Course Selection and Bidding Process

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
For Visiting Exchange Students
Prepared July 9, 2014

1. Why are we considered undergraduate students for our exchange term at Western Law?
   a. In Canada, studying Law is considered a “second-entry undergraduate degree.” This means that most of our students will have completed an undergraduate degree prior to applying to Law School. Our students will receive a JD degree at the completion of their studies. (This is similar to law students in the USA.)
   b. All incoming exchange students will be enrolling in our JD level courses.
   c. Western Law’s LLM program is thesis-based and only specialized research courses are taught at the LLM level.

2. I don’t understand course selection at all – what is it??
   a. Here in Canada we refer to "courses" instead of "modules" or “papers”.
   b. At Western Law, we don't require you to enrol in a certain number of courses - but instead require you to complete a certain number of credit hours.
   c. All visiting exchange students must enrol in a full-time course load:
      - Fall term (September - December) - minimum of 14 credit hours
      - Winter term (January – April) - minimum of 14 credit hours
      (This must include 4 credit hours in January term + a minimum of 10 credit hours in Spring term.)
      - Full year (September – April) - in addition to the above, also a minimum of 29 credit hours for the year

3. I don’t understand credit hours – what does that mean?
   a. You can determine the number of credit hours for each course by logging into the course selection material in OWL.
      i. Choose the project site: “Western Law – Curriculum & Course Information”
   b. From the tabs on the left side of the page, choose “Course List & Descriptions”.
      i. The “2014-15 Course List” shows the credit hours for each course under the column “Cr”.
      ii. Each individual course description will also list the number of “Credits”.
   c. Generally, it's best to select:
      - 4 courses during Fall term (but they must equal a minimum of 14 credit hours).
      - 1 course in January term (only one course is allowed).
      - 3 courses during Spring term (but they must equal a minimum of 10 credit hours).
4. I have questions about the points system. I don't understand how this system works and I don't know how it relates to credit hours.

   a. The short answer is these aren’t related. Bidding points and credit hours are two separate things.

   b. Visiting exchange students are provide the following number of bid points:

      i. Students coming for one term have 8 bid points to use in choosing their courses.
      ii. Students coming for the full year have 13 bid points to choose courses for the full year.

   c. The bidding system is a process which allows all students to indicate their interest in particular courses during course selection. It's a bit like a bank account or an auction, where you decide how much you want to "spend" for a course. There is no correlation between bid points and credit hours. Bid points are like “money” that you can “spend” to “bid” on a course, in hopes of being enrolled.

   d. In order to fairly allocate students to limited-enrolment courses, each student is given points to bid towards class enrolment. Student preferences are reflected by the amount of points bid for each course, and these bid points are used to determine the order in which students are enrolled in courses. The highest number of points bid will be the first enrolled in a course. (Example: A student bidding 3 points for a course will be enrolled in the course prior to someone who only bid 2 points.)

   e. To assist in determining the number of points to consider assigning to a course, be sure to refer to the Course Bid Statistics tab in the OWL Curriculum and Course Information site.

      i. Here you can see which courses have been filled to capacity in past years by comparing “Limit” to number of students “Enrolled”.

      ii. The “Waiting” column lets you know how long a waiting list there was at the end of the Course Bidding period.

      iii. The "MAP" (minimum amount of points bid to gain admission to the course) and "AAP" (average number of points bid to gain admission to the course) are also provided.

      iv. This will give you an idea about how many points were bid by students in past years. Please note that course instructors and course timetables vary every year, and this can affect the demand for a particular course in each year.
5. Where can I find more information about specific courses?

a. A list of all courses offered and a full description of each course can be found in the OWL Curriculum and Course Information site.

b. The course description provides information such as:
   1. Number of credit hours
   2. Pre-requisites required for the course
      NOTE: It may be possible to satisfy this requirement with courses completed at your home school.
   3. Course meeting days and times
      IMPORTANT: Some courses will have more than one meeting time per week (for example on Monday and Wednesday). It is expected that you will attended class on ALL days and times listed.
   4. Exam times
   5. Assessment method for the course (exam, paper, participation, group work, etc.)
   6. Materials/Textbooks required for the course
   7. Brief description of the course.

c. More details about course content (called the “course syllabus”) will be provided by the instructor at the start of the course. Unfortunately, I do not have access to these and cannot provide them to you.

6. The list of courses found on the public website does not match the Course List in OWL.

   Why aren’t all of the courses available this year?

a. The list of courses on our public website includes all of the possible course offerings approved by the University. However, our actual course offerings change from year to year and term to term, depending on availability of instructors and other factors.

b. In addition to the public website’s list of courses, we also offer a number of courses which are unique to that specific academic year:

   i. “ST” are “Special Topic” courses which are new courses offered by our Faculty members or courses offered by January term visiting professors or adjunct instructors/practitioners in the field.

   ii. “IC” are “Intensive Courses” offered by a prominent visiting professor as a special one week course. These courses meet for just one week during the term (every morning or every afternoon during that week). The specific dates for each course are available in the full course description. If you enroll in an IC, it will likely create a course conflict with your other courses during the week that the course meets. Enrollment in an IC does not require special permission to maintain this timetable conflict. However, students must agree that the course conflict cannot be used as the basis of an appeal.
      NOTE: Students may only enroll in one intensive course (“IC”) per term.
7. At my home school, I’m enrolled in a combined degree program (law and another subject). Why can’t I enroll in courses outside of the Law School at Western?

   a. Western Law is a professional school here at the University. There are a number of ways in which our program is unique to other programs on campus. Some examples are:
      i. Law sessional dates are different from the rest of the University:
         1. Our classes start earlier in September.
         2. Our exam periods have different start and end dates.
         3. Law does NOT have a Fall Break.
         4. Law has a January term followed by Spring term.
         5. Law’s Reading Week break is after January term and not scheduled with the rest of campus.
      ii. Law evaluation policy uses a letter based grading system (A, B, C, D, F) whereas the rest of campus uses the 100 point grading scale.
      iii. The Law timetable (length of class times each day) does not correspond with the timetable used by other Faculties on campus.

   b. These differences create too many administrative concerns and problems for both students and staff.

   c. We appreciate your understanding of this policy and encourage you to consider the variety of courses which we offer in the many areas of Law.

8. Why are some courses marked at “Compulsory” or “Core”? What does that mean for an exchange student?

   a. “Compulsory” courses are required for our students to complete their JD degree. Due to the demand from our students for these courses, they will not be available to exchange students for bidding.
      i. These courses include:
         1. Corporate Law
         2. Administrative Law
         3. Civil Procedure

   b. “Core” courses are open to exchange students and are available during the bidding process.
      i. These courses include:
         1. Evidence
         2. Public International Law
         3. Trusts (this course is NOT recommended for students from Civil Law jurisdictions)

9. Why do some courses meet the “essay requirement”? What does this mean?

   a. This does not pertain to visiting exchange students, so you can ignore this information.

   b. Our JD students must complete a course that satisfies the essay requirement to fulfill their graduation requirements.

   c. Since you are only studying here as a visiting student, this requirement does not apply to you.
10. Are we allowed to select and bid on courses whose total credit hours are more than required? 
   If so, can we wait and see which courses we are admitted to?
   
   a. Yes, you may bid for more courses than required.
   b. During Add/Drop periods, you will be able to make changes to your course enrolments (adding new ones and dropping others.)
   c. Add/Drop periods are available in August and again at the start of each term. Exact dates and details can be found in the OWL “Curriculum and Course Information” site.

11. There are two courses that I really want to enrol in, but there is an overlap in the course times. 
    May I still enrol in both of them?
    
    a. Sorry, but the answer is no. It is a student’s responsibility to ensure that you do NOT have conflicts in your course timetable. Be sure to check the class schedules for all meeting times for each class, as an overlap is not allowed on either day if a class meets more than one time per week.
    b. However during the bidding process, you may choose to bid on courses with an overlap if you are really keen on enrolling in both courses. Please keep in mind that during the term’s add/drop period, you will need to decide which course to keep and you will have to drop the other course.

12. The course description states that there is a pre-requisite or a co-requisite requirement that must be met to enroll in the course. Can I use a course from my home school to satisfy this?
    
    a. This may be possible. You will need to speak to the instructor of the course to find out whether your previous course will have covered the same material as the Western Law course listed as a pre-requisite. This can be done by email now, or in person during the add/drop period of the term in which the course is offered.
    b. If the instructor approves, then a Special Permission form must be completed. I will provide this to you when we meet to discuss your courses at the start of the term.

13. What is the Supplemental Writing Credit?
    
    a. The Supplemental Writing Credit (SWC) is a course that is used to add one credit hour to an existing course. This is helpful when you need one more credit hour to meet the minimum requirements for the term or year. It is best to wait until after you arrive to apply for this course.
    b. During orientation, I will give a detailed explanation about SWC and will provide you with information about the application process.
    c. SWC can only be added to a Fall or Spring term course (not a January term course). Applications are due during the add/drop period of that term.
    d. SWC is used to extend a writing component in a course by 10 additional pages.