



Red Rocks Community College Instructional Services Operational Guideline

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Reference:

- RRPR 9-471 Curriculum Development Procedure.
- ISOG 9-471.1 Curriculum Development Operational Guideline.
- [Curriculum Management web page](https://www.rccc.edu/curriculum-management/documents) (<https://www.rccc.edu/curriculum-management/documents>).
- [Colorado Commission on Higher Education \(CCHE\) FTE Reporting Guidelines](https://highereducation.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf) (<https://highereducation.colorado.gov/publications/policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf>) downloaded April 16, 2018; updated February 2016.

Purpose:

The purpose of this operational guideline is to state how the institution assigns course contact hours and credit hours. This guideline also provides definitions for class format and course delivery method.

Scope:

This operational guideline provides relevant definitions and descriptions of credit and contact hour requirements for various course types and delivery methods used at Red Rocks Community College (RCCC). It applies to faculty, instructional staff and employees involved in curriculum development, approval and review.

Contact Hour / Credit Hour Guidelines

Background:

RRCC follows the federal credit hour definition, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) policy guiding application of the Federal Credit Hour definition, and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) minimum recommendations for contact hours as described below. The RRCC Curriculum Committee has the responsibility of ensuring new and revised courses and programs meet these requirements. Deans of Instruction, Department Chairs, Full-time Faculty, and Instructional Support Staff are responsible for ensuring scheduled courses meet the definitions and criteria.

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://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf) (https://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf) downloaded May 21, 2018.
- 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) (https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assignment-of-credits.html) downloaded May 21, 2018.
- 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 April 16, 2018; updated February 2016.
- “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.

RRCC 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. See Appendix A for contact hour/credit hour calculation examples.

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	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	Faculty and student negotiate an individualized plan of study including student projects and other activities with minimal faculty associated direction.	15 contact hours = 1 credit	1:1
INTERNSHIP	INT	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	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	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	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

Course Type	Schedule Type Code (Banner)	Definition	Minimum Base Contact Hour	Ratio of Base Contact Hour to Credit Hours
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	PED	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	Formal presentation in a one-to-one relationship between student and instructor.	7.5 contact hours = 1 credit	0.5:1
STUDIO MUSIC	SMU	Bands, ensembles, music labs, and the like conducted by faculty.	37.5 contact hours = 1 credit	2.5:1
STUDIO ART	STU	Lab-type activities conducted by faculty (e.g., painting, sculpture, theatrical productions, etc.)	30 contact hours = 1 credit	2:1

* RRCC common practice is to exceed the minimum number of contact hours and utilize a 3:1 ratio or 45 contact hours = 1 credit.

Bachelor of Applied Science Degree
 Course type – 300 and 400 level
 (Water Quality Management BAS Degree)

Course Type	Schedule Type Code (Banner)	Definition	Minimum Base Contact Hour	Ratio of Base Contact Hour to Credit Hours
INTERNSHIP	INT	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
LECTURE	LEC	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

Master's Degree
 Course Type – 600 level
 (Physician Assistant Studies Master's Degree)

Course Type	Schedule Type Code (Banner)	Definition	Minimum Base Contact Hour	Ratio of Base Contact Hour to Credit Hours
INTERNSHIP	INT	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	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	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

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.

Class Format and Delivery Methods:

- 1) Traditional/Face-to-face: Meet in the classroom at specified times. Contact hours and learning outcomes are met through face-to-face meeting times. There may be an online learning management system component but that component is supplemental and not part of meeting the contact hour requirements.
- 2) RRCC Online: Delivered entirely online via online learning management system, no face to face meetings. Contact hours and learning outcomes are met through online activities.
- 3) Hybrid: Requires a blend of two delivery formats. Includes a combination of classroom meetings at specific times and required online class content. Contact hours and learning outcomes are met through less classroom time than traditional delivery methods and additional online activities and online class content.
- 4) Accelerated: Meet in the classroom at specified times but delivered in a shorter than 15-week part of term. Contact hours and learning outcomes are met through face to face meeting times. There may be an online learning management system component but that component is supplemental and not part of meeting the contact hour requirements. Since summer session does not have a 15-week part of term, all summer term courses are considered accelerated.
- 5) Accelerated Hybrid: Requires a blend of two delivery formats in a shorter than 15-week part of term. Includes a combination of classroom meetings at specific times and

required online class content. Contact hours and learning outcomes are met through less classroom time than traditional delivery methods and additional online activities and online class content in a shorter than 15-week part of term.

- 6) Arrangement: Require students to complete projects or other required activities with faculty direction and includes no face-to-face classroom time. One on one meetings between faculty and student may be required. Contact hours and learning outcomes are met through a variety of mechanisms that are not limited to one on one meetings or online interactions. Includes internships, independent study courses, etc.
- 7) Concurrent Enrollment: Concurrent enrollment courses follow the syllabus and academic outcomes of RRCC courses and use the same or equivalent textbooks as RRCC classes. Because bell schedules vary at each high school, concurrent enrollment courses often exceed the minimum number of contact hours. Under state statute, high schools may supplement the instruction with additional academic support embedded in the class or by adding additional requirements that go beyond what is required at RRCC. High schools may not supplant or eliminate academic requirements from the college courses but can include material that is in addition to the course. Because parts of term vary between RRCC and the high schools, Banner does not accurately reflect the actual contact hours for these classes. In some cases, a concurrent enrollment course may be a year-long but Banner will show student registered only in the Spring because it does not accommodate year-long courses.

APPENDIX A:

Directions/criteria of how to appropriately calculate class contact hours and meeting times are provided below - please also review the associated examples.

Directions / Criteria:

1. For each course, determine the appropriate course type, minimum base contact hour and ratio of base contact hour to credit hours using the tables in the above Instructional Services Operational Guideline, ISOG 9-471.2.
2. Multiply the number of course credits by the contact hours to get the total contact hours for the entire course.
3. Multiply the total contact hours times 50 minutes to get the total number of minutes of instruction (teaching time) for the course. Remember, 1 contact hour = 50 minutes of instruction (teaching time).
4. Divide the total minutes of instruction by the number of class sessions to get the number of minutes per session (class meeting).

NOTE: A break of up to 15 minutes must be added for every 120 minutes (2 hours) of consecutive class time.

Example #1:

Calculating the contact hours and meeting times for a Literature 111 (LIT 111) class.

1. For each course determine the appropriate course type, minimum base contact hour and ratio of base contact hour to credit hours using the tables in the above Instructional Services Operational Guideline, ISOG 9-471.2.
 - a. Example: LIT 115 is a 3 credit Lecture course type that has 15 contact hours per credit and a 1:1 ratio.
2. Multiply the number of course credits by the contact hours to get the total contact hours for the entire course.
 - a. Example: LIT 115 = 3 credits times 15 contact hours equals 45 total contact hours for the entire course.
3. Multiply the total contact hours times 50 minutes to get the total number of minutes of instruction (teaching time) for the course. Remember, 1 contact hour = 50 minutes of instruction (teaching time).
 - a. Example: LIT 115 = 45 total contact hours times 50 minutes = 2250 total minutes of instruction for the entire course.
4. Divide the total minutes of instruction by the number of class sessions to get the number of minutes per session (class meeting).
 - a. Example: LIT 115 = 2250 total minutes of instruction divided by 30 class sessions (2 class meetings for 15 weeks) = 75 minutes per class session.

NOTE: A break of up to 15 minutes must be added for every 120 minutes (2 hours) of consecutive class time.

Example #2:

Calculating the contact hours and meeting times for a Biology 111 (BIO 111) class.

1. For each course determine the appropriate course type, minimum base contact hour and ratio of base contact hour to credit hours using the tables in the above Instructional Services Operational Guideline, ISOG 9-471.2.
 - a. Example: BIO 111 is a 5 credit lecture / lab science course where 4 credits = lecture (1:1 ratio) and 1 credit = lab at the 3:1 ratio.
2. Multiply the number of course credits by the contact hours to get the total contact hours for the entire course.
 - a. Example: BIO 111 = 4 credits of lecture times 15 contact hours equals 60 total contact hours for the lecture portion. One credit of a 1:3 lab = 45 contact hours.
3. Multiply the total contact hours times 50 minutes to get the total number of minutes of instruction (teaching time) for the course. Remember, 1 contact hour = 50 minutes of instruction (teaching time).
 - a. Example: BIO 111 = 60 total contact hours of lecture times 50 minutes = 3000 total minutes of instruction for lecture and 45 total contact hours of lab times 50 minutes = 2250 minutes of instruction for lab.
4. Divide the total minutes of instruction by the number of class sessions to get the number of minutes per session (class meeting).
 - a. Example: BIO 111 lecture = 3000 total minutes of instruction divided by 30 class sessions (2 class meetings for 15 weeks) = 100 minutes per class session for lecture. BIO 111 lab = 2250 minutes of instruction divided by 30 class sessions = 75 minutes per lab session.

NOTE: A break of up to 15 minutes must be added for every 120 minutes (2 hours) of consecutive class time.

Example #3

Calculating the contact hours and meeting times for an Emergency Medical Services (EMS 121) class.

1. For each course determine the appropriate course type, minimum base contact hour and ratio of base contact hour to credit hours using the tables in the above Instructional Services Operational Guideline, ISOG 9-471.2.
 - a. Example: EMS 121 is a 3 credit CTE lecture / lab course where all 3 credits = a 1.5:1 ratio and 1 credit = 22.5 contact hours.
2. Multiply the number of course credits by the contact hours to get the total contact hours for the entire course.
 - a. Example: EMS 121 = 3 credits times 22.5 contact hours equals 67.5 total contact hours for the entire course.
3. Multiply the total contact hours times 50 minutes to get the total number of minutes of instruction (teaching time) for the course. Remember, 1 contact hour = 50 minutes of instruction (teaching time).
 - a. Example: EMS 121 = 67.5 total contact hours times 50 minutes = 3375 total minutes of instruction for the entire course.
4. Divide the total minutes of instruction by the number of class sessions to get the number of minutes per session (class meeting).
 - a. Example: EMS 121 = 3375 total minutes of instruction divided by 15 class sessions (2 class meetings for 7.5 weeks) = 225 minutes per class session.

NOTE: A break of up to 15 minutes must be added for every 120 minutes (2 hours) of consecutive class time.