

Southern Illinois University School of Law

Academic Honors Program

[Excerpted from the School of Law Rules for AY 2022-2023]

ARTICLE II - ADMISSIONS (J.D. Degree)

[amended 4/14/09; amended 8/12/18]

...

7. Admission to the Academic Honors Program

- (a) Pre-matriculation: An applicant (otherwise offered admission to the School of Law) will be offered admission in the Academic Honors Program if the student's LSAT score is within the top 10% of LSAT scores among matriculated students for the prior year. A student cannot be admitted into both the Academic Honors Program (a three-year program) and the Two-Year Honors Program.
- (b) Post-matriculation: Students who were not originally admitted to the Academic Honors Program but whose cumulative GPA is 3.500 or higher at the end of two full semesters are eligible to join the Academic Honors Program. Students who were not in the Academic Honors Program during their first two semesters but whose cumulative GPA after completing their fourth full semester is 3.500 or higher are eligible to join the Academic Honors Program. The Associate Dean or designee will be responsible for communicating with students about their eligibility to join the program.
- (c) Further rules governing the Academic Honors Program after initial admission are found in Rule IV.14.

ARTICLE IV - SPECIAL RULES REGARDING CURRICULUM

...

14. Academic Honors Program [added 5/9/18]

- (a) Continuing eligibility after Admission into the Program
 - (1) After Two Full Semesters: At the end of two full semesters, students admitted into the Academic Honors Program under Rule II.7(a) are eligible to remain in the Academic Honors Program if their cumulative GPA is a 3.500 or higher. Students admitted to the Academic Honors

Program under that Rule who fail to attain a cumulative 3.500 or higher after two full semesters are no longer eligible to be in the Academic Honors Program but may return after completing their fourth full semester if their cumulative GPA is, at that point, 3.500 or higher. The Associate Dean or designee will be responsible for communicating with students about any change in their eligibility for the program.

- (2) After Four Full Semesters: At the end of four full semesters, students who were either admitted to the Academic Honors Program under Rule II.7(a) or joined the program under Rule II.7(b) are eligible to remain in the Academic Honors Program if their cumulative GPA is 3.500 or higher. Students who were in the Academic Honors Program and fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.500 or higher after four full semesters are no longer eligible to be in the Academic Honors Program and may not return to it in the future. The Associate Dean or designee will be responsible for communicating with students about any change in their eligibility for the program.
- (b) Early Registration for Courses. Each semester that a student is in the Academic Honors Program, the student will be entitled to early registration for courses as set by the Registrar.
- (c) Requirements to Receive Academic Honors Designation. At graduation, a student who meets the following three requirements will be entitled to have an honors designation on the student's transcript.
 - (1) The student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.500 or higher.
 - (2) The student must (i) complete two full semesters as a member of the SIU Law Journal followed by two full semesters as an editor of the Law Journal, or (ii) be selected for and compete on the SIU Moot Court or Trial Team for four full semesters, or (iii) complete a minimum of five credit hours in a credited externship or in a law school clinic. [amended 9/24/21]
 - (3) The student must complete a capstone honors project.
 - (i) The capstone honors project must be a substantial, primarily self-directed undertaking that relates to legal study or practice and that has a defined end result or work product by which completion of the project can be assessed. Examples of qualifying projects could include independent study projects, substantial *pro bono* legal projects, or significant practical legal skills training projects that produce a significant legal academic writing, a community resource program or guide related to the law, or a substantially equivalent end product. The scope of the capstone project and the

proposed end product must be approved by the Associate Dean or designee prior to the student beginning the capstone project. Each capstone project must be supervised by a volunteer faculty advisor or attorney designated by the Associate Dean or his/her designee. Securing an advisor will be one of the student's requirements to complete the project. No faculty member will be required to advise a student on a project.

- (ii) The student must register for the capstone project course in the fall or in the spring semester of the student's third year. Upon completion of the capstone project, a student will receive one hour of S/U credit.
 - (iii) To earn the one credit hour, students must work on the capstone project no fewer than the minimum number of hours required by the then-current ABA definition of a credit hour (as of May 2018, 42.5 hours of work). Students are required to track the time spent on their project and maintain sufficient records to show compliance with the ABA standard.
 - (iv) All students in the Academic Honors Program must give a presentation about their projects at an annual capstone project forum held at the law school or an equivalent public speaking opportunity approved by the Associate Dean or designee.
- (d) Program Assistance. The Associate Dean will ask for one or more faculty volunteer(s) to assist students in identifying appropriate capstone projects and advisors to help keep track of the progress of Honors Program students as to the requirements for receiving the honors designation, especially paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) above.
- (e) Limitations on Counting Pro Bono Hours. A student who performs pro bono legal work to satisfy any requirements of this Honors Program is not allowed to count those pro bono hours towards the 35-hour pro bono graduation requirement of Rule III.5(c)(ix). The student must accumulate enough hours to separately fulfill both the graduation requirement and the Honors Program requirements.
- (f) Compliance with Rules. All students must comply with the rules and expectations of the Honors Program as established by the Associate Dean or designee to continue in the program and to receive program benefits.