

Credit Hour Policy
University of Mississippi School of Law
Approved and Effective Nov. 8, 2017

I. Credit Hour Requirements

The School of Law complies with federal and ABA requirements regarding the amount of classroom instruction and outside work for each credit hour earned by a student. This policy sets forth the law school's policy on credit hours, provides examples of how it generally applies to certain types of courses, and discusses publishing, implementation and monitoring of the policy.

II. Basic Requirements

A single credit hour generally requires that students receive at least 12.5 hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction, including a final examination, and be assigned at least 30 hours of work outside of class, for a total of 42.5 hours of coursework. This means that a 3-credit course with a 3-hour final exam will typically entail 34.5 hours of classroom instruction, 3 hours of exam time, and 90 hours of outside work.

An instructor may adjust the relative hours spent on instruction and outside work, but a single credit generally must require a total of at least 42.5 hours of coursework. A reduction in instructional time and a commensurate increase in outside work should reflect a demonstrated need for students to do more than 30 hours of outside work per credit hour. To the extent that instructional and final exam time total less than 12.5 hours per credit, the minimum number of outside work hours must be increased proportionally based on a formula prescribed by the ABA. In short, for each 50-minute reduction in instructional or final exam time, an additional hour of outside work is required. For example, a 3-credit course that had 30 hours of classroom or direct instruction and a 2.5-hour final exam, would fall 5 hours (300 minutes) short of the 37.5-hour standard, thus requiring at least 96 hours – rather than 90 hours – of outside work. The ABA does not require an absolute minimum number of instructional hours.

The specific determination of what constitutes instruction or outside work depends on the nature of the course. Instruction may take a variety of forms other than a classroom lecture, including, but not limited to: instructor videos; individual or small group meetings with the instructor; supervised team exercises; and in-class administering and review of quizzes, tests and midterm exams. Outside work includes not only reading assignments, but also time spent preparing for and taking quizzes, tests and midterm exams; outlining course material; conducting legal research; completing written assignments; client representation; engaging in experiential exercises, such as presentations, mock negotiations and appellate and trial advocacy; and other outside work.

III. Application to Course Types

The credit hour requirement is applied to common types of courses in the following discussion. The following is a general application of the requirement. The syllabus for each course will set forth the specific means by which instructional and outside work requirements are met for that course. This list is for illustrative purposes.

- A. Doctrinal, 3-credit course with reading assignments and a 3-hour final exam. The course generally will entail at least 34.5 hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction, at least 90 hours of outside work and a 3-hour final exam. Reading assignments totaling at least 420 pages, including textbooks, statutes, restatements or other assigned readings, are presumptively sufficient to meet the 90-hour outside work requirement (or, for a 1- or 2-credit course, 140 or 280 pages to meet the 30- or 60-hour requirement, respectively).
- B. Doctrinal, 3-credit course with reading and non-reading assignments and a 3-hour final exam. Many courses require outside work other than reading assignments, such as written assignments, advocacy exercises, quizzes, and other course-related assignments. Like the traditional doctrinal class described in Part A, this type of course generally will entail 34.5 hours of instruction, 90 hours of outside work and a 3-hour final exam. The counting of reading assignments toward the outside work requirement as described in Part A also applies to this type of course.

Instructors may reduce reading assignments commensurate with the number of hours required for non-reading assignments. For example, if students are given a written assignment for class rather than a reading assignment, the hours required for the written assignment may substitute for reading assignment hours for purposes of meeting the 90-hour outside work minimum.

- C. 2-Week, 3-Credit Intersession Classes. Intersession classes are subject to the same requirements described above – at least 42.5 hours of instructional time and outside work per credit hour. Outside work requirements are subject to the guidance in Parts A and B, with one exception. To the extent that outside work done during the 2-week class period does not entail sufficient hours, instructors may need to assign additional outside work to be done before the first class and/or after the last class.
- D. Writing Class for 3 credits and a final written product. Writing classes (this includes writing “seminars”) are generally required to provide no less than 37.5 hours of instruction (3 more hours than for doctrinal classes because there is no 3-hour final exam). To the extent that drafting and editing a final written product constitutes the only source of outside work for the course, a paper or other written work product totaling at least 9,000 words is

presumptively sufficient to satisfy the 90-hour outside work minimum (or at least 3,000 or 6,000 words to satisfy a 30- or 60-hour outside work minimum, respectively). Outside work other than work in the written product, such as reading assignments, preparing class presentations, experiential exercises or other outside academic work may allow for a commensurate reduction in the minimum word requirement for a final written product according to the same principles set forth above in Parts A and B. For example, a paper or other written work product totaling at least 7,000 words combined with reading assignments totaling at least 95 pages would presumptively satisfy the outside work requirement.

- E. Independent Study for 1 to 3 credits and a written product(s). An independent study with a written product(s) requirement is subject to the same credit hour requirement that applies to a writing class, as described immediately above. To the extent that an independent study requires less than 12.5 hours of instruction per credit hour, the independent study shall require a 1-hour increase in outside work for every 50-minute reduction in instructional time, including a commensurate increase in the minimum word length necessary for a written product(s) alone to be presumptively in compliance with the outside work requirement.
- F. Clinical Course for 3 credits. Like other courses, clinics may satisfy the credit hour requirement by providing for at least 42.5 hours of instruction and outside work. To the extent that a clinic requires less than 12.5 hours of instruction per credit hour, the clinic shall require a 1-hour increase in outside work for every 50-minute reduction in instructional time. The outside work requirement may be satisfied by means other than work on client matters, such as assigned reading and other academic work subject to the guidance provided in Parts A and B. For hours spent on *client* matters, instructors shall require students to submit copies of time sheets showing time spent and work done.
- G. Legal Research & Writing. First year Legal Writing & Research is required to provide no fewer than 42.5 hours of instructional time and student work per credit hour over the course of the semester. This requirement includes 12.5 hours of classroom instruction or other direct instruction via individual conferences or small group conferencing, and 30 hours of work outside of class that includes reading assignments, written exercises, quizzes, preparation of class presentations, research, drafts of writing projects, editing final papers, and preparation for oral argument.
- H. Advocacy Programs, Law Journal, Research Assistant and Pro Bono Program. Credit hours earned in connection with advocacy programs, law journals, or acting as a research assistant, or pursuant to the Pro Bono Program are subject to the same general standards described above, with the one exception. For each credit hour, the student must complete at 45

hours of outside work per credit hour, regardless of the amount of instruction received. For all outside work other than assigned reading and other academic work of the type subject to the guidance provided in Parts A and B, students shall submit copies of time sheets to their instructor that show time spent and work done.

III. Syllabi & Time Sheets

Instructors shall describe in their syllabi how a course will satisfy the credit hour requirement. Syllabi shall state the nature of the course (e.g., lecture, online, individual meetings) and the number and type of instructional, examination and outside work hours that are required for the that course. Where time keeping is required, syllabi shall set forth how students will keep their time and describe their outside work and provide that copies of time sheets shall be submitted to the instructor.

III. Records and Review

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall review syllabi on a 3-year rolling basis (on a rotation to be established by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs) and document compliance with this policy. Instructors shall maintain records of syllabi and student time sheets and certify compliance with this policy for each class. The Registrar shall monitor compliance with the certification requirement.

IV. Publishing and Implementation

This policy shall be published on the law school's website, in the student handbook, and in other appropriate places. The Senior Associate Dean shall be responsible for overseeing implementation of and monitoring compliance with this policy.