

# SOUTHWESTERN

## LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

### Attendance Policy

Faculty policy approved May 12, 2023.

**Revision history:** Substantive revisions made May 12, 2023 and June 2, 2023; revised to include provisions for online courses in May 2024.

**Related policies:** Academic Policies and Procedures (Sections B and C); Administrative Withdrawal Policy; Federal Financial Aid Eligibility Policy; Religious & Cultural Observances Policy (Section 5); SCALE Program Policies; Tuition Refund Policy; Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy; Return of Title IV Funds Policy

**Scheduled Review Date:** January 2025 (Student Services Office and Academic Standards Committee)

#### A. ABA Standard

Law schools approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) must require regular class attendance per ABA Standard 308(a). Students at Southwestern Law School are expected to attend all scheduled classes for each course they are enrolled in.

#### B. Maximum Absences

Southwestern recognizes that some absences may, in rare instances, be unavoidable. Students may need to miss an occasional class because of illness, personal and family emergencies, job interviews, law school activities and functions, religious and cultural observances, and other compelling reasons. Although students are encouraged to keep individual faculty members informed about their absences, students do not need to submit documentation to support an absence. As a professional school, Southwestern will assume absences are for compelling reasons and will be taken only when necessary.

Unless otherwise approved as a disability or pregnancy accommodation, or absent a successful appeal under the Administrative Withdrawal Policy, students who exceed the number of absences or fail to complete sufficient work will not earn academic credit for the course. Students who are administratively withdrawn may appeal under the Administrative Withdrawal Policy.

**1. Residential/in-person courses**

Students who are absent for more than 20% of regularly scheduled class sessions in a residential course will not have attended sufficient classes to earn credit and may be administratively withdrawn (WA). An absence for any reason counts toward the maximum of the 20% absences permitted.

**2. Asynchronous courses**

In an asynchronous course, students who fail to complete at least 50% of the assigned work by the due date for any three weeks during the semester or any two weeks during the summer term will not have participated sufficiently to earn credit for the course and may be administratively withdrawn (WA).

**3. Hybrid courses (residential/online or online synchronous/asynchronous)**

Students enrolled in a class with any weeks of instruction without a required synchronous class to attend will be deemed absent for that week if they fail to complete at least 50% of the required asynchronous coursework by the due date.

Classes with a mix of required synchronous and asynchronous lessons will apply the attendance policy based on the work required each week as described in the course syllabus.

**4. Intersession and mini-term residential courses**

Students enrolled in any January intersession or summer mini-term must attend all class meetings to receive unit credit.

**5. London Summer-Aboard Program**

Students enrolled in the London Summer-Abroad Program must abide by the attendance rules in place for that program and distributed as part of registration materials.

**C. Special Attendance Rules**

**1. LAWS I and Launch Week**

Attending LAWS I classes during Launch Week is part of the attendance policy. Launch Week is the first week of school for non-SCALE J.D. first-year students before they begin their full course load.

Missing more than two LAWS I classes during Launch Week may result in an administrative withdrawal from LAWS I, subject to review by the Associate Dean for Student Services and the LAWS professor.

Attending Launch Week classes for students in the Online J.D. Program means the timely completion of all asynchronous work and either attending the Zoom classes or watching the Launch Week videos for those Zoom classes within three calendar days of those videos being posted. Failing to complete the LAWS I Launch Week

coursework may result in an administrative withdrawal from LAWS I, subject to review by the Associate Dean for Student Services and the LAWS professor.

An administrative withdrawal from LAWS I will result in an administrative withdrawal from LAWS II, and the student will be required to take both courses during their second year. A student's failure to complete LAWS I and II during their first year will impact enrollment in other courses and programs, such as externships and honors programs, and could delay graduation.

## **2. Externships**

Students enrolled in an externship course are subject to the attendance requirements provided in the externship course syllabi.

## **3. Asynchronous online and hybrid courses**

A student attends an online course (or the online portion of a hybrid course) by participating in a synchronous class or otherwise engaging in an academically related activity, per the course syllabus or professor's instructions. Examples of asynchronous academically related activity include but are not limited to contributing to an online discussion or chat session; submitting an assignment or working draft; working through exercises; taking a quiz or exam; viewing or completing an interactive tutorial; participating in an online study group; and initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.

Discussing matters other than the course's subject matter does not count as attendance, even if the student contacts the course instructor to discuss them. Examples of discussion topics that would not qualify as attendance include but are not limited to plans about submitting assignments, extension requests on assignment deadlines, notifications of illness, or questions about purchasing course materials.

Academically related activities are tracked and documented through Canvas, Southwestern's learning management system, and Southwestern's email system.

Documenting that a student has logged into an online synchronous or asynchronous class on Canvas is insufficient to demonstrate attendance. For example, if a student logs into an online course on September 15 and logs out without any further activity, the student did not attend the online class that day.

## **4. First-day attendance**

As required by federal law, Southwestern monitors class attendance, including first-day attendance. If a student does not attend the first class and does not inform the professor or the Students Services Office before the absence, the student may be dropped from the course.

In addition, select courses may have a first-day attendance policy that requires students enrolled in the course to attend the first class session. The first class

session of these courses involves detailed planning that is necessary to the format for the entire semester. This policy ensures fairness to students on the waitlist and to students in these courses who depend upon their classmates' attendance and participation. Students who fail to attend the first class session of a course that has a first-day attendance policy will be dropped from the course automatically and without advance notice. Students must check the course description in Self-Service to determine if a course has a first-day attendance policy.

For the purposes of this section, students taking online or hybrid classes that do not require a live or synchronous session during the first week of the term must complete at least 80% of the asynchronous academically related activities assigned for the first week of the course by the end of the first week. Failing to complete 80% of the assigned asynchronous academically related course activities by the end of the first week may result in the student being dropped from the course.

Students should note that the course Canvas pages open at least two weeks before the term and that individual course professors will set the specific schedule for work to be completed.

## **D. Attendance Tracking**

### **1. Qwickly app**

Attendance for in-person and synchronous classes will be taken during class through Qwickly, a digital attendance tracking software. Students who do not check in at the appointed time during class are considered absent. Students may not check in other students or share Qwickly codes with other students; violations will be referred to the Honor Code Committee.

### **2. Permission to attend a residential class via Zoom**

Students who receive advanced approval from a faculty member to watch an in-person class session via Zoom due to illness or another compelling reason are not considered to be present for purposes of attendance, may not check into class via Qwickly, and will be marked absent. These absences count toward the maximum absences a student may accrue before being administratively withdrawn from the class. Students who check-in without being physically present during an in-person or synchronous class will be referred to the Honor Code Committee.

### **3. Unprofessional conduct and early departures**

Lack of preparation, early departure, or inappropriate behavior may result in a student being marked absent for a class session.

### **4. Impact on final course grade**

A professor may consider class attendance when determining course grades in the manner stated on the course syllabus.

**5. Student responsibility for absence tracking**

Students must keep track of their absences. The Student Services Office is unable to provide students with ongoing attendance totals. Students may view their attendance in Qwickly at any time.

**E. Course Roster Verification by Faculty**

As required by federal law, each semester, faculty must verify the accuracy of attendance rosters on the first day of class and again after the end of the add/drop period for each term. The purpose of verifying attendance is to prevent problems associated with tuition refunds, federal financial aid relative to Title IV refunding rules, and issuing grades such as "WA" for students who never attended class.

Faculty should take attendance for each class session. The Student Services Office should check class rolls weekly for all programs other than the Online J.D. Program. The Online Education Office should check class rolls weekly for courses in the Online J.D. Program.

**F. Federal Financial Aid**

Students who receive federal financial aid should consult the Related Policies (listed at the top of this policy) for more information about attendance requirements. Specifically, federal regulations require financial aid recipients to maintain satisfactory academic progress toward a degree program to continue receiving federal financial aid. Federal regulations also require Southwestern to return federal financial aid under certain circumstances when the student withdraws or is on a leave of absence. These regulations are complex, and any student with questions or concerns should contact the Financial Aid Office.

**G. Policy Revisions**

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