

## Credit Hour Policy

Approved by Provost's Council  
March 27, 2023

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**For referral purposes**, the Federal definition states that, "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:

- 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;
- *Or 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 toward the awarding of credit hours."

**Delivery Modes.** Courses at Loyola University New Orleans are delivered in-person, hybrid, remote (synchronous), or online (asynchronous). Faculty should follow [course-modality guidelines](#) for each delivery mode.

### Loyola University's Credit Hour Policy

This definition of credit hours awarded for courses is in accordance with the mission and standards of Loyola University and in agreement with the Carnegie collegiate student hour, related federal definitions and requirements, and the standards, policies, and guidelines of SACSCOC. This policy is intended to direct and guide credit hour processes and calculations in order to ensure the mission and goals of Loyola University.

In general, Loyola University expects 50 minutes of classroom or engaged instruction and 100 minutes of outside-of-class student engagement per week, *or the equivalent thereof*, for a regular full-term semester hour of credit. Therefore, one semester hour of credit is granted for 700 minutes of classroom/engaged instruction and 1400 minutes of outside-of-class instruction. Based on this calculation, students should expect to engage with a *one-credit class* for a minimum of 2100 minutes over the course of an academic session. A *three-credit* course requires a minimum of 6300 minutes per semester.

Faculty and students should expect to engage with a course using the above credit hour calculation no matter the length of the term or delivery modality. Remote and online courses also require classroom instruction/engaged instruction. Shorter terms will require more intense engagement as the same number of minutes are acquired within a shorter timeframe. In all instances, a 3-credit course will require a minimum of 6300 total minutes of student engagement whether the course takes place in a 14-week term, an 8-week

term, or a 2-week term. Faculty and students should not expect courses taken within a shorter time frame to include less coursework. Faculty and students may be required to engage for more than the minimum depending on the minutes calculated in a particular session; 2100 is a minimum and instructional days cannot be cut from the syllabus without approval by the respective Dean. Faculty are expected to teach all scheduled classes and may not change class times or locations, or cancel sessions, without prior approval from the department chair or direct supervisor. In the event of an absence, faculty must notify their department as soon as practicable; however, advance notice may not be possible in cases of sudden illness. Faculty remain responsible for arranging appropriate coverage, which may include securing a substitute instructor, conducting the class remotely (e.g., via Zoom), providing asynchronous recorded lectures, or rescheduling the session.<sup>2</sup>

The Credit Hour Policy applies to all coursework at Loyola and not only to lecture/seminar courses. The policy equally applies to internships, practica, labs, field research, independent studies, experiential courses, and studio courses.

### Zero-Credit Courses<sup>1</sup>

Some programs require courses with zero (0) credit hours of academic credit. Zero (0) credit courses typically meet no more than once a week with less than 700 minutes of in-class or individual meeting time, engaged instruction, or outside-of-class student engagement over the semester, resulting in well less than one (1) credit hour's worth of work (2100 minutes). Such zero-credit courses follow the standard university curricular approval process.

Additionally, zero credit transcript notations may be utilized to document a student's co-curricular, engagement, or other accomplishments that occur outside of a formal academic classroom or laboratory setting. Examples of such experiences may include orientation sessions, recitals, special non-class/lab experiential learning events, professional presentations, and capstone (ETS) exams or certifications.

### **What Does This Mean When Broken Down?**

The number of credit hours awarded for courses is determined by the basis of the time spent in classroom instruction, non-classroom engaged instruction, and out-of-class student work. Our instructional methods are categorized as: 1) classroom instruction (CI); 2) engaged instruction (EI); and 3) outside of class student engagement (OCSE). For credit hour purposes, CI is equivalent to EI (CI=EI).

#### **What is classroom instruction?**

*CI* includes the traditional classroom, a supervised lab, private instruction, or any similar meeting between the instructor and at least one student.

#### **What is engaged instruction?**

EI is non-classroom instruction that has a planned educational purpose, is actively guided/observed/monitored/facilitated by an instructor or qualified field supervisor, and is graded/documented.

EI may include: online lectures, video presentations, video conferencing, discussion board with direct faculty participation/feedback, group or team-based activities, virtual labs, directly supervised field experiences including service learning, practicum, narrated powerpoints, online quizzes/exams, and other assignment feedback.

### **What is outside-of-class student engagement?**

OCSE includes activities that are related to the course, but that do not qualify as CI or EI.

### **Using A Ratio for Determination of Compliance**

The ratio of classroom/engaged instruction and outside-of-class engagement may vary depending on the course type, with OCSE serving as the equivalent of CI on a 2:1 basis (that is, 2 minutes of OCSE equals 1 minute of CI) and visa versa.

\*For example, based on one-semester hour of credit during a 14-week session:

50 minutes CI/EI x 14-weeks	= 700 minutes in-class (CI/EI)
100 minutes OCSE x 14 weeks	= 1400 minutes outside-of-class (OCSE)
	= 2100 minutes total

A course without engaged instruction would use the 2:1 ratio.

*Note, Loyola does not allow regular courses to run without any engaged instruction. If your course does not have CI/EI, please check with your dean.*

200 minutes of OCSE x 14 weeks = 2800 minutes total

### **How Do You Calculate for a Shorter-Term?**

To calculate any shorter session, for a one-credit course take the in-class time (700 minutes) and divide by session length. Do the same for OCSE time (1400).

*For example, based on one-semester hour of credit for an 8-week session:*

87.50 minutes CI/EI x 8 weeks	= 700 minutes in-class (CI/EI)
175 minutes OCSE x 8 weeks	= 1400 minutes outside-of-class (OCSE)
	= 2100 minutes total

*To calculate a 3-credit course, the above minutes would be multiplied by 3:*

262.50 minutes CI/EI x 8 weeks	= 2100 minutes in-class (CI/EI)
525 minutes OCSE x 8 weeks	= 4200 minutes outside-of-class (OCSE)
	= 6300 minutes total

*For example, based on one-semester hour of credit for a 2-week session:*

350 minutes CI/EI x 2 weeks	= 700 minutes in-class (CI/EI)
700 minutes OCSE x 2 weeks	= 1400 minutes outside-of-class (OCSE)
	= 2100 minutes total

*For example, based on three-semester hour of credit for a 2-week session:*

1050 minutes CI/EI x 2 weeks	= 2100 minutes in-class (CI/EI)
2100 minutes OCSE x 2 weeks	= 4200 minutes outside-of-class (OCSE)
	= 6300 minutes total

To calculate your compliance:

1. Review the list of instructional activities and minute equivalencies.
2. Calculate your classroom instruction (CI), if any.
3. Calculate your engaged instruction activities (EI), if any.
4. Calculate student outside-of-class engagement (OCSE). Divide this number by 2.
5. Add these values together for a grand total.
6. Divide the grand total by the number of semester hours.
7. Divide by 14 (regardless of session length)
8. The value you calculate is your % of the Federal/Carnegie credit hour.
9. 100% of more = compliance.

*For example for a 3-credit course:*

Total # of minutes in classroom or lab (CI)	2000
Engaged instruction minutes (EI)	100
Outside of class student engagement (OCSE) divided by 2	4200/2 = 2100
Grand Total	4200
Divide Grand Total by number of credit hours	3
Divide by 14	100%

### **Instructional Activity Examples and Minutes Equivalencies**

In-class instruction always equates to actual time. The following table lists engaged instruction (EI) and outside-class student engagement (OCSE) activities with normal time to complete. Normal time to complete is the amount of time an average student would take to achieve the expected outcome for that assignment or method.

Calculated minutes per academic session may vary from semester-to-semester, but faculty should not cut instructional days from their syllabus if they are over the minimum number of minutes (i.e., if the session is calculated at 2200 minutes rather than 2100 minutes).

A [credit hour calculator](#) and [walk-through video](#) is available for easier determination of workloads.

EI or OCSE	Method/Activity	Unit Measured	Normal Time to Complete (in minutes)
EI	Instructor/guest speaker-made video lectures		Actual time
EI	Presentation slides - lower level	Per slide	3
EI	Presentation slides - upper level	Per slide	5
EI	Online video - required student viewing		Actual time
EI	Tutorial - document based		45
EI	Instructor meeting (in-person or online); available to all students	Per meeting	Actual time
EI	Online chat with instructor participation		Actual time
EI	Virtual Lab	Per online lab	Actual time
EI	Practicum (supervised)		Actual time
OCSE	Practicum (supervised)		Actual time
EI	Service Learning (supervised)		Actual time
OCSE	Service Learning (unsupervised)		Actual time
EI	Course start up/orientation/introduction		45
EI	Assignment feedback from instructor	Per assignment with feedback	15
EI	Field trip or tour (supervised)		Actual time
OCSE	Field trip or tour (unsupervised)		Actual time
EI	Online quiz - essay	Per question 250 words	20
EI	Online quiz - multiple choice or TF	Per question	3

EI	Online quiz - short answer	Per question - 250 words	5
EI	Discussion board or forum with direct instructor participation	Per post - 250 words	25
OCSE	Discussion board or forum without direct instructor participation	Per post - 250 words	25
OCSE	Assigned independent activity		Actual time
OCSE	Practice problems - simple	Per problem	15
OCSE	Practice problems - complex	Per problem	30
OCSE	Group presentation or panel	Per week, per project	180
OCSE	Portfolio development		240
OCSE	Presentation slides - student created	Per slide	20
OCSE	Speech/lecture/debate (practice)	Per speech minute	9
OCSE	Video presentation - student created	Per minute of video	30
OCSE	Reading: academic textbook/fiction - lower level	Per page	2
OCSE	Reading: academic textbook/scholarly article/fiction - upper level	Per page	7
OCSE	Reading: popular literature	Per page	5
OCSE	Reading: sacred literature	Per <i>chapter</i>	10
OCSE	Reading: science lab	Per lab	30
OCSE	Plot data into Excel or statistics program	Per data set	60
OCSE	Walk/hike (unsupervised)		Actual time
OCSE	Research: electronic source	Per source	30
OCSE	Research: Library	Per source	60
OCSE	Group wiki or blog project	Per entry - 250 words	30
OCSE	Interview		Actual time
OCSE	Observation		Actual time
OCSE	Studying: exam	Per exam	90
OCSE	Studying: quiz	Per quiz	60
OCSE	Studying: vocabulary	Per word	5
OCSE	Analysis: paper	Per page - 250 words	60
OCSE	Annotated bibliography	Per annotation	20

OCSE	Case study	Per page - 250 words	60
OCSE	Creative writing	Per page - 250 words	60
OCSE	Concept mapping/mind map		90
OCSE	Journaling	Per page - 250 words	30
OCSE	Lab notebook and report	Per lab	60
OCSE	Peer evaluation	Per page - 250 words	45
OCSE	Reflection paper	Per page - 250 words	30
OCSE	Report (video, field trip, lab, tour, etc)	Per page - 250 words	30
OCSE	Term paper - lower level	Per page - 250 words	60
OCSE	Term paper - upper level	Per page - 250 words	90
OCSE	Resume and cover letter		120
OCSE	Self-evaluation	Per page - 250 words	25
OCSE	Textbook chapter questions - lower level	Per chapter	60
OCSE	Textbook chapter questions - upper level	Per chapter	90
OCSE	Podcast - student created	Per minute of podcast	15

Should you have any questions about the credit hour policy, please contact Erin Dupuis ([edupuis@loyno.edu](mailto:edupuis@loyno.edu)). For assistance with online course design or instructional activities, please contact Dr. Dan Guo ([dguo@loyno.edu](mailto:dguo@loyno.edu)).

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1 revision approved on March 12, 2024 by University Curriculum Committee  
2 revision approved on April 27, 2026 by the Provost's Council