

Request for extension of waiver of non-classroom unit limitations—State Bar of California, Committee of Bar Examiners, Guidelines for Accredited Schools, Guideline 6.6 (D)

In October of 2012 the Committee of Bar Examiners, State Bar of California, first granted a waiver of the 10% limitation on non-classroom units, allowing SJCL students to earn up to 14 non-classroom units toward our 86 units required for graduation. (Guideline 6.6 (D).)

The waiver has allowed the law school to increase the maximum number of units a student may earn for practical training. Students may now earn up to 8 units of practical training in external placements or through our in-house clinic. With regard to external placements, a student may earn up to 4 units per placement. We limit the units to 4 per placement to ensure that students get a broad range of practical experience should they decide to earn all 8 practical units. The per-placement cap can be adjusted, however, if a student can show that he or she will be completing substantially different work from the work he or she completed while earning the first 4 units. There have only been a handful of cases in which we have allowed more than 4 units in one placement.

Students may earn all 8 practical training units in our in-house immigration clinic. We feel comfortable allowing a student to earn all 8 units in our in-house clinic because we require students to attend a weekly, three-hour classroom component. In addition, we have more control over the clinical experience in general and can adjust the program according to a particular student's training needs.

In addition to practical training units, the waiver has allowed us to offer students the option of earning units for competing in established external moot court competitions, writing for our Agricultural Law Review, and completing research and writing projects for professors. We are also in the process of establishing a mock trial program. We estimate that the program will start in the fall of 2015. The program will produce a mock trial team that will compete in regional and national competitions.

We have seen that these types of activities have helped the law school produce well-rounded graduates with both practical and theoretical knowledge. Moreover, the non-classroom activities have not shown to hurt our students' bar passage rates. As a result, we request a one-year extension of the limited waiver of Guideline 6.6(D).