



Credit Hours Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the assignment of semester credit hours awarded for all courses at SIU. Semester credit hours at SIU are equivalent to commonly accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement. Each course at SIU is measured by achievement of established course learning outcomes and the amount of time a typical student should spend to accomplish these outcomes.

Specifically, a one (1) semester credit hour requires a minimum of 45 hours of student work with one third of the time (15 hours) focused on academic engagement and two-thirds of the time (30 hours) focused on student preparation. For a three-semester credit hour course, a minimum of 135 hours of student work is required divided between 45 hours of academic engagement and 90 hours of student preparation.

The University Clock/Credit Hour Worksheet is utilized to estimate the amount of time a student should spend to accomplish course learning outcomes to substantiate semester credit hours awarded for all courses. Online and hybrid courses must meet the same total hour requirements.

The general rule provided by the U.S. Department of Education and regional accreditors is that one academic credit hour is composed of 15 hours of direct instruction (50–60-minute hours) and 30 hours of out-of-class student work (60-minute hours). This means that a student spends 45 total hours of time on 1 credit, and 135 total hours (45 hours of direct instruction and 90 hours of out-of-class student work) over the course of a semester in a typical 3 credit class. Time per week calculations for various course lengths can be found further down the page.

“Direct instruction” includes:

- Instructor’s narrative
 - In-class lecture (for hybrid courses)
 - Text in a learning module
 - Podcast
 - Video (instructor or departmentally created)
- Video from other sources (equivalent to a guest speaker or a movie watched during class time)
- Multimedia interaction (learning objects)
- Discussions, blogs, wikis
- Exams and quizzes
- Any instructor-guided activity including small group activities
- Any assignment or activity you would traditionally do “in-class”

“Out-of-class student work” includes:

- Readings
- Other media consumption
 - Videos or podcasts created by authors other than the instructor intended to replace readings



- Assignments
 - Papers
 - Projects
 - Prep of presentations
 - Research
- Group work that traditionally would be done “outside of class”

In accordance with federal regulations, online distance education courses are required to have **regular and substantive instructor-initiated interactions**, which will include **both direct instruction and student work**. All students in a course should have similar opportunities for instructor interaction, which is particularly important for courses with a mix of on-site and distance students.

Incorporating active learning in online and hybrid courses may make it more difficult to map “in-class” time to traditional categories of “direct instruction.” However, instructor-led activity, or group work centered around instructional activities (active learning), would also be appropriate to count as class time, in contrast to student work outside of class, and in many cases could also fulfill the regular and substantive instructor-initiated interaction requirements.

Course Time Per Week

The amount of time that should be offered in a course per week will vary with the length of the course.

Time per week over 15 weeks: 3 Credit Course: 3 hrs. direct instruction, 6 hrs. student work

Hours of Instructional Activity Equivalents (HIA) for Undergraduate/graduate Courses online and hybrid courses all have the same credit hour requirements for students. The information is used to make general estimates of **student learning time** in online and blended courses.

Expectations and Terminology

The Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR § 600.2 provides the following definitions used to determine institutional eligibility to participate in programs offered by the Higher Education Act of 1965, including participation in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Compliance with the federal requirements also ensures compliance with our institutional accrediting agency.

Distance Education: Education that uses one or more of the technologies [specified in 34 CFR § 600.2]...to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.

Regular interaction: Regular interaction includes substantive interactions between a student and an instructor or instructors on a predictable and scheduled basis prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency. Regular interaction entails



- providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency,
- monitoring the student's academic engagement and success, and
- ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed based on such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Substantive interaction: Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and includes at least two of the following:

- providing direct instruction.
- assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework.
- providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency.
- facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
- other instructional activities approved by the institutions or program's accrediting agency.

Credit hour: Credit hour is defined by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) as an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by [the institutional accrediting body, or state approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that reasonably approximates not less than

- i. 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, or the equivalent amount of work over a different period, or
- ii. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in (i) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including but not limited to laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; and permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

Academic engagement: Academic engagement is defined as active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study which includes but is not limited to:

- attending a synchronous class, lecture, laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students.
- submitting an academic assignment.
- taking an assessment or an exam.
- participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction.
- participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution; or
- interacting with an instructor about academic matters; and



- does not include, for example, living in institutional housing; participating in the institution's meal plan; logging into an online class or tutorial without any further participation; or participating in academic counseling or advisement.

Hybrid Course : Hybrid Class will meet in person and online. 75% or more of the class will be taught online synchronously or asynchronously.

Credit Requirements by Type of Instruction

1. For the typical student, a minimum of forty-five (45) hours of work planned and arranged by the University faculty is required to gain 1 credit. 3 credits require 135 hours of instructional activity (**HIA**).
2. The typical distribution of student learning time is approximately **one-third instruction** and **two-thirds outside preparation**.
 - a. One (1) credit = 45 Hours of Instructional Activity (15 hours EIA + 30 hours ELA)
 - b. Two (2) credits = 90 Hours of Instructional Activity (30 hours EIA + 60 hours ELA)
 - c. Three (3) 3 credits = 135 Hours of Instructional Activity (45 hours EIA + 90 hours ELA)

Credit Requirements by Type of Instruction	
Instruction time (1/3 of total time)	Outside preparation time (2/3 of total time)
<i>Activities that are typically instructor led, guided, or facilitated such as group discussions, field trips, and lectures.</i>	<i>Activities that students actively participate in such as reading, writing, and analyzing.</i>
Also referred to as: • Instructor-led activity • Direct instruction • Class or seat time for blended courses • Equivalent Instructional Activities (EIA)	Also referred to as: • Student-led activity • Out-of-class work • Work done without instructor oversight • Equivalent Learning Activities (ELA)

Weekly Expectations Based on Semester Length and Credits

15-Week Course

# Credits	Total Instruction Time (in hours)	Total Outside Preparation (in hours)	Weekly Instruction Time (in hours)	Weekly Outside Preparation (in hours)
1	15	30	1	2
2	30	60	2	4



3	45	90	3	6
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Time Equivalencies for Instructional Activities

The term “equivalent instructional activity” (**EIA**) is synonymous with “**in-class**” and “**direct faculty instruction**” particularly in a residential or blended course. One important point is that the **EIA** is not the amount of time that faculty spend teaching the course but rather the amount of time a student would be engaged in this faculty-directed activity. Methods such as discussion boards, exams, and chats can serve as instructional time. However, logging on constitutes neither active faculty teaching nor active student learning.

The term “equivalent learning activity” (**ELA**) is synonymous with “**student work**” and includes all assignments or other academic activities required to be completed outside of instructional time. Student work may include reading, studying, writing, completing worksheets, research, etc. The following table provides estimated equivalencies for time it will take to complete instructional and learning activities. In some cases, the instructional time and learning activity time will need to be combined to find the total hours for a given assignment.

Estimated equivalencies for time it will take to complete instructional and learning activities.			
Activity	Hours of equivalent instructional activity (EIA)	Hours of equivalent learning activity (ELA)	Notes
Blog entries (public)	½ hour per page	1 post equals ½ hour	Students’ opportunity to apply learned concepts or for reflection on learning experiences. To be shared with instructor and/or classmates for thoughtful analysis, feedback, and assessment.
Journal entries (private)	½ hour per page	1 post equals ½ hour	Students’ opportunity to apply learned concepts or for reflection on learning experiences. Not to be shared with other classmates.
Discussion activities	1 – 3 hours per activity	Initial post equals ½ hour Read all and respond equals 1 hour	Instructor-guided or mediated threaded discussion that directly relates to course objectives, and which has specified time frames, expectations for participation, and thoughtful analysis.
Case study and analysis	1 – 3 hours	1 hour equals 1 hour	In-depth analysis requiring utilization of higher order analytical skills which relate to course objectives and is shared with instructor and/or classmates for feedback and assessment.
Problem solving scenarios	1 – 3 hours	1 hour equals 1 hour	In-depth analysis requiring utilization of higher order thinking and analytical skills which relate to course objectives that may/may not be shared with



			instructor and/or classmates for feedback and assessment.
Synchronous communication	1 hour equals 1 hour	1 hour equals 1 hour	Examples: conference call chat phone call video conference web conference
Tours and field trips, including virtual	1 hour equals 1 hour	1 hour equals 1 hour	Students participate as individuals or in groups in analyzing an activity & preparing a paper or presentation, to be shared in whole or in part with instructor and/or classmates.
Group projects	1 – 3 hours per week for duration of project	1-10 hours per week, depending on project objective, deliverable, and duration	Examples: email chat collaborative documents discussion board video conferencing
Guided or service-learning projects	1 – 3 hours per week for duration of project	1 – 10 hours per week, depending on project objective, deliverable, and duration	Examples: email chat collaborative documents discussion board video conferencing
Lecture activities including lecture notes	1 hour equals 1 hour	30 minutes per page of notes	Notes in response to video and lecture
Media projects: Podcast	1 hour equals 1 hour	10 – 12 minutes equals ½ – 3 hours of instruction depending on production value	For every minute of a completed podcast project, several minutes will be required for production. The variation is dependent upon format: interview/informal with minimal post-production to creative/high production with potential special effects / field recording.
Media projects: Video	1 hour equals 1 hour	3 – 5 minutes of minimal production value video equals 1 – 3 hours of instruction	For every minute of a completed video project, several minutes will be required for production. The variation is dependent upon format: interview/informal with minimal production value, remix/mash-up, or creative/high production with potential special effects / field recording.



Online Quizzes	1 hour test equals 1 hour	1 hour test equals 1 hour	Opportunity for instructor to assess students' subject knowledge and provide feedback on students' progress.
Peer Review / Assessment	Up to 1 hour per page for review of peer papers	Student review of peer assessment and follow up response post/email to student/teacher equals ½ – 2 hours of instruction	Review of peer papers
Reflection Paper	1 private response equals ½ hour instruction 1 shared response (required to read all student responses) equals 1 hour	½ hour per page	Informal writing in reaction to a reading, video, quote, or questions from professor
Research Paper	5-page project equals 1 hour 3 – 5-page paper equals 1 – 2 hrs. instruction	2 hours per page	Research and writing of a formal research paper.
Readings	n/a	5 minutes per page for scholarly reading 3 minutes per page for popular reading	Examples: Textbook Online content Popular reading Websites