

Expected~~Instructional~~ Time per Course

Credit: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris,
Rochester

Policy Statement

This policy guides academic units in scheduling the instructional time for a specified number of course credits as well as workload expectations for students. ~~E~~Instructional time expectations per credit do not vary with the method(s) of delivery of the course or with the length of the academic term.

Instructional Time

Instructional time per course credit is defined to provide a consistent minimum expectation for students and faculty. Students and faculty should know in general what time commitment is involved for a specified number of course credits.

1. For all academic sessions, courses, and modalities, enrollment periods and for all courses, the hours of instructional time for a course must equal at least the number of credits for the course times 15 weeks in a semester~~the number of weeks the course is offered during the full academic term~~.
2. Instructional time is defined for these purposes as instruction the student receives in a class setting regardless of the modality, by the instructor(s) assigned to the class as scheduled by the academic department. Instructional time does not include office hours or casual or informal time spent with students.
3. Course proposals must include information regarding instructional time. Proposals must provide significant evidence to justify a schedule that

includes fewer total instructional hours than the standard. ~~defined in paragraph (1.). Instructional hours of all types equal to or in excess of the standard defined in paragraph (1.) need not be justified.~~

4. When reviewing a course proposal, college and campus curriculum committees and other approving bodies (e.g., the Council on Liberal Education) must consider the instructional hours in reaching a decision on whether to approve a proposed course; such bodies should normally reject course proposals that have fewer instructional hours than the standard defined in paragraph (1.), barring significant evidence that reduced instructional contact hours are appropriate. ~~In their review, these bodies will also take into consideration the method(s) of delivery of the course (e.g., traditional classroom setting, various distance education delivery methods).~~
5. Courses for individualized instruction, such as directed study, directed readings, and directed research, ~~and internships~~, which require a written contract outlining the responsibilities of the student for the course, are explicitly exempted from this standard, and may have fewer instructional hours per week than the standard. However, the total expected effort per credit (comprising instruction and mentored student work) is the number of course credits times the number of weeks in a standard term.
- ~~5.6.~~ Expectations listed under this policy may vary for graduate level courses.

Expected Student Academic Work

Workload expectations in this policy are an estimate of the amount of work needed for an average student to earn an average grade. Course grades are based on the quality of the work submitted, not on hours of effort (as provided in Administrative Policy: *Grading and Transcripts: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*). Workload expectations per credit do not vary with the method of delivery of the course or the length of the academic term.

A. Undergraduate Courses

1. **Student workload expectations per undergraduate credit.** For fall or spring semester, one credit represents, ~~for the average University undergraduate student,~~ three hours of academic work per week (including lectures, laboratories, recitations, discussion groups, field work, study, and so on), ~~averaged over the semester,~~ in order to complete the work of the course to achieve an average grade. One credit equals ~~42 to~~ 45 hours of work over the course of the semester (1 credit x 3 hours of work per week x ~~14 or~~ 15 weeks in a semester equals ~~42 to~~ 45 hours of academic work). Thus, enrollment for 15 credits in a semester represents approximately 45 hours of work per week, on average, over the course of the semester.
2. **Exceptions to undergraduate workload standard.** Professional norms and the nature of the academic work may necessitate spending more than three hours of work per week on average. For example, clinical experiences, some laboratory work, and some studio activities may require more than an average three hours per week. Demands on the student in excess of the average of three hours per credit per week are permissible with college approval and with appropriate notification to the student of the amount of work expected for the course or educational experience (e.g., in class schedules, ~~bulletins,~~ or syllabi).
3. Lab and studio courses. The ratio of instructional time and student work time may differ for lab and studio courses, however, the total time expected for these courses should follow the same formula. (One credit x 3 hours x 15 weeks.)
- 3.4. Student workload statement required for undergraduate courses. All proposals for undergraduate courses must include a student workload statement demonstrating how the course conforms to the student workload expectations ~~in sections (a) and (b).~~ College and campus curriculum committees and other approving bodies (e.g., the Council on Liberal Education) must consider the student workload statement in reaching a decision on whether to approve a proposed course.

B. Graduate ~~School~~ and Professional ~~School~~ Courses

It is expected that the academic work required of ~~graduate~~ Graduate ~~School~~ and professional ~~school~~ students will exceed three hours per credit per week.

C. All Courses

1. For courses using one course number that enroll both undergraduate and graduate/professional students, workload expectations ~~should~~ **may** be different for the two careers and clearly articulated in the syllabus.
2. When a course is offered at two levels (e.g., 1xxx/3xxx or 3xxx/5xxx), workload expectations will differ for the students enrolled at different levels.
3. Instructional units should periodically review course syllabi to determine whether the number of course credits is appropriate for the expected student workload.

Exclusions

This policy is not applicable to the Duluth campus.

Reason for Policy

~~Instructional time per course credit is defined to provide a consistent minimum expectation for students and faculty. Students and faculty should know in general what time commitment is involved for a specified number of course credits.~~ This policy implements criteria and requirements for accreditation established by the Higher Learning Commission and compliance with the federal definition of a “credit hour” for financial aid eligibility.

Procedures

There are no procedures associated with this policy.

Forms/Instructions

There are no forms associated with this policy.

Appendices

There are no appendices associated with this policy.

Frequently Asked Questions

- FAQ: *Instructional Time per Course Credit*

Contacts

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Average grade

According to the policy on Grading and Transcripts, an average grade (C) represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every aspect.

Instructional time

Scheduled instruction/teaching by an individual appointed for that purpose.

Responsibilities

Collegiate and campus curriculum committees

Review proposed courses in light of conformance with policy; assess the appropriateness of proposed instructional hours. When proposed instructional hours vary from the standard, assess the type of course, and the proposed delivery method.

Academic Departments

Follow the established policy for instructional time per course credit when scheduling courses.

Related Information

- Administrative Policy: *Academic Unit Authority over the Curriculum and Major: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*
- ~~Administrative Policy: *Expected Student Academic Work per Credit: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*~~
- Administrative Policy: *Class Scheduling: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*
- Administrative Policy: *Directed Study, Directed Readings, and Directed Research Courses: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*
- *Higher Learning Commission, Criteria and Requirements for Accreditation*