

STATEMENT OF POLICIES OF DETROIT MERCY LAW SCHOOL WITH RESPECT TO THE DETERMINATION OF CREDIT HOURS AWARDED BY THE SCHOOL

May 2018

Standard 310(a) of the *American Bar Association Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools* requires that: “A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to written policies and procedures for determining the credit hours that it awards for coursework.” Because, as the ABA Standards anticipate, the types of academic activities vary, the Law School is adopting the following approaches for the determination of credit hours for coursework.

I. General Credit Hour Policy

Students and faculty should understand that the hours listed below are minimums required to comply with ABA Standards, and that students will likely spend significantly more hours than the minimums set forth below. Under the ABA’s standard, a credit hour must “reasonably approximate not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work over 15 weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.” In accordance with this policy, the School of Law requires that for each credit hour granted, a student spend 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instructional time per week, and at least 120 minutes of additional out-of-class student work each week, or an equivalent amount of work for other courses and activities multiplied by 15. At a minimum, students must complete 42.5 hours for one credit hour; 85 hours for two credit hours; 127.5 hours for three credit hours; and 170 hours for four credit hours.

II. Determining Credit Hours

In the fall and winter terms, the School of Law maintains a 14-week semester, followed by a two-week exam period. The Summer term consists of a seven-week term, followed by a one-week exam period. The School also has a two-week intersession period. Regardless of the length of the term, students must complete 42.5 hours for one credit hour; 85 hours for two credit hours; 127.5 hours for three credit hours; and 170 hours for four credit hours.

A. Courses that traditionally require written examinations

1. In the Fall and Winter terms, one credit hour represents at least 50 minutes of classroom instruction, exclusive of breaks, and 120 minutes of out-of-class student work per week for 15 weeks (including 1 week for final examinations), or the equivalent amount of work over a different time period. In the summer term, the time specified in I is spread over a seven-week term and in the intersession term, the above total time is spread over a two-week term.
2. For classes with comprehensive in-school final examinations, the examination is scheduled during the examination period for 60 minutes per credit hour.
3. For classes in which a take-home examination is given, the examination is scheduled during the examination period and the time allowed for completing the examination will be no less than 60 minutes per credit hour. Instructors may permit additional time for completion of the take-home examination.

4. For classes in which the instructor chooses to require a final paper in lieu of an examination, the paper must require students to engage in additional out-of-class work beyond the general 120 hours per credit hour and must be no less than 60 minutes per credit hour.
- B. Courses involving legal research and writing and courses that satisfy the upper level writing requirement
1. In all legal writing courses and courses that satisfy the upper level writing requirement, classroom and direct instructional time is scheduled for at least 50 minutes per credit hour multiplied by 15, regardless of the length of the term. Direct faculty instruction includes faculty time spent observing or assessing simulations and meeting with students to discuss student work.
 2. Out-of-class work, including reading and completing assignments for class, conducting research, drafting of writing projects, and completing final drafts, must be designed to require 60 minutes of work per credit hour multiplied by 15.
 3. In the fall and spring semesters, the above total time is spread over a fourteen-week term. In the summer terms, the above total time is spread over a seven-week term. Regardless of the term, the combined time of classroom, direct instruction, and out-of-class-work equals at least 42.5 hours over the course of the term for each credit hour. Class meeting time and the amount of out-of-classroom work may vary from week to week as long as the total amount of instructional time and student work for the term meets the minimum requirement.
- C. Simulation Courses
1. Total classroom or direct faculty instruction time is scheduled for 50 minutes per credit hour, exclusive of breaks, multiplied by 15. Direct faculty instruction includes faculty time spent observing or assessing simulations and meeting with students to discuss student work.
 2. Assignments should be designed to require 120 minutes of out-of-class student work per credit hour per week for 15 weeks.
 3. In the fall and spring semesters, the above total time is spread over a fourteen-week term. In the summer term, the above total time is spread over a seven-week term. Regardless of the term, the combined time of classroom, direct instruction, and out-of-class-work equals at least 42.5 hours for each credit hour over the course of the term.
- D. Clinics and Externships
1. ABA Standard 310(b)(2) provides that a “credit hour” in the context of a clinical course should be “at least an equivalent amount of work” as required for standard law courses under Standard 310(b)(1). The requirements for a three-credit clinical course, not including an advanced clinic, are 110 minutes of classroom component (which

- normally would include both instruction and “rounds”) and 7.5 hours per week of out-of-class work over the course of a fourteen-week semester. The requirements for a four-credit course are 165 minutes of classroom component (again including instruction and 'rounds') and 9 hours per week of out-of-class work over the course of a fourteen-week semester. In the summer term, the above total time is spread over a seven-week term. At a minimum, students must complete a total of 42.5 hours for each credit hour.
2. Students shall submit detailed time logs to the clinical professors of the time spent on out-of-class work on, at a minimum, a bi-weekly basis.
 3. Externships are three-credit courses. To receive credit for an externship, students must log a minimum of 120 hours at their field placement, and submit their logs to the professor teaching the externship program and their supervising attorney on, at a minimum, a bi-weekly basis. Students are also required to fulfill other requirements for the course, including reading assignments, written submissions, and group discussions, that reasonably approximate ten additional hours of work for the course.
 4. Credit may be withheld for any student who fails to submit accurate time logs as required.
- E. Directed Research Projects, Law Review, Moot Court, and Internal Advocacy Competitions Credits
1. To receive credit for a directed research project, Law Review, Moot Court, and internal advocacy competitions, students must demonstrate that they have spent the requisite number of hours required to receive credit – 42.5 hours per credit hour. This means that students must submit logs on, at a minimum, a bi-weekly basis when they are participating in a competition, writing a note or source checking for law review, or completing a directed research project.
 2. The required credit hours are as follows:
 - a. Directed research projects: 1 credit hour (42.5 hours per work) or 2 credit hours (85 credit hours).
 - b. Law Review junior members:
 - Fall – 1 credit (42.5 hours)
 - Winter – 2 credits (85 hours)
 - c. Moot Court:
 - National Teams – 2 credits (85 hours) with the expectation that half of the time for the team consist of the writing of the brief, absent extraordinary circumstances.
 - Executive and Associate Board Members – 1 credit (42.5). Credit awarded in the winter term for effort throughout the year.
 - d. Internal Competitions (such as Keenan):
 - 1 Credit (42.5 hours)

F. Distance Learning Courses

Distance learning courses for which students receive credits, whether offered in synchronous or asynchronous format, shall require at least 42.5 hours of instructional time and student work per unit of credit.

III. Determining Hours of Out-of-Class Student Work

A. General Guidance

For classes that require attendance in regularly-scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction, course instructors should require outside student work that reasonably approximates a minimum of two hours of out-of-class time for every hour of in-class instruction. This outside work may include, but is not limited to: reading assignments, briefing cases, solving problem sets and hypotheticals, outlining and reviewing course materials, and otherwise engaging in activities that help develop students' comprehension of course content.

In planning student assignments to comply with these requirements, course instructors should take into account the level of experience of the students as well as the difficulty of the subject matter involved. Thus, first year courses are likely to have less reading than upper level courses because the students will likely take longer to read the materials. Faculty members are encouraged to set bench marks based on their experience and the experience of colleagues who have assigned similar work.

B. Syllabus Requirements

1. All readings and other assignments shall be indicated on the course syllabus.
2. All instructors shall submit their syllabi to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and in submitting that syllabi, are certifying that the outside work required complies with the requirements of Standard 310 and the School's policies outlined in this policy. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs shall keep these syllabi on file
3. All course instructors shall include a statement in their syllabi indicating the number of hours of work expected by the students for the credit hours involved. Such a statement could read as follows:

Consistent with the American Bar Association's standards for determining the amount of work that constitutes a credit hour, the Law School defines a credit hour as the amount of work that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of classroom instruction and two hours of out-of class student work per week. This is a ___-credit course, which means that you should plan on spending a minimum of ___ hours per week (___ in class and ___ preparing for class) on course related work over the course of the semester.

4. In addition to the language indicated above, for all courses in which student time logs are not required, instructors must indicate on their class syllabi the type of out-of-class

work that the students are expected to engage in to meet the time requirements. For example, the instructor might state that the students are expected to do the following outside of class: read and brief cases, answer problems and hypotheticals, prepare for assessments by outlining course materials and studying the materials, and take [] assessments of the course of the semester as well as prepare for and take a []-hour final examination.

IV. New Course Approvals

All proposals for new courses shall explain how the proposed course justifies the requested number of credit hours. In approving new courses, the Curriculum Committee and Faculty will determine whether the credits hours complies with Standard 310 and the School's implementation of that standard.