



# ASYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION: ESTIMATING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

## ABA Instructional Time Requirements

Consistent with ABA Standard 310, the Sturm College of Law requires 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instructional time per credit hour over 14 weeks plus a graded final exam or assessment. This amounts to **700 minutes of direct faculty instructional time per credit hour over the course of the semester**. Preparation time for these 700 minutes per credit hour should be double that. (ABA Standard 306's substantive requirements for distance law school courses are addressed in separate guidance.)

Since asynchronous learning is not classroom based, this guidance is intended to help you estimate the instructional minutes for your asynchronous instructional activities. **For weekend part-time program classes of 3 or 4 credits, one-third of your total instructional minutes are delivered in an asynchronous online format. For purely asynchronous classes, all of your instructional minutes are delivered this way.**

**This guidance focuses solely on direct instructional time and is based on literature in the field and experience. Preparation time has already been factored in and is assumed to amount to double the instructional time. It is not included in these estimates.**

This list includes the main types of asynchronous learning activities you might choose to incorporate into your class. You—the subject matter expert—know what activities are best suited for course content and the list is representative, rather than exhaustive. At the same time, the list can be used heuristically. You may find it helpful in thinking through new possibilities for your course since diversity in learning activities has been shown to deepen students' understanding of course content. Summative assessments in the form of final exams or assignments are not included below because they have already been factored into the Sturm College of Law instructional minute requirements.

## RECORDED MEDIA

(E.g., foundational lectures, supplemental instruction, podcasts, recap videos, films)

In general, recorded media account for 1.5 times the length of time of the media presentation. This is because the total amount of time it takes for students to interact with a 15-minute video is rarely 15 minutes. Students pause videos, take notes, review related reading material, process the information, and revisit difficult concepts.

## PRACTICE EXERCISES AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

(E.g., review problems, chapter exercises, quizzes, practice exam questions, or discussion boards with instructor feedback)

For practice exercises and formative assessment, factor in the time spent reviewing the question or prompt (such as a discussion board), planning the answer, writing the answer, and direct instructor feedback. Taking these elements into account, responsive writing is typically estimated at a rate of 500 words per hour, with additional time added for any direct instructor feedback. Timed exercises and assessments can use that time plus any direct instructor feedback as the indicator of instructional time.

## STUDENT MEETINGS

(E.g., office hours, group sessions, or one-on-one instructor student meetings)

If meetings with a student or group of students are required, the time spent meeting with a student is counted as instructional time. Count the minutes spent per student or student group, rather than the total minutes the instructor spends with students. If students are expected to prepare for the meeting beyond the standard preparation time allotted, add additional instructional time.

## PEER INTERACTION

(E.g., small group work, peer-reviews)

For small group work or peer reviews, count the time students are expected to spend with each other. If students are expected to prepare for the meetings beyond the standard preparation time allotted, for example, by working through a negotiation in between a series of peer meetings, add additional instructional time.

## RESEARCH AND WRITING

(E.g., research plans/papers, content summaries, response essays, self-evaluations, self-reflection activities, memos, case briefs, case charts)

Like reading, varying types of writing require varying degrees of effort and time. For the purposes of estimating instructional time, three types of writing are highlighted here: reflective, responsive, and research. These estimates account for review of preparation work such as reading and research and editing. However, they do not directly include the initial research and reading that would count as preparation time,

**REFLECTIVE WRITING** involves putting thoughts and opinions directly to the page (e.g., brainstorming, summaries, opinions).

You can estimate writing time for this type at the highest rate: 750 words (1½ pages) per hour.

**RESPONSIVE WRITING** typically requires more time and effort and describes writing in response to a prompt but without accompanying preparation work (e.g., essays, hypotheticals, reaction papers, discussion posts). A good rate for estimating time is 500 words (1 page) per hour.

**RESEARCH WRITING** includes significant preparation in the form of reading and research and is the most demanding type for many. Therefore, consider using the lowest rate: 250 words (½ page) per hour.

## STUDENT-DRIVEN CONTENT

(E.g., presentations, student-led discussion boards)

For presentations and discussion boards, factor in time spent preparing and writing the product. For presentations, you would also factor in practice time for the presentation, as well as the length of the presentation. Discussion boards are addressed above. If students are expected to prepare for the meetings beyond the standard preparation time allotted, add additional instructional time., for example,