CREDIT HOUR CALCULATIONS

Credit Hour Definition

California Code of Regulations, Title 5 §55002.5

- defines one unit of credit as a minimum of 48 hours of total student work for colleges on the semester system, and as a minimum of 33 hours for colleges on the quarter system.

Credit Hour Definition

Program and Course Approval Handbook

- Further defines credit hour as a range between 48 and 54 hours, depending on

Why 48 – 54 and not JUST 48?

- 48 minimum hours based on 16 weeks x 3 hours p/week
- Academic calendars range from 16 – 18 weeks. 54 = 18 x 3
- College MAY NOT claim apportionment above maximum contact hours listed on COR.
- Standing recommendation from CO for many, many years to avoid problems with audits and apportionment.

Four Basic Credit Calculation Methods

- **Standard Formula**
  - Derived from Title 5 §§55002-55002.5 and from 34 CFR 600.2
- **Cooperative Work Experience**
  - Title 5 §55256.5
- **Clock Hour Programs**
  - 34 CFR §668.8(k)(2)(i)(A) and 668.8(l)
- **Open-Entry / Open-Exit**
  - Title 5 §58164

Pending Changes to Regulation

- Current title 5 regs have not been revised since 2011 implementation of federal definition of credit hour and are out-of-step with standard practices in higher education.
- Current regs do not address clock hour programs and other non-standard configurations for credit hour calculations.
- Current title 5 regs imply but do not explicitly require local policy governing credit hour; federal law and accreditation make this explicit.
- System Advisory Committee on Curriculum has begun process of working with the Chancellor’s Office to review and revise title 5.

I. STANDARD FORMULA

Definitions for Standard Formula

Total Contact Hours

- Sum of all contact hours for the course in all calculations categories. Required on COR

Outside-of-class Hours

- Hours students are expected to engage in course work outside of the classroom. Required for Credit Hour definition and calculation.

Hours-per-unit Divisor

- Total student learning hours (contact + outside) for which the college awards one unit of credit.

Total Contact Hours

- Required component of COR (§55002)
- The total time per term that a student is under the direct supervision of an instructor or other qualified employee as defined in §58161.
- Sum of all contact hours for the course in all calculations categories, including lecture, recitation, discussion, seminar, laboratory, clinical, studio, didactic, practica, activity, to-be-arranged, etc.

Outside-of-Class Hours

Common categories and ratios:

Instructional Category	In-class	Outside-of-
Lecture	1	2
Activity	2	1
Laboratory	3	0

Hours-per-unit Divisor

Notes for Credit Hour Calculations

- Units of credit as specified in state and federal regulations are based total student learning hours, regardless of ratio of contact to outside-of-class hours.
- Ratios and categories should follow standard practices in higher education. ((1+2)x16-18) = 1 unit or the equivalent.
- Accreditation and articulation implications when standard practices not followed or when applied inconsistently.
- Local policy or regulation or formal guideline with explanation of how the institution calculates credit hours required.
- “Carnegie” unit is a colloquialism used in higher ed, but does not actually apply to higher ed.

II. OTHER CREDIT HOUR STANDARDS

Cooperative Work Experience

- 75 hours (50) of paid work experience = 1 unit
- 60 hours (40) of un-paid work experience = 1 unit
- Chancellor’s Office currently working on additional guidance for these course-types, including clarification of inclusion of “lecture” or classroom hours in formula.

Clock Hour Programs

- Defined in federal regulations USDE 34 CFR §668.8(k)(2)(i)(A) and 668.8(l).
- Newer regulation and definition that is just now being reviewed under 2014 ACCJC Standards (II.A.9).
- Instructions for compliance are complicated.
- Not covered in Title 5, but local districts must comply with feds for both accreditation and $.

Open Entry / Open Exit entoma020tom

More on Cooperative Work Experience

- Most colleges do not list co-op hours as a separate entry on COR. Most use “lab” category, even though it is inaccurate. Some house hours in other categories, including “lecture.” Local practices frequently tied to workload accounting.

- Chancellor’s Office currently rejecting submissions that include hours under lecture:

  “In no case shall duplicate student contact hours be counted for any classroom instruction and Cooperative Work Experience Education.” (title 5 §55256.5)

- Working on resolution that allows colleges to record these hours as needed on CORs.

More on Cooperative Work Experience

- Technically, co-op hours are neither lecture, nor lab, nor any other category. They are their own category.
- CO has determined that some hours may be allocated to “lecture” category, but no specific guidance or legal opinion on this currently.
- System Advisory Committee on Curriculum has convened a workgroup to look at overhaul and consolidation of title 5 regs on all credit hour calculations, including co-op.
- Recommendation for now is to follow what is needed to secure approval of courses and handle work load and other issues locally.

Other Course Types

Other Course Types Examples

- In CSU system, the following course types may award one unit of credit for 3 or more hours per week, without requirements for incremental units:
  - Major and minor intercollegiate sports
  - Performance / Production in art, drama, journalism, music, photography, radio-TV, debate that result in major public performance, showing, or distribution.
  -

Other Course Types Examples

- Allied health (non-nursing!) examples: Directed Clinical Practice in:
  - Radiologic Technology
  - Dental Assisting
  - Medical Assisting
  - Health Information

- Practices for awarding units of credit for the following instructional modes varies throughout CCC system.

- Historically, these instructional formats frequently awarded units of credit in a manner similar to CCC Cooperative Work Experience standards. This is consistent with much of higher education.

III. SCENARIOS

Sample Calculation

Imagine that a course requires 72 hours of lecture, 54 hours of laboratory, and 144 hours of homework. Then the total number of units would be:

Example 1

Solution 1

English 101 meets for 4 hours of lecture per week, over a 16 week semester.

- How many hours of outside-of-class work should be listed on the

Example 2

Welding 130 meets for 3 hours of lab per week for 18 weeks.

- How many hours of outside-of-class work should be listed on the COR?
- How many total student learning hours?
- How many units of credit should be recorded on the course outline of record?

Solution 2

Welding 130 meets for 3 hours of lab per week for 18 weeks.

- How many hours of outside-of-class work should be listed on the COR?
  - 0 hours are required for this laboratory course
- How many total student learning hours?
  - 3 * 18 = 54 hours
- How many units of credit should be recorded on the course outline of record?
  - 1 unit

Example 3

ARTS 100 meets for 6 hours of lab or activity w/ homework per week, over 18 weeks with 3 hours of homework per week.

- How many contact hours should be listed on COR?
- How many total student learning hours?
- How many units of credit should be recorded on the course outline of record?

Solution 3

ARTS 100 meets for 6 hours of activity w/ homework per week, over 18 weeks with 3 hours of homework per week.

- How many contact hours should be listed on COR?
  - 108 (6 x 18 = 108)
- How many total student learning hours?
  - 162 (9 x 18 = 162)
- How many units of credit should be recorded on the course outline of record?
  - 3units (162 / 54 = 3)

Challenging Scenario

Carpentry 101 – Introduction to Framing

Students are required to complete 710 hours of classroom time over 20 weeks, but there are no specifics on how those hours are divided between lecture, lab, or other categories.

A. How would the faculty and the curriculum committee determine the appropriate breakdown of hours between lecture, lab, or other instructional formats?
B. What elements on the COR would be reviewed to determine if the hours had been assigned to the appropriate instructional formats?
C. How many units of credit?
D. How many hours per week in each category?
E. What potential conflicts and pressure could enter in to this course approval?
F. What is the role of local policy and practice in this case?

Scenario Answers

A. Local policy, process, and standards based on guidelines in T5 and PCAH. COR elements can provide direction.
B. Homework, evaluation, assignments, content, outcomes, objectives, content.
C. Depends! Pure Lab= 13 units, Pure Lecture=39 units, Lec/Lab or Activity = Variable
D. Faculty Load, Cost of Enrollment, External Acc.
E. To provide guidelines that answer this question from inception and delineate between prescriptive and permissive aspects of regulation re: unit calculation.

IV. LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSIDERATIONS

Local Policy

- Changes to federal regulations in 2010 require that colleges develop an institutional policy defining the credit hour and provide evidence of consistent application of that policy. (34 CFR 602.24(f))

- Good practice is for a local policy to specify, at a minimum:
  - Baseline definition (e.g. 54 hours of work = 1unit of Credit)
  - Categories of academic activities (lecture, seminar, studio, lab, activity, clinical, work experience, etc.)
  - Standard calculation expectations for each category
  - Explanations of procedures for assigning credit hours to courses, including explanations for deviations from baseline definition.

- Local policy should align to standard practices in higher education and expectations for transfer and articulation of course credit, which can vary by category and discipline.

- Local policy is an academic and professional matter and is under 10+1 process for local policy making

- Coming title 5 changes will explicitly require local policy.

Challenges for Curriculum Committees

- Differential pay for instructional categories.
- Teaching load problems disguised as credit hour issue. Faculty may propose increasing units for reasons involving instructor load or other factors rather than content and instruction.
- External and internal pressures to change credit hours or make exceptions to established practices. These can include administrative or fiscal considerations, accreditation, degree unit limits, inter-departmental skirmishes, and a host of other pressures.
- Passing muster in the Chancellor's Office submission process.

Solutions for Curriculum Committees

- Establish and **follow** institutionally established credit hour policy as guideline for **all** committee decisions.
- Ratios and categories should follow standard practices in higher education, but policy should be flexible, within the boundaries of regulations, to accommodate differences among disciplines.
- Establish standards and follow them! Do not fall into the trap of trying to reinvent standards each time an unusual course or proposal comes to the committee.
- Faculty workload issues are for your union or faculty association, not your curriculum committee.

V. SAMPLE CALCULATIONS AND RESOURCES

Sample Calculations: Lecture

Lecture	***48 = 1 unit***		
	8	*16*	24
	16	*32*	48
	24	*48*	72
	32	*64*	96
	40	*80*	120
	48	*96*	144
	56	*112*	168
	64	*128*	192
	72	*144*	216
	80	*160*	240
	88	*176*	264
	96	*192*	288

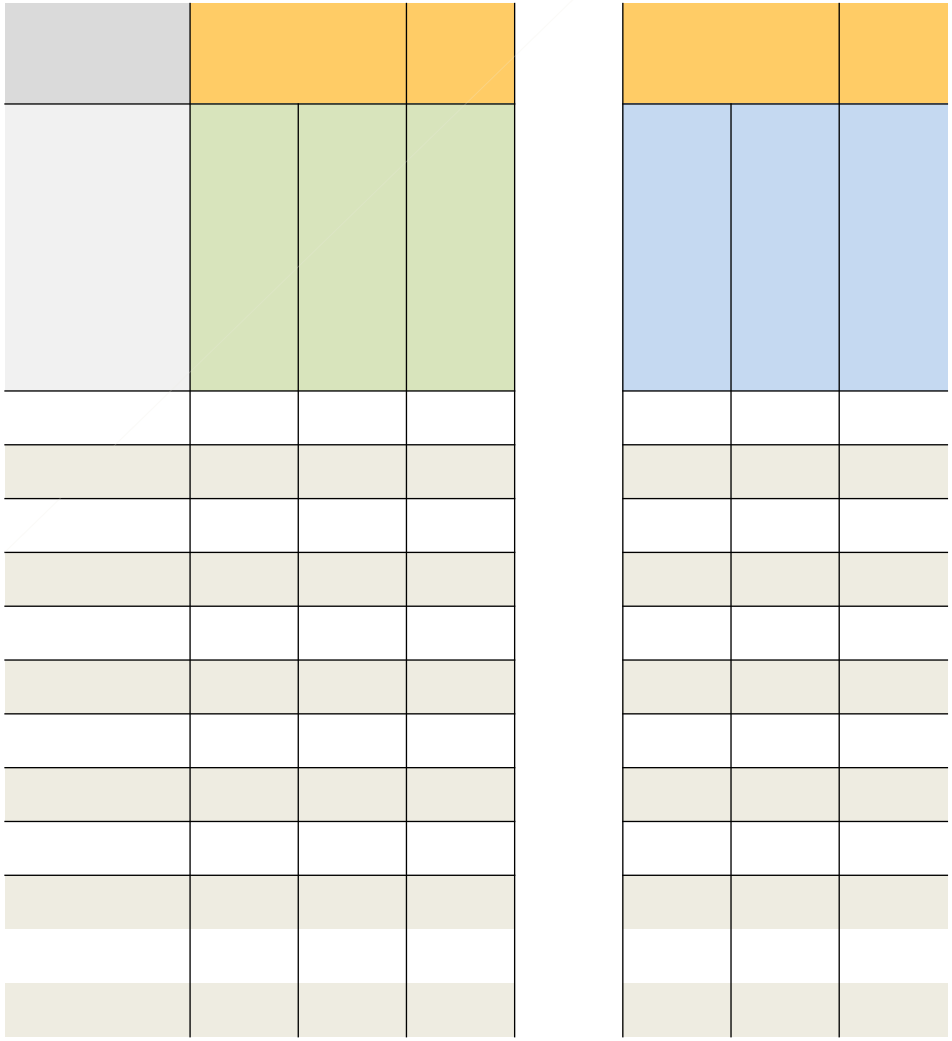
54 = 1 unit		
9	*18*	27
18	*36*	54
27	*54*	81
36	*72*	108
45	*90*	135
54	*108*	162
63	*126*	189
72	*144*	216
81	*162*	243
90	*180*	270
99	*198*	297
108	*216*	324

Sample Calculations: Activity or Lab with Homework

Activity,Lab w/Homework	***48 = 1 unit***		
	16	*8*	24
	32	*16*	48
	48	*24*	72
	64	*32*	96
	80	*40*	120
	96	*48*	144
	54 12	18	

54 = 1 unit		
18	*9*	27
36	*18*	54
54	*27*	81
72	*36*	108
90	*45*	135
108	*54*	162

Sample Calculation: Lab, Activity, Clinical, etc. without homework.



Sample Calculation Table:

for colleges that use 48 – 54 range

Lecture	***48 - 54 = 1 unit***		
	8-9	*16-18*	24-27
	16-18	*32-36*	48-54
	24-27	*48-54*	72-81
	32-36	*64-72*	96-108
	40-45	*80-90*	120-135
	48-54	*96-108*	144-162

Combined Instructional Categories

Individual CORs frequently record hours and units for multiple instructional categories. The most common example is a lecture / laboratory or lecture / activity course. Credit hour determinations for these courses works as follows in this example of a 3

Standard Practices in Higher Education

What are standard practices?

- Standard Hour: 50 minutes = 60 minutes!
- One hour in-class plus two hours out-of-class (three total hours) over the length of the primary term equals one unit of credit.
- Laboratory, studio, clinicals, practica, etc: **at least as much time** as required above, with in-class to out-of-class ratios adjusted according to discipline and course type. (1.5:1.5, 2:1, 3:0, 3-4:0, etc.)
- Credit hour policies define minimum hours for one unit of credit.