



Policy Title
Independent Research Policy

Policy Number
SULC-1-006

Responsible Unit: Office of Academic Affairs	Effective Date: July 25, 2025
Responsible Official: Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Last Reviewed Date: July 25, 2025
Policy Classification: Academic Affairs	Last Revised Date: July 25, 2025
	Origination Date: By 2019

I. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform Southern University Law Center (SULC) faculty and students of the process to earn academic credit for independent research.

II. Policy Scope

This policy applies to faculty and students.

III. Policy Compliance

Failure to abide by this policy will result in a student not earning credit for independent research work performed.

IV. Policy Definitions

Not applicable.

V. Policy and Applicable Procedures

POLICY STATEMENT ON INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

An application for academic credit for student independent research may be granted in conformance with provisions given hereunder:

1. One (1) or two (2) hours of academic credit may be earned and a student may engage in independent research only once for academic credit during the students' matriculation.
2. To be eligible for consideration, a student must have earned at least 30 semester hours. Students must be in academic good-standing, i.e. not on academic probation.
3. Save exigent circumstances that must be verified by the applying student and only if approved by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, independent research will not be allowed during summer sessions.
4. A student will not be allowed to take more than a total of sixteen (16) semester hours including the independent research hours during the semester in which the independent research is to be completed.
5. A student who desires to conduct an independent research project for course credit must write a proposal in the form of an abstract or prospectus describing the particular research project.
6. The student must complete an application and submit the application and an abstract or prospectus to a full-time faculty member for approval. The faculty member must sign the completed application agreeing to guide and supervise the research project. The number of course credit hours recommended by the faculty member must appear on the application. The application and abstract or prospectus must be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
7. Research projects that are approved by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will be forwarded to the Records and Registration Department for processing.
8. A professor shall supervise only one (1) student enrolled in an independent research project per semester.
9. A student research project must be completed during the same semester of enrollment unless extenuating circumstances prevent its completion. If this occurs the supervising professor must submit a statement explaining the delay.
10. The students shall be required to write a substantial research paper as a requirement of the independent research project. Students shall confer individually with their professor for assessment of written work and then edit and rewrite their papers to produce works of such quality that they could be published as student notes in a law review.
11. The supervising professor shall evaluate the final written product and submit a final grade of pass or fail to the Director of Records and Registration.
12. The supervising professor shall keep and maintain for two (2) years at least one copy of the graded final research product and provide a copy of the same to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
13. Withdrawal from the Independent Research course shall be governed by the same regulations governing formal withdrawal from any other course.
14. Research projects seeking the two hours advanced writing credit must meet the requirements of ABA Standard 303(a)(2) and Interpretation 303-2.

15. If the student desires only one hour credit for the project, the paper must meet all requirements stated in section 10 above and be at least 4500 words, including the footnotes but excluding the cover or other ancillary pages. If the student desires to earn two hours of course credit, the paper must meet all requirements stated in section 10 above and be at least 9000 words, including the footnotes but excluding the cover or other ancillary pages. A paper that meets the requirement for two hours of course credit is eligible for advanced writing credit.

PROCEDURE

1. The student completes an application and an abstract or prospectus with a complete bibliography.
2. The student contacts and presents to the proposed supervising professor the application and abstract or prospectus.
3. The professor reviews the prospectus or abstract and indicates his approval to supervise the project by signing the application.
4. The student submits to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs the application signed by the professor, and the Vice Chancellor will either approve or deny the research project. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs may deny the application for reasons that the Vice Chancellor deems appropriate.
5. If the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs approves, the Vice Chancellor will give written notification to the professor and to the Records and Registration Department.
6. The student should check the students' Banner account for the Independent Research course or may email the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
7. The application and abstract must be approved no later than five (5) days after the semester begins. Students are encouraged to submit the application in the prior semester.
8. The student may drop the course, but only after written notice to the Professor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and only after timely completion of the withdrawal process.

Any other matters, substantive or procedural, not covered above will be resolved by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs with the permission of the Chancellor as need may arise and dictate.

****If the project will be submitted for the two hours advanced legal writing credit, the supervising professor must submit, to the Records and Registration Department, a certification form verifying that the student has met individually with the professor for assessment of the work and has edited and rewritten the final graded assignment, and further verifying the length and quality of the final graded assignment.***

VI. Policy Related Information

Not applicable.

VII. Policy History and Review Cycle

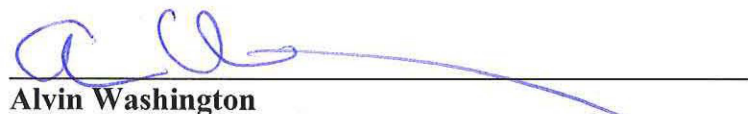
This policy was created prior to the adoption of the current policy format. The policy was updated in 2019 and revised again on May 28, 2021. The policy was revised, on June 4, 2021, to replace page limits with minimal word counts for research projects. The policy was reviewed, on July 25, 2025, without edits. The policy is subject to a five-year review cycle by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

VIII. Publication of Policy

The policy will be published at <https://www.sulc.edu/page/sulc-policies>.

IX. Policy Approval

This policy was approved by the faculty on July 25, 2025:


Alvin Washington
Chancellor, Southern University Law Center

June 25, 2025
Date