

What do the changes to ABA Standard 306 mean for how your law school thinks about legal education offering and curriculum? We are here to help you successfully meet the ABA standards for an online asynchronous course and increase your distance education offerings.

The ABA, in Standard 306, requires the following in order to give credit for distance learning:

- (1) an “opportunity for regular and substantive interaction between faculty member and student and among students”;
- (2) “regular monitoring of student effort by the faculty member and opportunity for communication about that effort”;
- (3) learning outcomes consistent with Standard 302.

All iLaw asynchronous classes include material presented in a online classroom; a substantial amount of time spent in Discussion Boards, where there is an expectation that faculty members will be involved and provide feedback to students and that students will communicate with each other; and assignments, with an expectation that faculty members will provide feedback to students about work. **The courses selected by iLaw have learning objectives consistent with Standard 302.**

A credit hour under Standard 310 is not less than one hour (50 minutes as explained in Interpretation 310-1) x 15 weeks 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. Time to take the exam is counted as “classroom or direct faculty instruction.” “The equivalent amount of work” (“as represented in the definition of credit hour”) applies to distance education classes.

iLaw calculates the minutes involved in distance learning activities by the nature of those activities. Material presented in the online classroom, though recorded, is no different than what can take place in the traditional classroom so they are counted in the same fashion as minutes in a traditional classroom. What occurs on a Discussion Board is described in the Managing Director’s Guidance Memo as an out-of-class activity. Therefore, the time devoted to the Discussion Board is divided in half to count toward credit. iLaw classes involve Discussion Boards where we expect students to be involved at least one hour for each question. This includes the student reading the question, other students’ responses, and the faculty member’s responses; the student thinking about an answer or a response; and the student typing an original response and responding to other students. To assure this amount of time, professors require students to make a particular number of responses or to have responses of a particular length.

Some of the professors also include a video each week that is recorded after the professor completes the evaluation of class assignments and/or what is said on the Discussion Board. When these recordings are used, iLaw counts them as “classroom or direct faculty instruction.”

Students also will be required to complete assignments. The time preparing these assignments is counted as out-of-class work, and the number of minutes is divided in half in reaching the number of appropriate minutes.

Additionally, the standard requires “two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks” for each credit. In iLaw classes this “additional” out-of-class work is covered in readings and study time. The standard requires at least 30 hours of out-of-class work per credit hour. iLaw estimates that it takes about five minutes for students to read one page of a law school textbook and that students read through the material at least twice during the term. iLaw suggests 10 minutes be the estimate for each page in the readings. Therefore, readings of 180 pages equates to 30 hours. Additionally, students are studying to prepare for exams. iLaw estimates (through student surveys) that students spend on average twenty hours studying for a three-credit course.

Here are examples of these interpretations:

Direct Instruction

ABA requires 750 minutes of direct instruction or its equivalent. For a three-credit course this is: **750 x 3 = 2250.**

Exam of 3 hours = 3 x 60 =	180
Recorded lecture of 900 minutes =	900
(28 discussion questions of 60 minutes)/2 =	840
(14 assignments of 60 minutes)/2 =	420
Total =	2340 minutes

Out-of-class Student Work

ABA requires 30 hours of out-of-class student work per credit. For a three-credit course this is **30 x 3 = 90 x 60 = 5400 minutes.**

Study in course and for exam 20 x 60 =	1200
420 pages of reading x 10 minutes =	4200
Total =	5400 minutes

iLaw is not an ABA accredited entity. In courses offering academic credit, the partner law school may use its accreditation to award course credit.