

## **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 SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.4.6 web-based 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 750 minutes (15 50-minute meetings) in the classroom is required for one college credit. Contact hours in synchronous online environments may be recorded in the same manner as for traditional classes.

However, contact hours in **asynchronous** learning environments are more difficult to monitor. Therefore, the definition of contact hours in asynchronous learning environments at CSU is based on the following guidelines:

- 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 course objectives,, the course topics, and the stated expectations for readings, projects, and other assignments as well as the stated learning outcomes. 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.

**Statement on Equivalence:** Courses taught in the web-based format must be equivalent to the same courses taught in the traditional format.

- a. Courses developed specifically for web-based delivery must be approved through the Undergraduate or Graduate Curriculum process in the same way as new traditional courses.
- 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 12.5 hours of contact time, as redefined above, for each credit hour (fifty minutes for fifteen weeks). They must also account for two hours of outside student work per credit hour, or 25 hours, for a total of 112.5 hours of contact time and student outside work. The following rubric can be used to estimate asynchronous contact hours in the absence of data. Outside student work must be accounted for in the traditional manner. (Synchronous courses account for contact time in the traditional manner since the instructor is online with the students.)

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	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.
Pod Casts. Phone Apps.	5 minutes per Podcast	Mobile Learning
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)	
Discussion Forum	60 minutes per session	Discussion. Remote Conferencing. Chats. Group Collaboration. Wikis. Blogs. Social Learning. Online Office Hours.
Quizzes	20 minutes per quiz	
Exams	1-3 hours per exam	