

## Administrative Guideline 115

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE TYPE: Curricular Functions  
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE TITLE: Credit Hour Guideline

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Academic Affairs

- I. Statement of Purpose:  
To establish standards and guidelines that ensure courses and programs meet academic quality standards.
- II. Users Governed:  
This guideline applies to all personnel involved in curricular matters.
- III. Credit Definitions

SCC uses the Federal Credit Hour Definition as a basis for awarding academic credit:

*A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:*

- (1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or*
- (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.*

*34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)*

SCC's semester consists of 16 weeks of instruction including a three-day final exam period. Methods of instruction and corresponding contact and credit hour requirements are detailed below.

At SCC, a standard one credit hour lecture course requires one contact hour of classroom-based instruction and two clock hours of out-of-class student work every week for 16 weeks. One contact hour equals 50 minutes; one clock hour equals 60 minutes. Students are expected to spend two clock hours out-of-class time for every credit hour.

As an example, for the typical three credit hour lecture course, a student should expect to spend 150 minutes in classroom-based instruction and 360 minutes out-of-class, on homework or course-related study, each week for 16 weeks.

Each course must have a minimum length of one credit hour. A fractional unit of credit may be awarded provided the course exceeds the minimum length of one credit hour. Required contact time varies depending on the instructional method.

#### IV. **Contact**

Engagement of instructors with students to advance course objectives is considered “contact.” Contact may take various forms: e.g., it may be face-to-face or online, synchronous or asynchronous, one-to-many or one-to-one, including faculty direction of students participating in for-credit internships or practica.

In addition to class meetings reflected in the College Course Schedule, other required course activities or combinations of activities may count as scheduled contact for the purpose of assigning credit. Examples include faculty-student conferences, skills modules, and participation in online forums, film screenings, site visits, rehearsals and performances, etc. All such scheduled contact must be specified as required in course syllabi and must contribute to a student’s grade or achievement of learning outcomes.

Instructors also require students to complete work outside of scheduled contact hours to fulfill course learning outcomes. Outside work normally includes, but need not be limited to, two hours of regular weekly class preparation for each credit earned.

#### **Semester Credit Hour Requirements**

- A. 800 minutes of Lecture = 1 credit hour
- B. 1,600 minutes of Laboratory = 1 credit hour
- C. 2,400 minutes of clinical practice = 1 credit hour
- D. 3,200 minutes of work experience = 1 credit hour

| <b>Credit Hours</b> | <b>Weekly Lecture Instruction in Minutes (16 week)</b> | <b>Out-of-Class Study in Clock Hours</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1                   | 50                                                     | 2                                        |
| 2                   | 100                                                    | 4                                        |
| 3                   | 150                                                    | 6                                        |
| 4                   | 200                                                    | 8                                        |
| 5                   | 250                                                    | 10                                       |
| 6                   | 300                                                    | 12                                       |

#### **Instructional Methods**

Conventional instruction is subdivided into four instructional methods:

1. Lecture — Lecture and formalized classroom instruction under the supervision of an instructor. The minimal requirement for one credit hour is 800 minutes (16 contact hours) of scheduled instruction.

2. Laboratory — Experimentation and practice by students under the supervision of an instructor. The minimal requirement for one credit hour is 1600 minutes (32 contact hours) of scheduled instruction.
3. Clinical — Applied learning experience in a health agency or office under the supervision of an instructor. The minimal requirement for one credit hour is 2400 minutes (48 contact hours) of scheduled instruction.
4. On the Job Training (OJT) work experience — Employment-related experience planned and coordinated by an institutional representative and the employer, with control and supervision of the student on the job being the responsibility of the employer. Examples include: internships, externships, field experiences, practica, etc. The minimal requirement for one credit hour is 3200 minutes (64 contact hours) of scheduled instruction.

### **Alternative Instructional Methods**

In addition to conventional course delivery methods, SCC courses may be taught in a variety of alternative modalities. In every case credit hours shall be awarded in accordance with the credit hours that would have been assigned if the course or program were taught by conventional methods. Alternative modalities include:

1. Video conference courses. Courses or programs delivered via a synchronous audio-video conferencing system which allows students to receive instruction in a classroom or any equipped remote location via an audio-video feed to a television, computer, or other electronic device.
2. Arranged study. Instruction offered to students at times other than stated or scheduled class times to accommodate specific scheduling or program needs of students. Credit hours shall be awarded in accordance with the credit hours that would have been assigned if the course or program were taught by conventional methods.
3. Individualized learning. Individualized learning experiences means independent study courses in which an equivalent course is not offered by the college or listed in the college catalog. Independent study permits in-depth or focused learning on special topics of particular interest to the student. Credit hours shall be awarded in accordance with the credit hours that would have been assigned if the course or program were taught by conventional methods.
4. Internship/Practicum/Field Experience/Clinical/WBL/OJT. A system that utilizes on the job training (OJT) in combination with classroom study to prepare practitioners of a trade or profession. The amount of classroom instruction and/or number of courses that are required to complete OJT experiences varies by program or discipline.
5. Hybrid courses. Courses or programs that combine traditional classroom and computer-based instruction. In-class sessions are offered with online instructional activities to promote independent learning and reduce seat-time.
6. Synchronous Online courses. Courses or programs delivered via the Internet. Courses may be taken using computers in a classroom setting or using personal computers or other electronic devices from the student's home or other location using an online content management system or mixed-media methods. Students will be electronically linked directly with the instructor at specified times or with other students.
7. Competency-Based Education (CBE) courses. These courses are offered in a manner that allows students to progress through a series of subcompetencies aligned to the student learning outcomes for the course at a flexible pace that is dependent upon each individual learner's needs. Well-defined competencies guide the development of the course curriculum, and a student may

take variable lengths of time to demonstrate mastery of a competency. Competency assessments will be embedded within the course to measure student mastery of a given competency. The institutional levels of mastery are defined as developing, developed, and highly developed. Courses offered in a CBE modality will be designed to include sufficient educational activity to fulfill the Federal Credit Hour Definition. The course will be designed to include an appropriate volume of content equivalent to the respective credit hours assigned to the course. Additionally, while a student will be able to advance through the material at a flexible pace, the courses will be designed to include an appropriate amount of material that would be equivalent to two clock hours of out-of-class student work every week for 16 weeks.

8. Asynchronous Online courses. These courses are taught in a time- and place-independent manner, without specific meeting times, but with clearly defined beginning and ending dates. For these courses, contact is based on the following guidelines (adapted from IW Credit Hour Policy, 2018):
  - a. The course syllabus should clearly document that the course covers the same amount of material or course content that would normally be expected if the class were a traditional campus-based course. Clear documentation includes the student learning outcomes, the course topics, and the stated expectations for readings, projects, and other assignments. It is the responsibility of departmental faculty teaching in an asynchronous environment to determine if the course content delivered in an asynchronous environment is of sufficient scope and rigor to ensure the amount of material delivered is comparable to the same campus-based course.
  - b. During the planning and development of an asynchronous learning environment, faculty should estimate the time a typical student will take interacting with the course content. This should be equivalent to the number of contact hours normally expected in a campus-based course, and should be documented in the course syllabus. Hours for completing homework assignments, working on projects, studying for examinations, etc., should be considered outside the contact hour requirements for the course. A rubric has been developed and should be used as a guideline for instructional design for asynchronous courses.
  - c. Faculty are encouraged to determine class attendance by the evaluation of student participation in scheduled online discussions, required interaction with the faculty as well as other classmates, and the timely submission of class assignments rather than simply by the number of logins provided in the statistics measured by the course management system. Quality and quantity of work will demonstrate the rigor and time on task assignments necessary to equal those of the traditional course delivery.

#### Rubric for Asynchronous Online Courses

In asynchronous learning environments, the traditional face-to-face contact time is redefined as the time a typical student spends interacting with course content. This definition excludes student work traditionally done outside of class such as homework, studying, reading, and writing papers. The following rubric may be used as a guideline for faculty to estimate asynchronous contact hours:

| Interactions with Course Content            | Time on Task Estimates              | Examples                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Startup Preparations.                       | 10 minutes per preparation item.    | Software Downloads, & Installations. Computer Preparations. Orientation to Course Management items.                         |
| Reading (descriptive and technical text)    | 3 minutes per page                  | Textbooks and reference materials, both online and traditional.                                                             |
| Reading (online screens w/no interactivity) | 2 minutes per screen                | PowerPoint Slide Shows. Syllabus. Announcements. Case Studies. Journals.                                                    |
| Reading (online screens with interactivity) | 4 minutes per screen                | Multimedia. Tutorial.                                                                                                       |
| Video                                       | Minimum of 5 minutes per video      | Instructor Brief. YouTube. Demonstrations.                                                                                  |
| Lecture Capture                             | 30 minutes per lecture              | Staged or Classroom Capture.                                                                                                |
| Audio                                       | 5 minutes per audio presentation    | Music, Medical, History, Speeches, Radio, Nature.                                                                           |
| Podcasts. Phone Apps.                       | 5 minutes per Podcast               | Mobile Learning                                                                                                             |
| Laboratory Activities                       | 1 hour per activity                 | Classes with laboratory components, such as Microbiology, Anatomy & Physiology, etc.                                        |
| Simulations and Gaming.                     | 15 minutes per simulation           | Virtual Laboratories. Hands-on learning. Mock Criminal Trials. Virtual Field Trips.                                         |
| Practice Problems (not homework)            | 20 minutes per problem              | Math, Computer Science, Case Studies. Surveys                                                                               |
| Outside Online Short Training Courses       | 50 minutes per outside course       | Courses taken, usually from Government sources (e.g., FEMA Online Training courses) as one requirement in an online course. |
| Writing Assignments                         | 1.5 hours per page (including prep) | Not homework.                                                                                                               |
| Discussion Forum                            | 60 minutes per session              | Discussion. Remote Conferencing. Chats. Wikis. Blogs. Social Learning. Online Office Hours. Group Collaboration.            |
| Quizzes                                     | 20 minutes per quiz                 |                                                                                                                             |
| Exams                                       | 1-3 hours per exam                  |                                                                                                                             |