

## CSU Curricular Guidelines to Determining Credit Hours for Online Courses

**Statement on Credit Hours:** Credit hours awarded must be determined by sound practice regardless of course delivery method. In accordance with federal law and SACSCOC standard 10.7, online courses should adhere to the following:

The number of contact hours for courses that meet face-to-face with an instructor is defined by the number of hours spent in classroom; typically 15 hours (1 hour per meeting for 15 weeks) in the classroom is required for one college credit. As noted by the Federal Definition of a Credit Hour, 1 contact hour is typically matched by 2 or more out of class hours. Contact hours in synchronous online environments may be recorded in the same manner as for traditional classes.

- a. Faculty should estimate the number of contact hours based on the stated learning objectives, the topics, and the scope of the course. For asynchronous environments, the number of contact hours should be based on the material delivered in the asynchronous environment.
- b. During the planning process, faculty should estimate the number of contact hours. This should be based on the stated learning objectives, the topics, and the scope of the course. For asynchronous environments, the number of contact hours should be based on the material delivered in the asynchronous environment. Faculty should consider out-of-classroom activities, such as homework assignments, as part of the total contact hours for the course. Quality assignments need to be developed and submitted for review.
- c. Faculty are encouraged to participate in the review process as other classroom faculty. The number of contact hours should be based on the number of contact hours in the classroom system. Quality assignments need to be developed and submitted for review.

**Statement on Equivalent Courses:** Courses that are equivalent to the same courses taught in the classroom should be awarded the same credit hours.

- b. The processes and procedures for offering web-based courses are the same as all other CSU courses.
- c. Departments offering courses in web-based format should be prepared to document that the courses have student-learning outcomes that are equivalent to those for courses taught in the traditional format. The rubric will provide guidelines to assist in the documentation of those requirements.

## CSU Rubric for Asynchronous Online Credit Hour Estimates

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.

When faculty plan and develop asynchronous courses, whether fully online or blended, they must account for 15 hours of contact time, as defined above, for each credit hour. They must also account for a minimum of as much as two hours of additional student work per credit hour, or 30 hours, for a total of 45 hours per term for each class. The following rubric can be used to estimate asynchronous contact hours in absence of data.

Faculty should also consider using Rice University's Course Workload Estimator, available at <https://cte.rice.edu/workload>.



|                                        |                        |                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Some New Concepts                      | 7 pp. per hour         | Text contains some unfamiliar words and ideas                                      |
| Many New Concepts                      | 5 pp. per hour         | Text contains many unfamiliar words and ideas                                      |
| Writing                                |                        | Longer reflection/narrative, argumentative, or research (250 words per page)       |
| Reflection/Narrative Writing           | 1 hour per page        | Little planning or critical engagement with content.                               |
| Argumentative Writing                  | 2 ¼ hours per page     | Detailed planning and critical engagement with content, but no outside research.   |
| Research Writing                       | 4 ½ hours per page     | Detailed planning, critical engagement with content, outside research              |
| Discussion Posts - Initial             | 30 minutes per post    | Time to prepare and write post                                                     |
| Discussion Posts – Reading and Replies | 1 hour                 | Time to read other posts and respond to 1 to 3 posts                               |
| Video                                  | Length of video        | Instructor lectures, brief YouTube videos, demonstrations                          |
| Lecture Capture                        | Length of lecture      | Staged or classroom capture                                                        |
| Audio                                  | Length of audio        | Music, medical, history, speeches, radio, audio lectures                           |
| Simulation and Gaming                  | Length of simulation   | Virtual laboratories, hands-on learning, mock criminal trials, virtual field trips |
| Practice Problems (not homework)       | 20 minutes each        | Math, computer science, case studies                                               |
| Outside Online Short Training Courses  | Length of short course | Government training courses, e.g. FEMA                                             |
| Quizzes                                | 1 – 1 ½ hours          | Dependent on number of questions and format                                        |
| Exams                                  | 1 – 3 hours            | Midterm and final exams may be longer                                              |