Universidad de Alcalá

Universidad de Alcalá
FACULTAD DE DERECHO

COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction to Administrative Law

Degree in Law

University of Alcalá

Academic Year 2026/2027
Second Year – Second Semester

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course name:	**Introduction to Administrative Law**
Code:	**400015**
Degree Program:	**Law Degree**
Department and Area of Knowledge:	**Administrative Law**
Type:	**Basic**
ECTS Credits:	**7**
Year and semester:	**Second year, second semester**
Teaching staff:	Responsable: Prof. Ignacio Hierro Herrero Suplente: Prfª Ximena Lazo Vitoria
Tutorial hours:	
Language of instruction:	English

1 a. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Administrative Law is a 7-ECTS basic course.

This course belongs to the Area of Administrative Law (Public Law). Administrative Law is the branch of Law that establishes the rules governing the actions of Public Administrations, as well as their relations with citizens.

The course provides students with knowledge of the essential features of the administrative legal system; the rules and basic principles of administrative organization; the structure and general characteristics of the various Public Administrations; the general principles governing administrative activity; administrative procedure and acts; the relationship between public authorities and citizens; and the legal instruments that ensure oversight and accountability of administrative action (administrative appeals, ex officio review, and judicial remedies).

From a professional standpoint, *Introduction to Administrative Law*—and more broadly, all courses in the Administrative Law area—provides students with fundamental knowledge to prepare for competitive examinations for access to public employment. From a more practical perspective, the course equips students with the skills to handle everyday interactions with Public Administrations, such as drafting and understanding administrative documents.

1 b. PRESENTATION

This course ("Introduction to Administrative Law") provides students with knowledge about the essential characteristics of the legal and administrative system; on the rules and the basic principles of administrative organization; on the structure and general characteristics of the various public authorities; on the general principles of the activity of government; on the procedure and administrative acts; relations between public authorities and citizens and instruments to control of the functioning of the administration (administrative and judicial review).

2 . COMPETENCES

- **General competences:**

1. Ability to search for, select, and evaluate legal documentation and general information.
2. Use of information technology tools to obtain information and address legal issues..
3. Reflective, critical, and autonomous learning.
4. Capacity for critical analysis of acquired knowledge, as well as the ability to synthesize and apply theoretical concepts in practice.
5. Oral and written communication skills.
6. Teamwork skills.
7. Understanding of Law as a system for regulating social coexistence that incorporates a concept of justice. Commitment to respect for human rights and democratic principles.

- **Specific competences:**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to Administrative Law. Specifically, it aims to ensure that students:

1) Understand what Administrative Law is, its sources, foundations, and purpose. To achieve this, students must assimilate the key legal concepts (regulation, administrative act, procedure, remedies, etc.) that structure the discipline. This conceptual framework is essential since this is the first course in which students encounter Administrative Law. It is therefore the moment to acquire basic but essential theoretical knowledge that will allow them to autonomously read and understand the complex and ever-changing administrative legislation, both present and future.
2) Study, understand, and analyze the basic body of administrative legislation, using the conceptual tools acquired.
3) Learn how to search for legislation and case law, with a particular focus on the use of new technologies.
4) Read, understand, and critically analyze both legal rules and judgments related to the course content, while also developing the ability to identify shortcomings and gaps in regulation and their potential for improvement. For this purpose, it is essential that students become aware of the values reflected in the rules, of their effectiveness—or lack thereof—in balancing general interests with the protection of individual rights and freedoms, and that they are capable of forming and expressing their own views on legal regulation.
5) Learn to properly interpret legal rules (in line with technical interpretive methods and principles governing relationships between norms) and apply them to specific cases, identifying the applicable legal regime and resolving the legal issues raised.
6) Acquire the skills of legal analysis, interpretation, reasoning, logic, and argumentation, working with statutes, judgments, and legal principles.
7) Learn to use legal terminology correctly and rigorously, and develop dialectical and rhetorical skills.
8) Que Develop oral and written communication skills by applying theoretical and practical knowledge to the analysis and presentation of legal texts and judicial decisions, as well as to the resolution of legal problems and cases.

9) Learn to draft legal documents—administrative and contentious-administrative—using templates (requests to the Administration, appeals, reports, legal opinions, complaints, etc.)

3. CONTENTS

Content blocks (topics may be specified where necessary)	Total of lectures, credits and hours
Lesson 1. Administrative Law. Concept	0.5 ECTS credits. 2 weeks (4 hours of lectures and 4 hours of practical sessions)
Lesson 2. The Administrative Legal System.	1 ECTS credit. 2 weeks (4 hours of lectures and 4 hours of practical sessions)
Lesson 3. Administrative Organization. I. General Theory of Administrative Organization.	0.5 ECTS credits. 1 week (2 hours of lectures and 2 hours of practical sessions)
Lesson 4. Forms and Principles of Administrative Action	1 ECTS credit. 2 weeks (4 hours of lectures and 4 hours of practical sessions).
Lesson 5. Administrative Procedure	1 ECTS credit. 2 weeks (4 hours of lectures and 4 hours of practical sessions).
Lesson 6. Administrative Acts	1 ECTS credit. 2 weeks (4 hours of lectures and 4 hours of practical sessions).
Lesson 7. Ex Officio Review and Revocation of Administrative Acts. Administrative Remedies.	0.5 ECTS credits. 1 week (2 hours of lectures and 2

	hours of practical sessions).
Lesson 8. Judicial Review of Public Administration. Contentious-Administrative Jurisdiction.	1 ECTS credit. 2 weeks (4 hours of lectures and 4 hours of practical sessions).

1. Concept, Evolution, Characteristics, and Current Trends in Administrative Law

- Concept and rationale of Administrative Law.
- Historical origin and development of Administrative Law.
- General features of Administrative Law.
- Recent trends in the evolution of Administrative Law.

2. The Administrative Legal System. With particular reference to regulations

- Sources of Administrative Law (with partial reference to Constitutional Law).
- The regulation: concept and types.
- The relationship between laws and regulations.
- The principle of non-derogability of regulations by individual acts.
- The procedure for drafting regulations.
- Invalidity of regulations and remedies.
- Application of Administrative Law in space and time.

3. Public Administration: General Aspects of Administrative Organization and Typology

- Public Administration and the public sector.
- Administration as a legal person.
- The organizational power.
- Administrative bodies.
- Competence and techniques for its modification.
- Conflicts of competence.
- Types of Public Administration: State Administration, Regional Administration, Local Administration.
- Instrumental administrations and corporate bodies.
- Independent authorities.
- Inter-administrative relations.

4. Forms and Principles of Administrative Action

- Forms of administrative activity.
- Forms of relations between the Administration and citizens: general subjection, special subjection, and statutory relations.
- Rights and duties of citizens in their relations with public authorities (partial reference to procedure).
- Administrative transparency: right of access to information and documents.

- Citizen participation.

5. Administrative Procedure

- Concept and function of administrative procedure.
- Parties to the procedure.
- Initiation of the procedure.
- Use of official languages in the procedure.
- Provisional measures.
- Management and instruction of the procedure.
- Terms and deadlines.
- Termination of the procedure: duty to issue a decision, settlement by agreement, abnormal termination, and administrative silence.

6. Administrative Acts

- Concept and types of acts.
- Elements of administrative acts.
- Enforceability of administrative acts.
- Effectiveness of administrative acts: commencement, retroactivity, termination of effectiveness.
- Enforcement.
- Invalidity of administrative acts: null and void acts, voidable acts, non-invalidating irregularities.
- Transferability, conversion, preservation, and validation.

7. Ex Officio Review and Revocation of Administrative Acts. Administrative Remedies

- Ex officio review of null acts.
- Declaration of detriment of voidable acts.
- Revocation of administrative acts (on grounds of legality and expediency).
- Correction of errors.
- General limits on review powers.
- Administrative remedies: concept, principles, and general rules.
- Ordinary appeals: appeal to a higher authority; optional reconsideration appeal; extraordinary review appeal.
- Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

8. Judicial Review of Public Administration. Contentious-Administrative Jurisdiction

- Contentious-administrative jurisdiction.
- Scope of contentious-administrative jurisdiction.
- The organs of contentious-administrative jurisdiction.
- The contentious-administrative appeal: general features, parties, object of the appeal, impugnable activity, and claims.
- The contentious-administrative process: ordinary procedure, interim measures, abbreviated procedure, special procedures, enforcement of judgments.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODOLOGIES. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Distribution of teaching and student workload:

Total hours: 175

Classroom hours: 70	• In-person hours: 60 • Guided Work hours: 10
Independent student work hours: 105	• hours of self-study: 75 • hours for assignments and practical case resolution: 30

Methodological strategies

A) In-class methodologies:

1.**Lectures (2 hours per week)**

Expository sessions delivered by the professor, aimed at introducing students to the subject matter in a clear, systematic, and engaging manner, while fostering interest and motivation for further study.

The lectures will not be purely theoretical: emphasis will be placed on the practical utility of the knowledge, as well as on the explanation of the basic techniques of legal reasoning and case-solving. Problems and shortcomings of the regulations will also be presented, including difficulties of interpretation and application, and potential contradictions in case law. This approach fosters critical thinking about Law, encouraging students to actively participate, ask questions, and engage in debate.

Lectures may be supported by PowerPoint slides, which will be provided to students in advance to facilitate active listening and avoid over-reliance on note-taking. These slides will also serve as tools for students to develop their own conceptual maps and notes for study.

2.Practical classes (2 hours per week)

Practical sessions will be devoted to:

- **Discussion of provided materials:** Students will analyze and debate legal texts, judgments, news items, or other documents provided by the professor. The objective is to complement the professor's explanations with active student engagement, developing their understanding of Administrative Law principles through direct analysis of primary sources.
- **Case resolution:** Students will work on practical legal cases provided by the professor, identifying the relevant issues, applicable legal regime, and solutions. This fosters legal reasoning, research, and application of statutory and case law.
    - *Individual work:* Each student independently addresses the problem, assessing their level of understanding and identifying gaps.
    - *Teamwork:* Students collaborate in small groups to reach a joint solution, presenting their findings to the class. This method highlights interpretative divergences, argumentative strategies, and the open-ended nature of legal problems, fostering critical debate under the professor's guidance.
- **Role-play of legal disputes:** Students simulate litigation by assuming roles (claimant, defendant, co-defendant, judge/tribunal), analyzing positions, and presenting arguments orally in class. This activity enhances rhetorical and dialectical skills and exposes students to contrasting perspectives.
- **Oral presentations and debates:** Individual or group presentations on assigned topics, supported by written papers, PowerPoint slides, or structured outlines, followed by class discussions.
- **Drafting legal documents:** Preparation of administrative or contentious-administrative writings (e.g., petitions, appeals, reports, lawsuits) using templates, linked to the resolution of specific practical cases.
- **Debates on current events:** Analysis of recent news items or public controversies related to Administrative Law.
- **Court visits (optional):** Where possible, attendance at hearings in contentious-administrative courts.

B) Independent student work (5 hours per week)

- Reading and studying recommended bibliography under professor guidance.
- Preparation of notes, conceptual maps, and outlines based on lectures.
- Reading of materials assigned by the professor (laws, judgments, legal news, academic articles, etc.).
- Legal research and information retrieval.
- Preparation of practical cases and class debates.
- Writing short essays or papers on assigned or approved topics.
- Preparing PowerPoint slides or scripts for oral presentations.
- Teamwork preparation of assignments for in-class presentation.

C)Tutorials

Individual tutoring sessions (as scheduled) will provide personalized academic support, addressing both conceptual and practical difficulties. Professors will also guide students in their independent learning.

In addition to in-person tutorials, electronic or virtual tutorials may also be used.

Materials and resources

- An **Administrative Law textbook** (compulsory learning tool).
- **Code of Administrative Legislation.**
- **Electronic resources and legal databases.**
- **Practical cases.**
- **Documentation:** judgments, legislation, legal news, press articles, and other relevant materials.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 Assessment criteria

For the evaluation of students, the following criteria will be applied:

1) Theoretical knowledge:

- Understanding of the concepts, principles, and institutions of Administrative Law.
- Ability to establish relationships between concepts and institutions.
- Capacity for synthesis.
- Ability to express ideas clearly, coherently, and substantively, both orally and in writing

2) Practical skills:

- Ability to identify and understand legal controversies.
- Ability to search for legal information.
- Ability to identify applicable legislation, case law, and legal principles.

- Capacity to analyze and interpret legislation and case law.
- Logical, argumentative, and legal reasoning skills.
- Written and oral communication skills, particularly rhetorical and dialecticalability.
- Capacity for debate, dialectical argumentation, and oral presentation (clarity, rigor, ability to engage the audience).
- Capacity for critical analysis.
- Originality in the preparation of assignments or oral presentations in class.

5.2 Grading criteria

Students not subject to continuous assessment will be graded solely on the basis of their final exam result.

Grades will be awarded in accordance with Royal Decree 1125/2003, as follows:

- **Fail:** 0 – 4.9
- **Pass:** 5 – 6.9
- **Good (Notable):** 7 – 8.9
- **Excellent (Outstanding):** 9 – 10
- **Honors (Matrícula de Honor):** 9 – 10, with exceptional performance

Detailed descriptions

- **Fail:** when the student shows significant deficiencies and gaps in acquiring basic knowledge of the subject, demonstrates a low level of understanding, or fails to participate adequately in practical classes and seminars.
- **Pass:** when the student demonstrates adequate knowledge and practical skills to apply administrative law autonomously in their future professional tasks.
- **Good (Notable):** when the student masters the subject matter and has developed the competences required in practical classes and seminars at a medium-to-high level, demonstrating critical capacity, reflection, and the ability to interpret and apply Law to resolve cases.
- **Excellent (Outstanding):** when the student demonstrates a high level of understanding, both conceptually and in the preparation of assignments, presentations, and case resolutions. This includes conceptual clarity, extensive knowledge, rigor in the use of legal terminology, and originality in assignments and case work.
- **Honors:** awarded to students with an Excellent grade who stand out due to their exceptional dedication and brilliance in class activities, especially for initiative, depth, and originality in their work.

5.3 Assessment procedures

A) Continuous assessment:

A.1 Ordinary session:

For students following continuous assessment, the final grade will result from the combination of continuous evaluation of activities and tests during the semester (up to 60% of the final grade) and the final exam (40%).

- The **60% continuous assessment** is broken down as follows:
  - 10% for participation and attendance.
  - 20% for the first partial test (multiple-choice questions).
  - 30% for resolution of a comprehensive practical case.
    Partial tests are not eliminatory.
- **Active participation** will be evaluated on the basis of: demonstrated legal knowledge, accuracy in responses to questions, ability to locate relevant case law, comprehension of rules and judgments, and quality of oral presentations. Constructive contributions reflecting effort and engagement will be particularly valued.
- The **partial theory test** (multiple-choice) will cover the first four topics of the syllabus and will not be eliminatory.
- The **practical test** may concern any topic covered in class, including those from the first block, and will not be eliminatory.
- The **final exam** will cover the entire syllabus. It will consist of a written, theoretical exam lasting no more than three hours. Questions may directly correspond to syllabus topics or may require broader reasoning and integration.
  - Maximum score: 4 points.
  - A minimum score of **1.5 points** on the final exam is required to pass this exam. .
- Students who meet attendance requirements but do not sit any of the evaluation tests during the course will be graded as **"Not Presented"**.

A.2 Extraordinary session:

- Written or oral exam (at the professor's discretion), theoretical in content, with a maximum duration of three hours. Questions may relate directly to syllabus topics or require broader reasoning and integration.

B) Final assessment:

Students not subject to the continuous assessment system will be graded on the basis of the score obtained in the final examination.

B.1 Ordinary examination session:

– Written examination of a theoretical nature. The duration of the exam shall not exceed three hours. It may include questions that correspond directly to the headings of the syllabus, as well as others which, while not mirroring those headings, relate to parts of their content or require students to establish connections and exercise reasoned judgment.

B.2 Extraordinary examination session:

– Written examination of a theoretical nature. The maximum duration shall not exceed three hours. It may include questions that correspond directly to the headings of the syllabus, as well as others which, while not mirroring those headings, relate to parts of their content or require integrative and reflective reasoning.

During all assessment activities, in every modality and session, the guidelines set out in the University of Alcalá's Regulations on Standards of Conduct (*Normas de Convivencia*) must be observed, together with the implications of any irregularities committed during such assessments, including the consequences for academic fraud under the University of Alcalá's Student Disciplinary Regulations.

The teaching–learning methodology and the assessment process will be adjusted, where necessary and under the guidance of the Diversity Support Unit, in order to implement curricular adaptations for students with specific educational needs.

6. Bibliography

- **Legislation: *Code of Administrative Legislation*, latest edition.**

- **Administrative Law textbook as an essential tool for learning the subject:**

The basics of Spanish Administrative Law, María Jesús García García

Derecho Administrativo, Parte General. M. Sánchez Morón. Tecnos, última edición.

Principios de Derecho Administrativo, I y II, J. A. Santamaría Pastor, Iustel, última edición.

Curso de Derecho Administrativo I y II, E. García de Enterría y T. R. Fernández, Civitas, última edición.