

American Bar Association Proposes Loosening Online Education Rules



Summary: The American Bar Association wants to ease restrictions on online legal education.

The American Bar Association has proposed loosening its rules on online education. In an announcement posted Monday, [they stated](#), "The Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, the American Bar Association's accreditor of law schools, is proposing a new rule for distance education that would nearly double the number of credits law students can earn in distance learning courses before graduating."

The current American Bar Association (ABA) rules state that no more than 15 required credits from an ABA-accredited school can be from online education. With the new proposal, the ABA would allow at least 28 online credit hours.

"ABA standards now require at least 83 credit hours for graduation although most schools require more, with the usual range being between 86 and 90 credits. As proposed, the revised standard would effectively raise the number of credits for distance learning to at least 28 credit hours and, in many cases, 30 credit hours. Those courses would continue to be subject to other requirements of the standards," the ABA wrote.

The ABA proposal would also change how many hours a first-year law student could complete remotely. Currently, they are not allowed any distance education, but the new rule would allow up to 10 credits online for 1L students.

The proposal will be discussed at a public hearing in Washington DC in April, and if the changes are approved, they will be finalized in May and ratified by the ABA House of Delegates in August.

Pamela Lysaght, chair of the council's Standards Review Committee, said that the ABA's proposal was designed to give law schools more flexibility.

The proposal was approved on February 9 at a meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

In addition to the online learning requirement change, the ABA approved other measures such as how accredited law schools should report employment outcomes. This employment outcome rule is of high-importance to students, who are often graduating with six-figures of debt and use employment outcomes to determine whether or not to enroll in a program.

The ABA is also reviewing the confidentiality of the accreditation process (Rule 53) and the operations of the organization, and they heard updates from the Law School Admissions Council on the upward trend of applications for this admissions cycle.

The ABA is the national accreditor of all law schools, and their open agenda can be found [here](#).

- [American Bar Association Bans Sexist Language in Court](#)
- [Bar Admittance Requirements for Foreign-Trained Attorneys](#)
- [Number of Law School Applications Increased for 2018](#)

What do you think of the ABA's possible changes to distance learning? Let us know in the comments below.