CUNY Law School
Credit Hours Policy

The law school sets forth the following policy for awarding credit hours. It distinguishes the following types of classes:

- Traditional doctrinal classes that are graded in part by a final exam. For these classes, the final exam “counts” as a class meeting for the purpose of calculating the required fifteen-week period of “classroom or direct faculty instruction” and out-of-class student work and the amount of “classroom or direct faculty instruction” and out-of-class student work can be based on a period of 14 weeks plus a final exam.

- Lawyering Seminars, other Seminars, Legal Research classes, and Clinics, which are not graded by a final exam. Since these classes do not have a final exam, the calculation of the total hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work must be based on a fifteen-week period.

- Independent Studies, Moot Court, Law Review, and other co-curricular credit bearing activities, which do not have regularly scheduled classroom meetings.

The Law School’s policy follows the ABA Guidance’s explanation that 42.5 total hours per credit is required. For all classes that have regularly scheduled class meetings, the Academic Affairs office will schedule classes in a way that allots sufficient classroom time to satisfy the Standard’s requirement for “classroom or direct faculty instruction.” Faculty members should plan assignments to reflect their best judgment about the approximate time students will spend in out-of-class student work required to complete the learning objectives for the class. The combined total of “classroom or direct faculty instruction” and “out-of-class student work” should approximate the required amount of time for a course’s allocated credits.

Faculty members should enumerate in their syllabi the expected amount of time students will spend in out-of-class work. This time will vary depending on the type of course and the particular assignment. Out-of-class time includes required readings and other assignments such as completion of hypothetical problems, preparation for group presentations and other group work, simulations, and client-related work.

When creating class assignments, faculty should estimate the amount of time students are expected to spend on particular assignments based on factors such as the following:

- level of class (1L, 2L, 3L, 4L)
- complexity of material (caselaw, social science, case materials, commentary, etc.)
- supplemental course requirements (hypotheticals, problem sets, group projects, presentations)
- complexity of assignment

* Approved by faculty vote 11/4/16.
- level of faculty or other professional supervision and degree of collaboration or group work with other students, clients, or community partners. Faculty may require students to maintain time logs or other mechanisms for all or some assignments to evaluate the number of hours students have spent on out-of-class work.

For classes incorporating asynchronous learning (e.g., “flipped classrooms” and other “hybrid” approaches), time spent engaged in faculty-designed and supervised, out-of-class learning activities (such as watching videotaped lectures; engaging in prepared exercises, problems and role plays), as well as time spent in an asynchronous exchange with a faculty member giving feedback on student work, or other faculty-designed online activities that promote exchange of ideas between students and faculty, is also considered “classroom or direct faculty instruction” for purposes of calculating the total amount of time associated with awarding credits. For these classes, the amount of time scheduled in the physical classroom may be adjusted accordingly.

When determining the amount of combined in-class and out-of-class work per credit for their classes, faculty may find the following examples helpful:

- **Doctrinal courses (graded in part by final exam):** The combined classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work includes time spent preparing reading assignments, hypotheticals and any other class presentations or group work, and in preparing for and taking a final exam.
  - For example, for a 3-credit criminal law class that is graded in part by a final exam the class would require a total of approximately 127.5 hours.

- **Lawyering Seminars (not graded by final exam):** The combined classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work includes time spent preparing reading assignments, completing writing projects, working with other students to prepare group projects, and preparing for simulations.
  - For example, for a 4-credit lawyering seminar course that is not graded in part by a final exam, the class would require a total of approximately 170 hours.

- **Clinics (in-house and practice clinics and Pro Bono Scholars) and other simulation courses (not graded by final exam):** The combined classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work includes time spent performing field placement or clinic work, preparing reading or other class assignments, working with other students to prepare group projects, and preparing for simulations.
  - For example, for an 8-credit clinic that is not graded in part by a final exam, the class would require a total of approximately 340 hours.

- **Legal Research course (not graded by a final exam):** The combined classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work includes time spent preparing reading and research assignments and other class projects.
- For example, for a 2-credit legal research class that is not graded in part by a final exam the class would require a total of approximately 85 hours.

- **Seminar course (not graded by a final exam):** The combined classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work includes time spent preparing reading assignments, preparing class presentations or other projects, and in writing the required paper(s) and associated drafts.
- For example, for a 3-credit seminar class that is not graded in part by a final exam the class would require a total of approximately 127.5.

- **Independent Studies and Co-curricular classes, e.g., moot court; law review (not graded by final exam):** The combined classroom or direct faculty instruction and out-of-class student work includes time spent engaged in legal research, editing, drafting, and in other project-related work.
- For example, for a 2-credit independent study, the course would require a total of approximately 85 hours.

**Publication of the policy:**
This policy shall be published in the student handbook (both paper and on-line versions), and in the course planning handout distributed to students each semester. Faculty members shall incorporate a statement of their expectation of the amount of student out-of-class work into their syllabus for each course.

**Ensuring adherence to the policy:**
The law school ensures adherence to this policy through the following procedures:
- The policy is incorporated into its curriculum review and assessment program, the course approval process, and the ongoing review by the Academic Dean’s office of the school’s academic program.
- Proposals for new courses (including Topics in Law (TIL) courses) must include a justification for the number of credits to be awarded, taking into account the projected time that will be spent in classroom or direct faculty instruction and time spent in out-of-class work.
- The Academic Affairs office periodically reviews course descriptions and syllabi to ensure that the amount of work assigned complies with the school’s policy for the amount of work required per credit. The Academic Affairs office also periodically reviews supporting materials, such as student time logs, where appropriate, to ensure that they are being submitted and reviewed by faculty and that they are consistent with the policy.
- The Academic Dean will review course evaluations to identify student concerns about workload inconsistency with allotted course requirements.