

GUIDELINES on the RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTACT HOURS AND UNIT CREDIT

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) is responsible for reviewing course contact hours and the expected amount of work outside class to ensure that the workload is consistent with mastery of the specified body of material. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for reviewing current course offerings to ensure they conform to the following Guidelines.

- 1) A contact hour is defined as 50 minutes of class time, regardless of modality – i.e., in-person class or online (synchronous or asynchronous). The expectation is that the number of 50-minute contact hours per week will match the number of units for a course following the standard 15-week session term. For non-standard session terms (e.g., 4-, 6-, 8-, or 12-week sessions), the number of contact hours per week will be adjusted accordingly.
- 2) A contact hour includes engagement with instructors through presentation, discussion, and/or other exercises that foster critical engagement with lecture materials, course materials, or discussion with classmates. For asynchronous online class sessions, this may include question & answer, or other methods, sometimes referred to as *Bidirectional Learning Tools* (BLT).
- 3) One semester unit represents 1 hour of class time and 2 hours of outside work (3 hours total) per week for a 15-week term. For example, for courses with a lecture/discussion/seminar format, students are expected to work 2 hours outside class for each 1 hour of class time; for courses with a lab or studio format, students are expected to spend all that time in lecture and the lab or studio environment, with little, if any, outside work expected.
- 4) Weekly contact hours for courses with unit values of 3, 2, or 1 should equal the number of units.
- 5) Where the number of contact hours for a 4-unit course is reduced, the instructor and sponsoring academic unit will provide the UCOC with an academic rationale for the reduction (e.g., extensive reading assignments, more than the average out-of-class writing assignments, regular instructor/student tutorials, etc.). The UCOC will evaluate the rationale. This flexibility, however, may not allow contact hours for a 4-unit course to drop below three 50-minute contact hours per week whether in-person or online.
- 6) The unit definition implies a maximum as well as a minimum amount of student effort. For new course proposals, if the number of contact hours exceeds the number of units, the UCOC should ensure that the requirements are not excessive. For existing offerings, the Registrar expects chairs and directors to do the same.
- 7) Regarding asynchronous course offerings for which the Registrar cannot verify contact hours, the cognizant dean will verify, and certify to the Registrar, that current offerings comply with the Guidelines.
- 8) In order to encourage innovative and nontraditional course structures, the UCOC may consider other course formats deemed to provide an appropriate course experience.