



Procedure 301-03 Assignment of Credit Hours

Sponsor: Academic Affairs

Purpose

This procedure describes how credit hours are assigned to courses and programs at Coconino Community College.

Definitions

Clock Hour The standard measurement of work time; one clock hour is 60 minutes of work.

Contact Hour One instructional contact hour is 50 minutes of direct contact with students or the equivalent amount of work in a remote modality. Two types of contact hours are delineated at CCC:

1. **Lecture:** This describes instructional contact time that focuses on direct instruction, discussion, and other class activities to help students master conceptual materials. Because direct application of concepts is limited during class time, students are expected to spend a significant amount of time outside of class (typically two hours outside of class for every hour in class) completing assignments and learning to apply the concepts and skills taught in class.
2. **Lab:** This describes instructional contact time that focuses on direct application or practice of concepts and skills. Because this takes place with the instructor present, instructional contact time is increased and the accompanying outside-of-class work is reduced (for example, a student may spend two or more hours in class and one hour or less outside of class per credit hour).

Credit Hour According to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (34 C.F.R. §600.2), “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
2. Or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time
3. Or at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work [including synchronous or asynchronous online work] leading to the award of credit hours.”

Procedure

Assignment of Credit Hours to Courses

When designing a course, CCC faculty assign credit hours based on the estimated time an average student will spend on the class each week (including direct instruction, homework, laboratory work, and any other academic work for the class) over a standard semester. Credits are to be rounded down to the nearest full credit based upon total student work per week. The following table illustrates how this determination is to be made.

Table 1 – Determining Credit Hours

Number of Credit Hours	Minimum total student work per week (hours)	Minimum total student work per course (hours)
1	3	45
2	6	90
3	9	135
4	12	180
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

Because different types of courses require different amounts of direct instructional time, basing credit hour assignments on total student work is critical. For example, a 3-credit course may take a variety of forms.

Table 2 – Examples of 3-credit Course Variations in a Standard Semester

Direct Instruction (contact hours)	Independent work (homework, etc.)	Total hours of student work per week	Examples
0 (0 lecture + 0 lab)	9	9	Internship or independent study
3 (3 lecture + 0 lab)	6	9	Traditional lecture-only class
5 (2 lecture + 3 lab)	4	9	Science class with embedded lab
9 (0 lecture + 9 lab)	0	9	Activity or performance class

In some instances, commonly accepted practices or specialized accreditation standards may dictate assigning fewer credit hours than is justified by the total amount of student work. For example, internships and clinical practica often exceed the minimum standard for hours of student work per credit hour assigned. However, in no case shall more credit hours be assigned than is justified by the total amount of student work.

Assignment of Credit Hours to Programs

The total credit hours for a program are calculated by summing the credit hours of all required components, including general education coursework, required program coursework, and electives where applicable. Remedial coursework (with course numbers below 100) and prerequisites required for program entry do not count toward the total.

References

34 C.F.R. §600.2 (Definition of Credit Hour)

Procedure History

02/25/2021 New and approved by Executive Leadership Council

07/08/2025 Revised Sponsor from Academic and Student Affairs to Academic Affairs

Legal Review

None