includes assuring that the methods and processes used to determine and assign credits lead to reliable, accurate results, and conform to commonly accepted practice in higher education. It also includes assuring that the methods and processes followed in determining and assigning academic credit are documented, and that all requisite records are kept.
 - b. Determination of Credit Hours for New Courses:
 - i. At the time of approving a new course, the Curriculum Committee shall determine and assign 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 proposed syllabus and set forth 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.
 - iii. In determining and assigning the number of credits, the Curriculum Committee shall take into account:
 - 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.
- iv. The Curriculum Committee shall submit a statement to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs 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.
 - v. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall review the statement provided by the Curriculum Committee and make a determination whether or not the number of credits that the Curriculum Committee assigned to the new course complies with Standard 310 and the Credit Hour Policy. If the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs determines that the number of credits assigned is not in compliance, the Associate Dean shall describe the problems identified and send the new course proposal back to the Curriculum Committee for further consideration.
- c. Ongoing Review to Assure Adherence to Standard 310 and the Credit Hour Policy
 - i. Each semester, professors must submit course syllabi to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that demonstrate compliance with this Credit Hour Policy. If the syllabus has not undergone a significant change, the professor may instead so indicate to the Associate Dean.
 - ii. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will review the documentation to determine whether the professor has complied with this Credit Hour policy. If there is a question concerning compliance with this policy, the professor will be given an opportunity to provide additional information to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to demonstrate compliance.

Adopted by the faculty on February 10, 2017.