

Credit Hour Policy

Body

Policy Title

Determining Credit Hours Awarded for Courses

Policy Text

Harding University requires this policy to be practiced by all faculty, full-time and part-time. All definitions and standards apply equally to courses offered both on and off campus. The federally-approved regulation for a credit hour has been defined in two ways:

§ 600.2(1): The credit hour value of a standard or more traditional course must be calculated as follows: A clock hour of instructional time is the equivalent of (a) 50 minutes of class time or (b) 60 minutes of independent-study work or some measures of clinical time; and (2) a minimum of two hours of out-of-class work is expected for every hour (50 minutes) of instructional time. To assist faculty in ensuring that a course complies with this policy, (1) the Credit Hour Calculator will be available online, both in HUPP and on Pipeline, (2) the Summary Chart (Appendix A) should be used as a guide, and (3) the Reading Speed Tables (Appendix B), may be used as a guide.

§ 600.2(2): If the credit hour value for an academic activity (including but not limited to "laboratory work, internships, practica, and studio work") cannot be calculated using the information cited in § 600.2(1) (above), that academic activity can be found to have met the federal definition by documenting that it involves "at least an equivalent amount of work" as the criteria cited in § 600.2(1). To assist faculty in ensuring that a course complies with this policy, (1) the Summary Chart (Appendix A) should be used as a guide, and (2) the Reading Speed Tables (Appendix B) may be used as a guide. Note that Appendix B is incorporated into the Credit Hour Calculator.

Federal definition of a credit hour

...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 one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, or;
- At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. (§600.2) A semester hour approximates one hour (or 50 minutes) of classroom time and two hours of out-of-class student work each week in a 15-week semester or its equivalent. (Report of the Meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, December 2010, U.S. Department of Education, pp. 25-26).

Harding University definition of a credit hour

The Harding definitions of a credit hour constitute a formalization of policy in order to ensure compliance with federal and accreditation expectations, as well as to provide consistency throughout the University. Courses may be composed of any combination of elements described, such as a lecture course which also has required laboratory periods or a lecture course having an additional requirement for supervised independent study or tutorial activity.

Procedure

The requirements which follow represent minimums for average students and that some deviation in excess of these requirements may occur, particularly at the graduate and professional levels. Please note that each category of academic activity is followed by the applicable policy section. In the interest of accurate academic measurement and cross-campus comparability, the following policies and practices apply in controlling the relationship between contact hours, work outside of class, and credit hours. (See Forms section below for summary chart.)

Basic one credit hour [§ 600.2(1)]

At least 15 contact hours (with each hour being 50 minutes) of recitation, lecture, discussion, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of 30 hours of student homework, are required for each unit of student credit.

Lecture, traditional class [§ 600.2(1)]

A semester credit hour is earned for fifteen 50-minute sessions of classroom instruction with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study (homework, reading assignments, preparation for class) for each class session (meeting time). Typically, a three-semester credit hour course meets for three 50-minute sessions per week for fifteen weeks, for approximately 45 sessions and 90 hours of work outside of the classroom. (This usually yields 16 weeks when including the final exam.)

Supervised group activity [§ 600.2(2)] (laboratory, field trip, practicum, workshop, group studio)

The equivalent of three 50-minute sessions per week over a traditional 15-week semester of a lab, rehearsal, or studio time would qualify for one semester credit hour. Where such activity involves substantial outside preparation by the student, the equivalent of two 50-minute sessions will earn one semester credit hour. Field trips are to be counted hour-for-hour as laboratory meetings (not including travel time).

Supervised individual activity [§ 600.2(2)] (independent study, individual studio, tutorial, dissertation)

One semester credit hour credit for independent study (defined as study given initial guidance, criticism, review and final evaluation of student performance by a faculty member) will be awarded for the equivalent of three one-hour sessions of student academic activity in a traditional 15-week semester.

Full-time Independent Study [§ 600.2(2)] (clinical placements, student teaching, practicum)

If a student's academic activity is essentially full-time (as in a student teaching or in a clinical placement), at least one full-time, eight-hour per day, 40-hour, five day week of such experience will be required for one credit hour. Depending on specific curriculum, programs may require more than one week in order to award one credit hour. Clinical placement experiences are defined as "a part of the program that allows for observation, participation, studies of individual pupils or clients, individual field work, and practicums both on and off campus." Credit for clinical experiences is determined in accordance with recommendations of a program's specific best practices, accrediting

body, or applicable state regulation.

Experiential Learning [§ 600.2(2)]

At its discretion, Harding may award credit hours for learning acquired outside the institution (provided that such hours are an integral part of a program of study). When a life or work experience is to be credited as a concurrent portion of an academic program design's, as in an internship, one semester credit hour will be awarded for each 40-45 clock-hour week of supervised academic activity that provides the learning considered necessary to program study. The number of such credits to be awarded is limited according to the policies stated in the "Academic Policies" section of the catalog.

Short Sessions [§ 600.2(1)]

Credit hours may be earned in short sessions (summer sessions, interessions, weekend sessions, workshops, seminars, etc.) proportionately to those earned for the same course during a traditional 15-week semester, normally at no more than one credit per week of full-time study. Courses offered over a period of time other than a traditional 15-week semester will require the same amount of classroom and out-of-class work per credit hour as is required of semester-long courses. The same amount of work will be distributed over a shorter period of time and may be allocated in various ways. Forty-five hours of work are required to earn one credit hour. The allotment of face-to-face instruction and work outside of class may vary. Examples:

1. For one credit, a workshop could require 15 hours of contact time and 30 homework hours (total hours = 45).
2. For one credit, a seminar could require 20 hours of contact time and 25 homework hours (total hours = 45).
3. For one credit, a studio could require 30 hours of contact time and 15 homework hours (total = 45).

Since it would be virtually impossible for a student to satisfactorily complete 45 hours of work in less than one week, the policy regarding the duration of courses maintains that a course must cover at least a one-week period for every unit of credit given. During the intensive summer session, however, eight units of credit might be given over a four-week period.

Credit by Examination [§ 600.2(2)]

At its discretion, an institution may award semester hour credits for mastery demonstrated through credit-by-examination. When such credit by examination is allowed, it may be used to satisfy degree requirements or to reduce the total number of remaining hours required for a degree.

Distance Education, Internet and Hybrid (Blended) Courses [§ 600.2(1)]

Harding's credit hour policy for distance education, Internet and hybrid courses is consistent with the standards for courses offered through face-to-face instruction, although some or all of course content and faculty-student interaction occurs through one or more forms of distance education.

How to use the Credit Hour Calculator:

1. With a copy of a course syllabus, complete the information at the top of the form, including the number of credit hours assigned to the course.
2. Identify the level of reading difficulty associated with course assignments and the level of student proficiency. (For most courses, the default is to assume all students are of average ability.)
3. Using the syllabus, enter course assignments.
4. The CHC will calculate whether the required number of hours has been met.

The examples below show how data can be entered for different types of courses:

- POLS 4201 Constitutional Law: This example is an application of how assignments that are listed chronologically in a syllabus are entered into the CHC spreadsheet.
 - HNRS 2030 The Human Situation: This example shows how a summary of assignments can be entered.
 - MATH 1200 Elementary Statistics: This example shows how a course that has the same weekly assignments can demonstrate compliance in a more compact format.
- Syllabus Statement: Each course is required to contain this syllabus statement regarding credit hours.

Rationale

New federal regulations (34 CFR parts 600 and 668) require that institutions submit their definitions and related policies regarding credit hours to their accrediting agencies and receive an official, recorded certification from that agency that the definitions meet the new federal definition of a credit hour.

Forms:

Credit Hour Calculator.xlsx

Credit Hour Summary Chart.pdf

Reading Speed Table.pdf

Governance

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Details

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Summary: Harding University Credit Hour Policy

Note: Harding's credit hour policy for distance education, Internet and hybrid courses is consistent with the standards for courses offered through face to face instruction, although some or all of course content and faculty-student interaction occurs through one or more forms of distance education.

Type of Instruction	Contact Hours* per week ("class hours," 50-minute segments) A	Weekly Preparation Time (50 minute segments) B	A+B	Total Number of Weeks C	Total number of hours (A+B) x C	Number of credit hours awarded 45 = 1 90 = 2 135 = 3 180 = 4
Traditional Class [§ 600.2(1)]						
Lecture, recitation	1	2	3	15	45	1
	2	4	6	15	90	2
	3	6	9	15	135	3
Supervised Group Activity [§ 600.2(2)]						
Lab, Group studio, Practicum	3	0	3	15	45	1
	1	2	3	15	45	1
	2	4	6	15	90	2
Field Trip	6	12	18	5	90	2
	6	12	18	10	180	4
Supervised Individual Activity [§ 600.2(2)]						
Independent study, individual studio, dissertation	.5	2.5	3	15	45	1
	.5	5.5	6	15	90	2
	.5	8.5	9	15	135	3
Full-time Independent Study [§ 600.2(2)]						
Student teaching, practicum, clinical placement [#]	0	45 (prep time and work time)	45	1	45	1
Experiential Learning [§ 600.2(2)]						
Approved learning activities**	0	45 (prep time and work time)	45	1	45	1
Short Sessions [§ 600.2(1)]						
Courses offered in summer sessions, intersessions, weekend sessions, workshops, seminars	12.5 (one half day, one full)	10	22.50	2	45.0	1
	18 (two 9-hour days)	27	45.00	1	45.0	1
	8 (Once per wk for 4 wks)	15	23.00	4	92.0	2
	8 (Once per wk for 6 wks)	15	23.00	6	138.0	3
	21.25 (4.25 hrs per day)	44	65.25	2	130.5	3

*One contact hour = 50 minutes.

**The number of such credits is limited per catalog policy.

[^]This assumes regular contact takes place.

[#] Credit for clinical experiences and/or practica is determined in accordance with recommendations of a program's specific accrediting body or applicable state regulation

APPENDIX B

Reading Speed Charts

Based on research from Rosalind Streichler, Ph.D., Center for Teaching Development, University of California, San Diego; Karron G. Lewis, Ph.D., Associate Director, Center for Teaching Effectiveness. Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment, The University of Texas at Austin; and research conducted at Cambridge University in England; we can assume that the average college student can read 250 words per minute and that the average textbook has approximately 800 words per page. Therefore, it would take 3.2 minutes to read one page, 32 minutes to read 10 pages, and a little over an hour to read 20 pages.

Hours	Pages		Hours	Pages		Hours	Pages
6	120		12	240		18	360
24	480		30	600		36	720

*Average text page = 800 words

		Percentile		
		25%	50%	75%
		Remedial student or slow reader	Average student	Above-average student
General expository reading: easy fiction and non-technical materials	Words per minute	150	250	500
	Pages per hour**	11	19	38
Advanced, scientific, and/or technical material	Words per minute	100	149	170
	Pages per hour**	8	11	13
*Based on research from Rosalind Streichler, Ph. D., Center for Teaching Development, University of California, San Diego; Karron G. Lewis, Ph. D., Associate Director, Center for Teaching Effectiveness, Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment, The University of Texas at Austin; John P. Staeck, Ph.D., College of DuPage; and Cambridge University.				

Credit Hour Requirement Calculator Template					
Enter Course Information in Gold Highlighted Cells					
Use or edit / enter description of instructional activities in green highlighted cells					
Enter estimated hours of instructional activities in blue cells					
Course Information				Instructions	
Course Prefix and Number				Enter all Course Information in top section. A CHC is required for each course, each modality and each length of term offered.	
Course Title					
Credit Hours					
Mode of Delivery					
Weeks in Part of Term					
Level of Reading Material					
Reading Level of Students					
Average Pages per Hour	#N/A				
Direct Instruction				Instructions Enter a description of all direct instruction utilized in this course. The descriptions provided in the template are examples of direct instruction, but you can edit them, replace them, or add your own to the list. At least two types of direct instruction are required for any distance courses. Items that begin with "For online courses" are specifically designed to provide direct instruction in online courses.	
Use at Least Two (2) Types	Hours/Week	Hours/Term	Total Hours		
Course Introduction / Orientation / Guidance					
Lecture / Recitation					
Meeting with students about the class (e.g., providing feedback on an assignment)					
Discussions (In class, discussion boards (250 - 500 words approximately 1 hr with peer responses, references), journals, synchronous chat rooms, structured meetings)					
Planned laboratory / studio meetings					
Faculty-delivered or timed tests/quizzes					
Clinical experience					
Field trips, field work, events, service learning					
For online courses, providing feedback on student work can count as direct instruction.					
For online courses, scheduled, documented (in syllabus) office hours can count as direct instruction.					
Total for Direct Instruction Must ≥ 0		Total	0		
Non-Direct Instruction & Activities					Instructions
	Pages Asg'd	Hours/Week	Hours/Term		
Reading			0		
Written assignments			0	Enter a description of all non-direct instruction and activities for this course.	

Homework				0			The descriptions provided in the template are approved examples, but you can edit them or add your own.
Preparing for Exams				0			
Preparing for Quizzes				0			
Self-directed practice quizzes				0			
Professional Paper with citation, argumentation, references (1 - 1.5 pgs per hour, 250 - 500 words per page - calculate and put in Hours/Term box)				0			
Reflective Narrative (1 - 2 pgs per hour - calculate and put in Hours/Term box)				0			
Group Project				0			
				0			
				0			
				0			
				0			
				0			
Total Hours				0			
Required Hours				Need Credit Hours			
Difference				Need Credit Hours			
Last Revised April 2024							

Instructions				
How to use the Credit Hour Calculator				
<p>1. Enter course information at the top of the form: Course Prefix and Number, Course Title, and Credit Hours.</p> <p>2. Select the appropriate menu option from the drop-down for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mode of Delivery: In Person, Online, Hybrid, Independent Study, Research Activity - Weeks in Part of Term: 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 15, 16 (Note that full term is 15 weeks; 16 weeks is a special term used by HST.) <p>3. Identify the level of reading difficulty associated with course assignments and the level of student proficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of Reading Material: General/Easy/Non-Technical, Advanced/Scientific/Technical - Reading Level of Students: Above Average Student , Average Student, Remedial Student or Slow Reader - Note: For most courses, the default is to assume all students are of average ability. <p>4. Enter course assignments / requirements and your best estimate of the time required for a typical student to complete.</p> <p>5. The CHC will calculate whether the required number of hours has been met.</p>				
Credit Hour Policy and Credit Hour Calculator				
Higher Learning Commission (2024):				
<p>An institution shall be able to equate its learning experiences with semester or quarter credit hours using practices common to institutions of higher education, to justify the lengths of its programs in comparison to similar programs found in accredited institutions of higher education, and to justify any program-specific tuition in terms of program costs, program length, and program objectives. Institutions shall notify HLC of any significant changes in the relationships among credits, program length, and tuition.</p> <p>Assignment of Credit Hours. The institution's assignment and award of credit hours shall conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education. Those institutions seeking, or participating in, Title IV federal financial aid, shall demonstrate that they have policies determining the credit hours awarded to courses and programs in keeping with commonly-accepted practices in higher education and with any federal definition of the credit hour, as may appear in federal regulations and that institutions also have procedures that result in an appropriate awarding of institutional credit in conformity with the policies established by the institution.</p>				

Harding University Credit Hour Policy: ([Link to full policy in HUPP](#))

Harding University requires all faculty to develop and teach courses that adhere to the credit hour policy. The policy applies to courses at every location, modality and term length. The Harding credit hour policy aligns with the federally-approved regulation for a credit hour which as been defined in two ways:

1. The credit hour value of a standard or more traditional course must be calculated as follows: A clock hour of instructional time is the equivalent of (a) 50 minutes of class time or (b) 60 minutes of independent-study work or some measures of clinical time; and (2) a minimum of two hours of out-of-class work is expected for every hour (50 minutes) of instructional time. To assist faculty in ensuring that a course complies with this policy, this Credit Hour Calculator will be available online, both in HUPP and on Pipeline; the [Summary Chart \(Appendix A\)](#) and the [Reading Speed Tables \(Appendix B\)](#) may be used as a guide. Note that Appendix B is incorporated into the Credit Hour Calculator.
2. If the credit hour value for an academic activity (including but not limited to “laboratory work, internships, practica, and studio work”) cannot be calculated using the information cited above in (1) above, that academic activity can be found to have met the federal definition by documenting that it involves “at least an equivalent amount of work”.