**Law School Course Credit-Hour Expectations:   
*Please include on your syllabus***

The following **Law School-specific suggested descriptions of how credit hours are met in 2-, 3-, and 4-credit courses** are based on ABA Standard 310 and related ABA guidance of 42.5 hours per credit; this is the equivalent of the federal credit-hour definition followed by UW–Madison[[1]](#footnote-1). The sample language below reflects typical Law School course meeting times.

Suggestions for **clinics** (any credit level) and **co-curricular activities like journals, moot court, mock trial** (any credit level) appear at the end.

[*For all other course offerings falling outside these parameters, please consult with Assoc. Dean Emily Cauble.*]

General guidance (ABA Standard 310 and *Interpretation* 310-1):   
\*ABA Standards indicate that “*at least* 42.5 hours of total in-class and out-of-class student work is required per credit.” [emphasis added].  
\*As a general guideline, for each hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction, students should be expected to devote two hours of out-of-class work.  
\* For courses with final exams, “[t]ime devoted to taking a required final examination may count toward the in-class time required, and time devoted to studying for a required final examination may count toward the out-of-class time required.”   
\* However, re the above, the ABA Managing Director’s Guidance Memo also indicates that ‘seat time’ is “not the sole focus of Standard 310” and “[n]o minimum amount of seat time is required in any particular class.”   
 **2-Credit Course** [85 hours minimum in-class and out-of-class student work].   
Sample statements:

*Meeting twice a week:*   
**Credit Hours**: This is a two-credit course, which meets twice a week in 55-minute class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately two hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Meeting once a week:* **Credit Hours**: This is a two-credit course, which meets for one two-hour class session a week. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately four hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Other:*   
**Credit Hours:** This two-credit course is met by an expectation of a minimum of 85 hours of student engagement with the courses learning activities (at least 42.5 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor-student meeting times [*insert meeting time expectations*], reading, writing, assignments, [*and other student work as described elsewhere in the syllabus*].

**2-3 Variable Credit Course** [85 or 127.5 hours minimum in-class and out-of-class student work]. Sample statement: *Meeting once a week:***Credit Hours**: This variable-credit course meets for one two-hour class session a week; you should expect approximately four hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. Students may take this course for two or three credits. [*The syllabus includes additional information about any meeting times and expectations for student work for the 3rd credit, viz:* “Students enrolled for three credits are expected to [*insert description of additional learning activities*] and should expect that the total work for the additional one credit should require at least 42.5 hours of student engagement.]

**3-Credit Course** [127.5 hours minimum in-class and out-of-class student work]   
Sample statements:*Meeting twice a week:* **Credit Hours:** This is a three-credit course, which meets twice a week in 80-minute class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately three hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Meeting three times a week:* **Credit Hours:** This is a three-credit course, which meets three times a week in 55-minute class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately two hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Meeting once a week:* **Credit Hours:** This is a three-credit course, which meets once a week in one two-hour class session. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect an amount of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) that will approximate a minimum of 100 hours or more throughout the semester. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Other:*   
**Credit Hours:** This three-credit course is met by an expectation of a minimum of 127.5 hours of student engagement with the courses learning activities (at least 42.5 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor-student meeting times [*insert meeting time expectations*], reading, writing, assignments, [*and other student work as described elsewhere in the syllabus*].

**3-4 Variable Credit Course** [127.5 or 170 hours minimum in-class and out-of-class student work].   
Sample statement: *Meeting twice a week:***Credit Hours**: This variable-credit course meets for two 80-minute class session a week; you should expect approximately three hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. Students may take this course for three or four credits. [*The syllabus includes additional information about any meeting times and expectations for student work for the 3rd credit, viz:* “Students enrolled for four credits are expected to [*insert description of additional learning activities*] and should expect that the total work for the additional one credit should require at least 42.5 hours of student engagement.]

**4-Credit Course** [170 hours total in-class and out-of-class student work].  
Sample statements:

*Meeting four times a week:***Credit Hours**: This is a four-credit course, which regularly meets four times a week in 55-minute class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately two hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Meeting twice a week:* **Credit Hours**: This is a four-credit course, which meets twice a week in two-hour class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately four hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Meeting three times a week:* **Credit Hours**: This is a four-credit course, which meets three a week in 80-minute class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately three hours of out-of-class work (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for each class session. [*The syllabus also includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.*]

*Other:*   
**Credit Hours:** This four-credit course is met by an expectation of a minimum of 170 hours of student engagement with the courses learning activities (at least 42.5 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor-student meeting times [*insert meeting time expectations*], reading, writing, assignments, [*and other student work as described elsewhere in the syllabus*].

**Clinic sections** [Law School Rule 3.14(6) requires 45 hours per credit in clinic activities.]  
Sample statement:

**Credit Hours:** The academic credit standard for this clinical course is met by an expectation of a total of 45 hours of student engagement with the clinic-related work per credit, which include instructor-student meetings [*insert meeting time expectations*], case-related work, assignments, [*and other student work as described elsewhere in the syllabus*].

**Co-curricular Courses** [*e.g*. law journals, moot court, mock trial]  
*Note: Co-curricular course faculty advisors should consult with Assoc. Dean Emily Buchholz, who serves as Academic Credit Reviewer for co-curricular activities per Law School Rule 3.06(6).*  
Sample statement:

**Credit Hours:** The academic credit standard for this co-curricular course is met by a general expectation of a minimum of [60 hours]\* of student engagement with [co-curricular course activity-related] work per credit, which include [*insert meeting time expectations and other student work as described in the syllabus*].

*\*Note*: see this additional information about journals and moot court, *especially re journal editors and Moot Court Board members.*

Law School Rule 3.06 (2) provides that students who satisfactorily participate in Moot Court or Mock Trial as contestants shall receive up to 3 credits in the semester in which they did so; students who serve as coaches will receive 1 credit in the relevant semester. Notwithstanding this rule, faculty advisors should ensure that the work associated with these credits is consistent with the 60-hour per credit minimum standard.

Law School Rule 3.06(3) indicates that students satisfactorily writing notes, comments, or similar pieces for law journals shall receive 2 credits for each of two semesters. Notwithstanding this rule, faculty advisors should ensure that the work associated with these 2 credits is consistent with the 60-hour per credit minimum standard.

Importantly, Rule 3.06(4) states that students performing editorial functions for the law journals and members of the executive board of the Moot Court may receive *up to* 4 credits a semester based on the hours of “educationally beneficial work” performed at a rate of *60 hours of such work per credit*. (“Educationally beneficial work” is defined elsewhere in Rule 3.06.)

1. UW-Madison [policy statement](https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1011) on the definition of the credit hour: “Generally, UW–Madison will follow the federal credit-hour definition: one hour (i.e., 50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty/qualified instructor instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks, or the equivalent engagement over a different time period.” This is the equivalent of 42.5 hours per credit overall, *viz*.: “15x50 minutes + 15x2 hours”; *see* [ABA Standards](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2024-2025/2024-2025-standards-chapter-3.pdf): Standard 310 (Interpretation 310-1). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)