

## Policy Guidelines for Instructional Time Expectations

The Higher Learning Commission reiterates the federal definition which is based on the Carnegie Unit. It states: *“Federal Credit Hour Definition: 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 toward to the award of credit hours. 34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)”*

Thus, the Carnegie unit, which is based on the basic idea of “two hours outside of class for every hour in class,” may be codified as the equivalent of 1 hour in class plus 2 hours outside of class over the course of 15-week semester per credit hour, or, put another way, a total of 45 hours of student engagement per credit hour earned.

However, 34CFR 600.2 indicates that face-to-face instruction can be calculated a bit differently than the statement above based on the idea of built-in break time or the lack thereof. For example, 50 minutes of face-to-face instruction fulfills one hour of class time because this is equivalent to a full hour without any sort of “break time” included. So, over time, the Carnegie Hour calculations began to reflect this arrangement, at least in regard to face-to-face instructional time. The requirement was then understood to be a minimum of 50 minutes of face-to-face instructional time per credit without breaks to fulfill one hour, plus two hours outside of class over the course of a 15-week semester per credit hour. Put another way, this is 12.5 hours of instruction with no breaks equivalent to 15 hours of face-to-face student engagement and 30 hours of student engagement outside of class per credit hour.

In a traditional semester, a typical 3-credit-hour class meets 3 times a week for 50 minutes, which is 2.5 hours (representing 3 hours of face-to-face instruction, assuming no breaks). Add to this figure 6 hours of work outside of class per week. Over a 15-week semester, that is equivalent to a minimum of 37.5 hours face-to-face instruction with no breaks (equivalent to 45 hours), plus 90 hours outside of class, for a total of 135 hours of student engagement for a 3-credit course (45 per credit hour).

Applying this formula to a 3-credit class in UIU’s 8-week sessions, the minimum amount of face-to-face instructional time is 5 hours or 300 minutes per week with no breaks equivalent to 6 hours of student engagement. This, in addition to 11.25 hours of student engagement outside of class per week represents a total of 17.25 hours of student engagement per week. Over an 8-week session that amounts to 138 hours of student engagement consisting of 40 hours of instruction with no breaks (representing 48 hours of face-to-face student engagement) plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 46 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

### Examples for Regular Sessions 1-5

**Face-to-Face in Fayette:** 3-credit classes on the Fayette campus meet for at least a total of 5 hours per week without breaks. There is a variety of schedules, however, including 75 minutes per day for four days or 60 minutes per day for five days. Whatever the configuration, each course schedule totals 300 minutes of direct instruction per week without breaks (which represents 6 hours of direct student

engagement). Students are also expected to spend 11.25 hours engaged outside of class per week for a total of 17.25 hours of student engagement per week, or 138 hours of total student engagement. This consists of 40 hours of instruction with no breaks (representing 48 hours of face-to-face student engagement) plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 46 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

**Face-to-Face at the Centers:** 3-credit classes at the Center locations also utilize several different schedules. Centers classes may meet for 5 hours and 30 minutes once per week (assuming two 15-minute breaks), or they may meet for 2 hours and 45 minutes two days per week (assuming one 15-minute break per classroom session). In either case, total face-to-face instructional time excluding breaks will remain the requisite 300 minutes per week, equivalent to 6 hours of face-to-face student engagement. Students are also expected to spend 11.25 hours engaged outside-of-class per week for a total of 17.25 hours of student engagement per week, or 138 hours of total student engagement for the 8-week session. This consists of 40 hours of instruction excluding breaks (representing 48 hours of face-to-face student engagement) plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 46 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

**Hybrid at the Centers:** Classes at the Center locations may be offered as hybrid classes by moving a portion of the classroom experience online, which would decrease the amount of time engaged in face-to-face instruction and replace it with direct instructional time online. For example, in our 3-credit course example, instead of meeting for 2 hours and 45 minutes twice per week (300 minutes of instruction after excluding two 15 minute breaks, representing 6 hours of student engagement), Center courses may meet only once per week (150 minutes of instruction after excluding one 15 minute break, equivalent to 3 hours of student engagement) by moving the equivalent of the remaining 2 hours and 45 minutes worth of activities and exercises online that would normally occur face to face. In this example, direct instructional time would remain at the equivalent of 6 hours per week, and students would still be expected to spend 11.25 hours engaged outside-of-class per week (not including direct instructional time online) for a total of 17.25 hours of student engagement per week, or 138 hours of total student engagement for the 8-week session. This consists of 40 hours of instruction excluding breaks (representing 48 hours of direct instructional time) plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 46 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

### **Examples for Session 6**

Applying the formula above to UIU's 6-week Session 6, the minimum amount of face-to-face instructional time in a 3-credit course is 6.5 hours per week excluding breaks, equivalent to 7.8 hours of student engagement in addition to 15 hours of student engagement outside of class per week for a grand total of 22.8 hours of student engagement per week. Over the 6-week session that amounts to 136.8 hours of student engagement consisting of 39 hours of face-to-face instruction excluding breaks equivalent to 46.8 hours of face-to-face student engagement plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 45.6 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

**Face-to-Face at the Centers:** 3-credit courses at the Center locations during the shortened Session 6 have several options. Courses at centers may meet for 7 hours once per week (assuming two 15-minute breaks), or they may meet for 3 hours and 30 minutes two days per week (assuming one 15-minute break per classroom session). In either case, total face-to-face instructional time excluding breaks will remain the requisite 390 minutes per week, equivalent to 7.8 hours of face-to-face student engagement. Students are also expected to spend 15 hours engaged outside-of-class per week for a grand total of

22.8 hours of student engagement per week. Over the 6-week session that amounts to 136.8 hours of student engagement consisting of 39 hours of face-to-face instruction excluding breaks (representing 46.8 hours of face-to-face student engagement) plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 45.6 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

**Hybrid at the Centers:** Classes at the Center locations may be offered as hybrid classes by moving a portion of the classroom experience online, which would decrease the amount of time engaged in face-to-face instruction and replace it with direct instructional time online. For example, instead of meeting a 3-credit hour course for 3 hours and 30 minutes twice per week, Center courses may meet only once per week by moving the equivalent of the remaining 3 hours and 30 minutes worth of activities and exercises online that would normally occur face-to-face. Students would still be expected to spend 15 hours engaged outside of class per week (not including direct instructional time online) for a grand total of 22.8 hours of student engagement per week. Over the 6-week session that amounts to 136.8 hours of student engagement consisting of 39 hours of direct instructional time excluding breaks (representing 46.8 hours of face-to-face student engagement) plus 90 hours of engagement outside of class, or roughly 45.6 hours of student engagement per credit hour.

**Examples for Courses with a Lab Component:**

Courses at Upper Iowa that are valued at 4-credits are typically the sum of 3-credits of lecture-based instruction and 1-credit of lab-based work under the direct supervision of a faculty member. Therefore, a student in one of these courses must meet all of the requirements of a typical 3-credit course (listed above) as well as additional engaged time in the laboratory. The total student engagement time of 45 hours remains the same for the laboratory credit, but it is typical in laboratory courses for more of that time to be accounted for in face-to-face instruction. The total engaged time can be calculated entirely as supervised face-to-face work or can be the sum of the number of hours of supervised face-to-face time, plus documented preparatory time outside of the regular contact hours. Several examples for this calculation are given in Table I below assuming a 15-week semester:

	Number of credits awarded	Scheduled face-to-face time per week without breaks mins	Weekly face-to-face student engagement (1 hour per 50 minutes of break-free contact time) hrs	Total contact time per 15-week semester hrs	Minimum amount of required outside of class student work time per week mins (hrs)	Minimum outside of class student work per semester mins (hrs)	Total engaged time and outside of class work time per semester (mins/hrs)
Lab A	1	150	3	45	0 (0)	0 (0)	2700 (45)
Lab B	1	120	2.4	36	36 (0.6)	540 (9)	2700 (45)
Lab C	1	90	1.8	27	72 (1.2)	1080 (18)	2700 (45)

Table I: Example lab instructional time requirements for a 15-week semester.

Please note the trends in these examples laboratories show that as the amount of face-to-face contact time per week decreases, the minimum amount of required outside-of-class time increases. It is

allowable to exceed both the minimum contact time and minimum required time for outside-of-class work for a student to earn 1-credit for laboratory work.

Examples of how these requirements would be applied to Upper Iowa University 8-week and 6-week courses are given in Table II below.

	Number of credits awarded	Scheduled contact time per meeting  mins	Meetings per session	Total face-to-face student engagement per session(1 hour per 50 minutes of break-free contact time)  hrs	<u>Minimum</u> amount of required outside of class student work time per week  mins (hrs)	<u>Minimum</u> outside of class student work per session  mins (hrs)	Total engaged time and outside of class work time per semester  (mins/hrs)
Lab D	1 (8 wks)	160	15	48	0 (0)	0 (0)	2880 (48)
Lab E	1 (8 wks)	120	15	36	36 (0.6)	540 (9)	2700 (45)
Lab F	1 (6 wks)	180	11	39.6	54 (0.9)	324 (5.4)	2700 (45)
Lab G	1 (6 wks)	150	11	33	120 (2)	720 (12)	2700 (45)
Table II: Example lab instructional time requirements for Fayette sessions.							

**Examples for Online Courses:**

Courses offered entirely online must have the same learning outcomes and substantive components of standard face-to-face courses. Each course syllabus must demonstrate that the course adheres to, and reasonably approximates, the Department of Education’s and the Higher Learning Commission’s definition of a credit hour (the equivalent of one hour of classroom, or direct, faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours student work out of class over a 15-week semester, or 45 hours of student engagement per credit hour). Thus, each online course must meet the total number of student engagement hours, have the same number and quality of assignments, and meet the same course learning outcomes as similar courses taught in the face-to-face format, although the ratio of direct instructional time to the time students spend outside of class will be different for asynchronous online courses.

**Examples for Other Credit-Bearing Courses:**

Upper Iowa University also offers other types of credit-bearing courses such as supervised clinical rounds, visual/performing arts ensembles, studio time, and supervised student teaching/field work (etc.) that do not have a typical face-to-face classroom component. In these cases, students must be engaged for 3-4 hours per week for a 15-week semester (a total of 45-60 hours of engagement time) to be awarded 1-credit.