

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Program Review Policy

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A. Purpose and Applicability

Southwestern Law School is committed to continuous improvement and rigorous evaluation of its academic programs. This policy establishes the standards, timeline, and responsibilities for the systematic review of Southwestern's degree programs and educational partnership programs in accordance with the requirements of the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) and American Bar Association Standard 315 on program evaluation. The purpose of program review is to ensure that each degree program remains mission-aligned, academically rigorous, student-centered, and sustainable. Educational partnerships will be reviewed to ensure mission alignment, continued benefits to the institution and students, and effective functionality.

This policy applies to the following programs at Southwestern Law School:

- J.D. degree in all of its modalities (treated as a single program for purposes of this policy);
- Joint J.D./M.B.A. degree in collaboration with the Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University;
- LL.M. in Entertainment & Media Law;
- General LL.M. program; and
- the 3+3 pipeline program with California State University, Northridge (B.A./J.D.).

B. Program Review for the J.D. Program

1. Overview

The J.D. program, which has been continuously accredited by the Council for the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association (ABA) since 1970, undergoes regular, continuous, systematic program review to ensure it meets high standards of quality, student learning, and institutional effectiveness.

2. Comprehensive reaccreditation (10-Year Cycle)

The ABA conducts a full evaluation of Southwestern's J.D. program every ten years. This comprehensive review includes a self-study report prepared by the law school, a detailed site evaluation questionnaire with supporting evidence and data, and a multi-day on-site visit by a team of trained peer reviewers. The evaluation examines all aspects of the J.D. program, including student learning outcomes, curriculum, academic support services, faculty qualifications, student services, library, technology, and facilities, and culminates in a detailed report and recommendations. The ABA's report provides findings on program quality and integrity and may include recommendations for improvement to ensure the program's academic rigor is maintained.

3. Annual data reporting and monitoring

Each year, Southwestern submits multiple extensive questionnaires to the ABA, providing up-to-date data on the J.D. program. This annual review covers key indicators of program health and effectiveness, including:

- Admissions, enrollment, and attrition:*** Yearly admissions numbers, entering student credentials, enrollment figures, and attrition or retention rates.
- Student funding and finances:*** Statistics on student financial aid, scholarship support, and overall program finances or expenditures.
- Curriculum and programs:*** Statistics regarding the curriculum, including experiential offerings, seminar courses, program changes, and information on study-abroad or other foreign programs offered.

- d. **Faculty, staff, and library resources:** Data on faculty composition, staff support, library collections and staffing, and other academic resources.
- e. **Technology and facilities:** Information on technological resources available to students and physical facilities.
- f. **Compliance and student services:** Confirmation of compliance with student consumer protection standards and summaries of student services that support learning and well-being (e.g., academic advising, career services).
- g. **Distance education:** Details on any online or hybrid J.D. program components or distance education offerings (if applicable).
- h. **Bar passage and licensing:** Bar examination passage rates for graduates and any other relevant licensing exam results.
- i. **Graduate outcomes:** Employment outcomes for J.D. graduates and other measures of career placement success.

The ABA's ongoing monitoring through these annual questionnaires allows the law school to track trends and ensure that any emerging issues are identified in a timely manner. The comprehensive scope of data helps verify that the J.D. program consistently meets its educational objectives and fulfills accreditation standards.

4. **Integration of findings and continuous improvement**

Following each ABA reaccreditation review, the Dean (in consultation with relevant administrators and faculty committees) will thoroughly review the ABA report and its recommendations. The Dean will then formulate specific action plans to address any noted areas for improvement. These action steps will be documented and, where appropriate, integrated into Southwestern's institutional planning and budgeting processes, ensuring that identified improvements are implemented and sustained. This responsive follow-up process demonstrates the law school's commitment to using program review findings to enhance academic quality.

On an annual basis, the Dean and appropriate administrators and committees will review the data and trends from the ABA questionnaires and other internal assessments of the J.D. program. If concerns or areas for enhancement are identified, the law school will develop plans and take action to address these issues promptly.

5. **Accountability and oversight**

Each year, the Dean or the Dean's designee will provide a summary report of the J.D. program's key performance indicators and notable trends to the faculty and the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee. This annual briefing will ensure that the Board is kept informed of the program's status, progress, and any areas of

concern, and it allows the Board’s Academic Affairs Committee to exercise appropriate oversight.

C. Program Review for Master of Laws Programs

1. Timing and responsibilities

Each LL.M. program will undergo a comprehensive program review at least every seven years. The LL.M. program review will be completed by the faculty Graduate, Joint, and Partnership Programs Review Committee. The Dean will staff the Committee as needed to prepare for upcoming program review processes as calendared in the Ten-Year Graduate, Joint, and Partnership Programs Assessment Plan. The Committee will include the director for the program being reviewed, the Associate Dean for Learning Outcomes (or equivalent), a Vice Dean, one additional faculty member, and at least one additional senior administrator (e.g., the Assistant Dean for Student Services or a member of the Institutional Research Office), who will serve ex officio to assist with data collection and analysis.

2. Program review phases and deliverables

For each review cycle, the law school will complete the phases and steps below:

Phase	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Key Activities & Outputs
Planning	Month 0	Graduate, Joint, and Partnership Programs Review Committee (PRC) chaired by a Vice Dean or Associate Dean for Learning Outcomes (or equivalent)	The PRC will discuss the plan for data and information gathering to inform the program review, including scope, timeline, and evidence needs.
Data Gathering	Month 1-2	Ex officio administrator	An administrator will collect information and provide a data packet and the WSCUC Program Review Rubric.
Self-Study (a narrative report with evidence)	Months 3–5	PRC	The PRC will: Analyze mission fit and current market demand. Review the program’s learning outcomes and assess the extent to which students are achieving these outcomes (using direct and indirect evidence, and curriculum mapping where applicable). Review the program’s curriculum map to determine alignment with Programmatic Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

			<p>Compile direct and indirect evidence of student success and achievement of learning outcomes for the three most recent cohorts. However, the Committee can include relevant evidence even if it is available only for the current cohort.</p> <p>Evaluate the student experience and academic support services. This evaluation should include LL.M. students' interactions with faculty and involvement in student life.</p> <p>Review the sufficiency of course offerings and the faculty qualifications and scholarship of particular relevance to the unique aspects of the LL.M. programs.</p> <p>Summarize enrollment, retention, and career outcomes.</p> <p>Assess the school's satisfaction of any program-specific fiscal, library, technology, and staffing needs.</p> <p>Identify strengths, challenges, and preliminary improvement recommendations.</p>
External Review	Months 6–7	PRC	<p>The PRC will engage at least one external legal-education expert.</p> <p>The external reviewer will review the self-study and meet with constituents. Meetings will include relevant faculty and administrators. In addition, the external reviewer will solicit input from currently enrolled students and recent alumni from the program being reviewed. The external reviewer will submit a written evaluation within 30 days of the site (virtual or on-campus) visit.</p>
Action Plan & Approval	Months 8-11	PRC and Curriculum Committee	<p>The PRC will review the external reviewer's evaluation and discuss the evaluation with law school leadership, including the Dean and Vice Deans.</p> <p>The PRC will draft a 3- to 5-year action plan with measurable objectives,</p>

			<p>timelines, responsible parties, and budget implications.</p> <p>The Curriculum Committee will review the plan and offer feedback.</p> <p>The PRC will revise the plan based on the Curriculum Committee’s feedback and present the revised plan to the full faculty for feedback. The PRC will revise the plan based on faculty feedback.</p> <p>The Dean will approve the plan or request additional information.</p>
Annual Assessment and Information Gathering	Years 1–5	Faculty program directors (with assistance of Associate Dean for Learning Outcomes or equivalent)	<p>Faculty program directors will complete exit interviews for every graduating LL.M. student.</p> <p>Faculty program directors will submit annual progress reports to the Curriculum Committee, summarizing status of action-plan items.</p> <p>Annual reports should focus on “closing the loop” on improvements. In addition, progress reports should include a narrative for each student who has completed the degree in the academic year. The narrative should report on the student’s success and achievement of learning objectives, participation in student life, entering credentials and feedback on the student’s experience at Southwestern. Students should be asked about employment during the exit interview and, if known, employment should be included in the narrative.</p>

3. Data standards and evidence

In recent years, the LL.M. programs have been exceptionally small. Accordingly, the studied period for the program review should be at least five years prior. Until annual enrollment reaches at least five students, data will be presented in tables and narratives rather than longitudinal graphing. No student names or identification numbers will be included. Each review cycle will also draw on mixed-method evidence: direct assessment artifacts tied to program learning outcomes; alumni interviews or surveys; and structured exit interviews conducted with every LL.M. graduate.

4. Integration with planning and budgeting

Approved action items will be reviewed and acted on during the next annual budgeting process. The LL.M. Program directors are responsible for submitting budget requests and tracking decisions and allocations.

5. Records and reporting

The complete review dossier (self-study, external report, action plan, progress reports) will be archived digitally by the Institutional Research Office and referred to in WSCUC reaffirmation materials. Key findings will be summarized by either the Dean or the PRC for the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee.

D. Program Review for the Joint J.D./MBA and Educational Partnerships

1. Timing and responsibilities

The Joint J.D./MBA and each educational partnership will undergo a comprehensive program review at least every eight years. These reviews will be completed by the faculty Graduate, Joint, and Partnership Programs Review Committee. The Dean will staff the Committee as needed to prepare for upcoming program review processes as calendared in the Ten-Year Graduate, Joint, and Partnership Programs Assessment Plan. The Committee will include the director for the program being reviewed, the Associate Dean for Learning Outcomes (or equivalent), a Vice Dean, one additional faculty member, and at least one additional senior administrator (e.g., the Assistant Dean for Student Services or a member of the Institutional Research Office), who will serve ex officio to assist with data collection and analysis.

2. Program review phases and deliverables

For each review cycle, the law school will complete the phases and steps below:

Phase	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Key Activities & Outputs
Planning	Month 0	PRC	The PRC will discuss the plan for data and information gathering to inform the program review, including scope, timeline, and evidence needs.
Data Gathering	Month 1-2	Ex officio administrator	An administrator will collect information and provide a data packet and the WSCUC Program Review Rubric.
Self-Study Including Action Plan (a narrative with evidence)	Months 3–8	PRC	The PRC will: Analyze mission fit and current market demand. Compile direct and indirect evidence of student success for the three most recent cohorts. However, the Committee

			<p>can include relevant evidence even if it is available only for the current cohort.</p> <p>Evaluate the student experience and academic support services.</p> <p>Review the sufficiency of course offerings and the faculty qualifications and scholarship of particular relevance to the unique aspects of the program/partnership (if applicable).</p> <p>Summarize enrollment, retention, and career outcomes.</p> <p>Assess the school's satisfaction of any program/partnership-specific fiscal, library, technology, and staffing needs. Identify strengths, challenges, and preliminary improvement recommendations.</p> <p>Contact the partner institution to discuss how effectively the partnership is functioning, how well it serves students, and whether it continues to align with both institutions' missions and standards.</p> <p>An external review will be solicited for any program that alters the course of study at Southwestern (e.g., by accepting transfer credits from another institution). See above description of external review for the LL.M., which would also apply to other external reviews.</p> <p>The PRC will draft a 3- to 5-year action plan, informed by external review when applicable, and should include measurable objectives, timelines, responsible parties, and budget implications.</p>
Approval	Month 9	Curriculum Committee	The Curriculum Committee will review the plan and offer feedback.

			<p>The PRC will revise the plan based on the Curriculum Committee’s feedback and present the revised plan to the full faculty for feedback. The PRC will revise the plan based on faculty feedback.</p> <p>The Dean will approve the plan or request additional information.</p>
Annual Assessment & Information Gathering	Years 1–5	Dean-appointed faculty member (with assistance of Associate Dean for Learning Outcomes or equivalent)	<p>The appointed faculty member will conduct exit interviews with every graduating student in the joint-degree program/partnership.</p> <p>The faculty member will also submit annual progress reports to the Curriculum Committee, summarizing the status of action-plan items. Annual reports should focus on “closing the loop” on improvements.</p> <p>In addition, progress reports should include a narrative for each student who has completed the program in the academic year.</p> <p>The narrative should report on the student’s GPA at Southwestern, entering credentials, and feedback on the student’s experience with the joint degree program. Students should be asked about employment during the exit interview and, if known, employment should be included in the narrative</p>

3. Data standards and evidence

The partnership programs have been exceptionally small. Accordingly, the studied period for the program review should be at least five years prior. Until annual enrollment reaches at least five students, data will be presented in tables and narratives rather than longitudinal graphing. No student names or identification numbers will be included. Each review cycle will also draw on mixed-method evidence: direct assessment artifacts tied to program learning outcomes; alumni interviews or surveys; and structured exit interviews conducted with every graduate.

4. Integration with planning and budgeting

Approved action items will be reviewed and acted on during the next annual budgeting process. The appointed faculty member for annual assessment of each program is responsible for submitting budget requests and tracking decisions and allocations.

5. Records and reporting

The complete review dossier (self-study, external report, action plan, progress reports) will be archived digitally by the Institutional Research Office and referred to in WSCUC reaffirmation materials. Key findings will be summarized by either the Dean or the PRC for the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee.

E. Interim Reviews

The Dean or the Curriculum Committee may initiate an interim review of any program when triggered by (a) material changes in enrollment, (b) substantive curricular modification, (c) accreditation findings, or (d) teach-out or closure considerations. Any interim review will, to the extent feasible, include a focused self-study and appropriate external input, resulting in findings and, if needed, an action plan. Records and reporting related to interim reviews will be the same as for regular reviews.

F. Policy Revisions

Southwestern expressly reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without notice.