

## NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

### ABA Standard 310 Compliance Policy

#### PART I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Standard 310 of the ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools requires law schools to “adopt, publish, and adhere to written policies and procedures for determining the credit hours that it awards for coursework.” Additionally, Standard 310 sets forth the amount of in-class and out-of-class work that is required for students to earn a credit hour. According to Standard 310,

[a] a “credit hour” is an amount of work that reasonably approximates:

- (1) not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in subparagraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including simulation, field placement, clinical, co-curricular, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

For purposes of Standard 310, 50 minutes suffices for one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction. An “hour” for out-of-class student work is 60 minutes. Out-of-class work may include such activities as reading, case briefing, completing assignments or assessments other than a final exam, solving problem sets, research assignments, posting to an online discussion board, practice questions and examinations, CALI exercises, participation in study groups, reviewing, outlining, studying or otherwise working on materials and assignments for the course that assists in comprehension of course content. Out-of-class student work may also include participating in out-of-class simulations and role-playing exercises that help students develop lawyering competencies, court or other observations, and attendance at review sessions. Conferences with the instructor, research, and completion of drafts of writing projects, and preparation for an oral argument or presentation also constitute out-of-class student work.

In compliance with ABA Standard 310, NCCU School of Law has adopted this Credit Hour Policy. The policy strives to provide clear guidance while also allowing flexibility to faculty to determine the most effective out-of-class work for their students.

#### PART II: DETERMINATION OF CREDIT HOURS

As allowed by Standard 310, NCCU School of Law maintains a 14-week semester followed by an exam period of at least one week. Summer sessions consist of five-week terms followed by an exam period. Intersession courses and specialty courses may be scheduled for shorter periods of time. The chart below

1. Exam Courses: Courses that require a written final exam are scheduled for 50 minutes per credit hour multiplied by 14, regardless of the length of term. Professors must assign at least 120 minutes per credit hour, multiplied by 15, of out-of-class work for students to complete over the course of the term. The minimum time to complete the out-of-class exams (including the final exam) for the course must be 60 minutes per credit hour.

2. Non-Exam Courses: Doctrinal courses that do not have a final exam are scheduled for 50 minutes per credit hour multiplied by 14, regardless of the length of term. Professors must assign at least 120 minutes per credit hour, multiplied by 15, of out-of-class work for students to complete over the course of the term. The minimum time to complete the out-of-class assessment(s) for the course must be 60 minutes per credit hour.

3. Writing Courses: Most writing courses, including Legal Writing Courses, Practice Oriented Writing Courses, and Writing Seminars are scheduled for 50 minutes per credit hour multiplied by 14, regardless of the length of term. Professors must assign at least 120 minutes per credit hour, multiplied by 15, of out-of-class work for students to complete over the course of the term. Class meeting times and the amount of out-of-class work may vary from week to week. However, the combined time must equal at least 42.5 hours of instructional time and out-of-class work per credit hour over the course of the term.

4. Appellate Advocacy and Senior Writing: Appellate Advocacy and Senior Writing are scheduled for 100 minutes per course multiplied by 14, regardless of the length of term. Professors must assign at least 140 minutes per credit hour, multiplied by 15, of out-of-class work for students to complete over the course of the term. Class meeting times and the amount of out-of-classroom work may vary from week to week. However, the combined time must equal at least 42.5 hours of instructional time and student work per credit hour over the course of the term.

5. Clinical Courses: Credit for clinical courses, including externships, may be awarded for 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instructional time or for 60 minutes of out-of-class work. Out-of-class work may include "law office" meetings, research, in-court or appropriate forum representation, discussion board participation, journaling, performing clinic work, preparing for class, completing class assignments and other academic work related to the course assigned by the supervising faculty member.

Clinical professors may determine the overall number of hours of each type of work required for each unit of credit for their clinical courses but they must include a classroom component as per ABA Standard 304. At a minimum, students must complete a total of 42.5 hours clinic-related work for each unit of credit. Students enrolled in clinical courses must complete required hours and submit time keeping records in accordance with clinic practices.

6. Distance Learning Courses: Students may receive credit to the extent allowed by ABA Standards for distance learning courses that are in compliance with ABA Standards. Distance learning courses, whether offered in synchronous or asynchronous format, or a combination, shall require at least 42.5 hours of instructional time and out-of-class work per credit.

7. Independent Study: Students must complete a minimum of 45 hours of research and writing work for one unit of credit, 90 hours of research and writing work for two units of credit, and 135 hours of research and writing for three units of credit. Students shall submit detailed timesheets to their supervising professor, including time spent researching a topic, creating an outline, drafting the paper, re-writing the paper, and meeting with the professor or a research librarian. The professor is responsible for reviewing the student's timesheet before assigning a grade and certifying that the student completed the requisite amount of time.

8. Student Research Experience: Students must complete a minimum of 60 hours of research and writing work to earn one credit for Student Research Experience. Students shall submit detailed timesheets to their supervising professor. The professor is responsible for reviewing the student’s timesheet before assigning a grade and certifying that the student completed the requisite amount of time.

9. Moot Court, Trial, Client Counseling, Negotiations and other approved competitions: Students may receive credit for participating in approved competitions. At a minimum, students must complete 45 hours for one unit of credit, 90 hours for two units of credit, or 135 hours for three units of credit. Credit is granted for time spent receiving direct faculty instruction, completing assignments or other work assigned by the coach or supervising professor, preparing briefs and other materials for the competition, mooted arguments, and participating in actual competition(s). Students shall submit detailed timesheets to the designated supervising faculty member. The faculty advisor is responsible for reviewing the student’s timesheets before certifying that the student completed the requisite amount of time. This function may not be delegated to a student leader of the co-curricular activity.

10. Law Review and Law Journal: Students may receive credit for serving on the editorial boards of approved law reviews and law journals. At a minimum, students must complete 45 hours of journal-related work for each unit of credit. Students shall submit detailed timesheets to the journal’s advisor. The advisor is responsible for reviewing the student’s timesheets before certifying that the student completed the requisite amount of time. This function may not be delegated to a student leader of the law review or journal.

**PART III. COMPLIANCE.**

To ensure compliance with this policy, ABA Standard 310, and applicable federal regulations

1. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall, prior to each academic semester, remind the faculty of this policy.
2. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall schedule courses to ensure that they meet for the requisite minutes of instructional time. In general, classes will be scheduled in the following block configurations during the fall and spring semesters:

Credits	Configuration Option	Schedule (Unless otherwise specified, does not include time for a break during the class meeting.)
1	A	Once per week for 50 minutes.
2	A	Once per week for 100 minutes.
	B	Twice per week for 50 minutes.
3	A	Once per week for 160 minutes, which includes the option for up to a 10-minute break.
	B	Twice per week for 75 minutes.
	C	Three times per week for 50 minutes.

4	A	Twice per week for 100 minutes.
	B	Three times per week for 67 minutes.
	C	Three times per week with two 75 minute classes and one 50 minute class.
	D	Four times per week for 50 minutes.

3. The syllabus for each course shall include a statement summarizing the law school’s credit hour policy and specifying the number of hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction and the number of hours of out-of-class student work required in that course to comply with the policy. Course syllabi shall state—through specified assignments, readings, projects, simulations, and other work—that students’ out-of-class time will meet the requirements of this policy. Readings—on average—of at least 15 pages per credit hour multiplied by 14 (if there is a final exam) or 15 (if a final exam will not be administered) regardless of the length of the course<sup>1</sup> shall be presumed to meet this rule. While the stated average minimum page numbers assigned is presumed to meet the rule, faculty may assign less than the minimum stated when, in their professional judgment, the problem, statute, or other material assigned is complex in nature and it is expected that the amount of time it will take students to complete the out of class assignment will meet the rule. This will be so indicated on the syllabus itself.

4. All professors shall submit a completed Standard 310 Compliance Report to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the beginning of every semester for each course taught during the semester. In so doing, a professor certifies that outside work for the course meets the requirements of ABA Standard 310 and the Standard 310 Compliance Policy.

**PART IV. DETERMINATION OF HOURS OF CREDIT FOR COURSES TAKEN AT ANOTHER LAW SCHOOL**

1. As a condition of approval of a School of Law student’s application to visit at another ABA-approved law school, an official from the school offering the course must certify in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that the units of credit awarded for successful completion of the course(s) to be taken comply with Standard 310.

2. As a condition of approval of transfer credits by the College of Law, an official from the school from which an applicant is seeking to transfer must certify in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs that the units of credit for the courses taken comply with Standard 310.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the credit hour calculator from Rice University (<http://cte.rice.edu/blogarchive/2016/07/11/workload>) NCCU School of Law has determined that 15 pages of reading per credit per week presumptively satisfies the out-of-class aspect of the policy. The calculator is based on empirical research into reading speeds and absorption rates based on expected mastery of the material. This reading time estimate does not include additional work expected of the student. The School of Law will monitor this policy through, among other things, student evaluations, which will ask about the perceived workload for particular courses. [Academic literature indicates that a skilled adult reads an average of 5-40 casebook pages per hour, depending on the density of the text, the difficulty of the material (number of new concepts), and the competency expected (to skim, understand or engage).<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Rice Center for Teaching Excellence, How Much Should We Assign? Estimating Out of Class Workload, available at <http://cte.rice.edu/blogarchive/2016/07/11/workload>. See also the Course Load Estimator tool, available at <http://cte.rice.edu/workload>.]

**PART V. IMPLEMENTATION**

The policy will be implemented by publication in student handbooks, on the web, and in other appropriate places to provide notice. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will have primary responsibility for monitoring implementation.

**PART VI. SUMMARY**

Number of Credits	Minimum Number of Hours of Classroom Time or Direct Faculty Instruction	Aggregate Number of Hours of Out-of-Class Student Academic Engagement (over the course of the semester)	Minimum Time for Assessments (length of exam or amount of time spent completing assessment) or Additional Instruction
1	14 hours	30 hours	1 hour
2	28 hours	60 hours	2 hours
3*	42 hours	90 hours	3 hours
4	56 hours	120 hours	4 hours

\* Appellate Advocacy and Senior Writing: Appellate Advocacy and Senior Writing, 3-credit hour courses, are scheduled for 100 minutes per course multiplied by 14, regardless of the length of term. The aggregate number of hours of out-of-class student academic engagement (over the course of the semester) is 104 hours and the minimum time for completing the final assessment is 3 hours. The out-of-class work may consist of individual conferences with the instructor, research, completion of drafts of writing projects, attending an appellate argument, or spending a day with an appellate attorney. The last two activities will require students to submit a reflective writing piece as a part of the course grade.

\*\*Mandatory extra class if class scheduled for assessments