



Credit Hour Policy

Background and Scope:

Colorado Northwestern Community College offers classes on a semester system:

- Fall and spring semesters consist of a minimum of 15 weeks, plus one week for exams.
- Special sessions within fall and spring, as well as summer sessions, are typically less than 15 weeks and must adhere to the policy in terms of contact hours and the amount of work required.

The faculty and program administrators are responsible for developing, maintaining and evaluating the curriculum within an academic program, although college requirements must still be met. Assignment of credit hours for courses are determined within the program based on content and course learning objectives.

This operational policy provides relevant definitions and descriptions of credit and contact hour requirements for various course types and delivery methods used at Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC). Any Staff and Faculty involved with curriculum development and course scheduling must adhere to the policy described in the document below.

Definitions:

- A. **Federal Credit Hour:** "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 or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
 - 2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours." [34CFR 600.2](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/dpclatters/GEN1106.pdf) ([https://https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/dpclatters/GEN1106.pdf](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/dpclatters/GEN1106.pdf)) downloaded February 18, 2022.
- B. **Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Policy – Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition:** "Assignment of Credit Hours. The institution's assignment and award of credit hours shall conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education. Those institutions seeking, or participating in, Title IV federal financial aid, shall demonstrate that they have policies determining the credit hours awarded to courses and programs in keeping with commonly-accepted practices and with the federal definition of the credit hour, as reproduced herein for reference only, and that institutions also have procedures that result in an appropriate awarding of institutional credit in conformity with the policies established by the institution." [FDCR.A.10.020](#)

(<https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assignment-of-credits.html>) downloaded February 18, 2022.

- C. **Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Base Contact Hour:** Since 1985, CCHE and institutions of higher education have established criteria for assigning credit hour values to courses. The typical relationship between base contact hours, credit hours, and types of faculty involvement are provided starting on page 7 of the [CCHE FTE Reporting Guidelines](https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf) (<https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf>) downloaded February 18, 2022.

“Base Contact Hour: The faculty base contact hour represents a standard measurement of consumption of faculty resources by students. It consists of the number of scheduled minutes of instructional activity involving direct contact of faculty with students in a given term utilizing a particular method of instruction.” The standard measurement for a faculty Base Contact Hour for a semester system term is: One base contact hour = a minimum of 750 minutes. This translates to a minimum of fifteen 50-minute hours per semester.

CNCC Course Type and Contact Hour Requirements:

The following table summarizes the minimum contact hour requirements for instruction as designated by schedule type code in banner. The standard measurement of class time is a contact hour which is the equivalent of 50 minutes of instruction (teaching time). For example, a 3 credit lecture (LEC schedule type) course must have 45 contact hours or 2250 minutes of instruction over the duration of the course.

Associate Degrees and Certificates

Course Type	Schedule Type Code (Banner)	Definition	Minimum Base Contact Hour	Ratio of Base Contact Hour to Credit Hours
CLINICAL	CLI or CL2 or OCL	Participation in client and client-related services that are an integral part of an academic program. Clinical / practical instruction occurs in an appropriate setting and involves work with clients who receive professional services from students serving under the direct supervision of a faculty member and/or approved professional member of the agency staff. There is regular consultation with the faculty member.	30 contact hours = 1 credit	2:1
INDEPENDENT STUDY	IND or OIS	Faculty and student negotiate an individualized plan of study including student projects and other activities with minimal faculty associated direction. The variation in contact hours relates to the type of class. Lecture Independent	15 contact hours = 1 credit Or 22.5 contact hours = 1 credit	1:1 Or 1.5:1

Course Type	Schedule Type Code (Banner)	Definition	Minimum Base Contact Hour	Ratio of Base Contact Hour to Credit Hours
		study classes are a 1:1 ratio, however, CTE Lecture/Lab Combos are 1.5:1.		
INTERNSHIP	INT or OIN	Applied and supervised learning experiences in business and industry environments that offer professional-level experience and responsibility following a negotiated and/or directed plan of study.	45 contact hours = 1 credit	3:1
LAB	LAB or OLA	Instructional activities conducted by faculty which require student participation, experimentation, observation, or practice. This portion of the course has no lecture component.	30 contact hours = 1 credit	2:1
LECTURE	LEC or OLE	Formal presentation /communication by faculty. Faculty responsible for delivery and discussion of learning material and related instructional activities.	15 contact hours = 1 credit	1:1
CTE LEC/LAB	LLB or OLL	Instructional activities involving training for employment with an active faculty teaching role. Lecture and lab activities occur during the same meeting times.	22.5 contact hours = 1 credit	1.5:1
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	PED or OPE	Participation in or the performance of some form of physical activity. Knowledge associated with the proper performance of the activity is presented.	30 contact hours = 1 credit	2:1
PRIVATE INSTRUCTION	PRI or OPI	Formal presentation in a one-to-one relationship between student and instructor.	7.5 contact hours = 1 credit	0.5:1
STUDIO MUSIC	SMU or OSM	Bands, ensembles, music labs, and the like conducted by faculty.	37.5 contact hours = 1 credit	2.5:1
STUDIO ART	STU or OSA	Lab-type activities conducted by faculty (e.g., painting, sculpture, theatrical productions, etc.)	30 contact hours = 1 credit	2:1

Scheduling Breaks:

In order to allow appropriate breaks for students and faculty in longer classes while meeting required contact hours, a break of up to 15 minutes is added for each 120 minutes (2 hours) of consecutive class time. The timing of breaks is up to the instructor.

Examples:

- Classes meeting 120 – 239 minutes = 15 minutes of break time will be scheduled
- Classes meeting 240 – 359 minutes = 30 minutes of break time will be scheduled

- Classes meeting 360 – 480 minutes = 45 minutes of break time will be scheduled4 Page 7 of 8
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- Classes meeting over 480 minutes = 60 minutes of break time will be scheduled

Examples of Contact Hour Conversion to Credit Hour:

- Lecture
 - 15 contact hours in banner = 1 credit hour
 - That is a ratio of 1:1
 - In actual time, that is 12.5 hours, or 750 minutes.
 - That means, if a class meets for 75 minutes twice a week for fifteen weeks:
 - $75 \times 2 = 150 \times 15 = 2,250$ minutes total instruction time
 - $2,250 / 750 = 3$ credits.
- Academic Lab
 - 30 contact hours in banner = 1 credit hour
 - That is a ratio of 2:1
 - In actual time, that is 25 hours, or 1,500 minutes.
 - That means, if a class meets for 200 minutes once a week for fifteen weeks:
 - $200 \times 1 = 200 \times 15 = 3,000$ minutes total instruction time
 - $3,000 / 1,500 = 2$ credits

Class Format and Delivery Methods:

* Instructional method includes Banner code

- CE - Continuing Education
 - EAB Display: Not Displayed
 - Student Experience: Code is reserved for non-credit courses, students take these courses through their college continuing education, community education, and/or work force development office and do not receive academic credit.
- CL - Classroom Based
 - EAB Display: On Campus: In-person
 - Student Experience: Class meetings are on-site and in-person.
 - Note: This mode is Traditional/Face-to-Face
- CB - Competency Based
 - EAB Display: Competency Based
 - Student Experience: Student's will have a fixed amount of time to meet specific competencies before receiving credit for the class.
 - Note: This mode is Self-paced
- HF - HyFlex
 - EAB Display: Live: Remote or In-person
 - Student Experience: A highly flexible experience where the course is delivered entirely remotely in real-time, entirely in person in real-time, or a combination of the two.
- HL - HyFlex with Lab
 - EAB Display: Live: Remote or In-person With In-person Lab
 - Student Experience: A highly flexible experience where the course is delivered entirely remotely in real-time, entirely in-person in real-time, or a combination of the two.
 - Lab will require in-person attendance.

- HY - Hybrid
 - EAB Display: Hybrid
 - Student Experience: Class will have some live in-person components, and some on-line components. Percentage of on-line versus in-person can vary by class.
- ON - Online
 - EAB Display: Online
 - Student Experience: Class is entirely online with no real-time expectations.
- RM - Remote Real-Time
 - EAB Display: Live: Remote Only
 - Student Experience: Class will be taught in real-time, with 100% remote delivery at pre-determined times. There is no scheduled in person attendance. Class will be 100% real-time live meetings delivered remotely via technology.
- WC - WebCast
 - EAB Display: Global Delivery
 - Student Experience: On-site student meetings with on-site or remote instruction by use of technology.

Reference:

- [34CFR 600.2](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/dpcletters/GEN1106.pdf)
(<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/dpcletters/GEN1106.pdf>)
downloaded February 18, 2022.
- [CCHE FTE Reporting Guidelines](https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf) (<https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf>). Version 2019, effective July 1, 2019. downloaded February 18, 2022
- [Colorado Commission on Higher Education \(CCHE\) FTE Reporting Guidelines](https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf)
(<https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf>)
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- [FDCR.A.10.020](https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assignment-of-credits.html) (<https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assignment-of-credits.html>)
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