Ensuring Online Courses Meet Credit Hour Requirements

Definition of a Credit Hour

According to Tulane University, the definition of a credit hour is:

"Program Integrity Rules issued by the U.S. Department of Education require institutions to establish a definition of "credit hour". This applies to all degree programs (including credit for full and part-time undergraduate, graduate, professional, post-baccalaureate, and online programs):

For courses in lecture format, one credit-hour represents the subject content that can be delivered in one academic hour (50 min) of contact time each week for the full duration of one academic semester, typically fifteen weeks along. For undergraduate courses, one credit-hour also includes associated work that can be completed by a typical student in 1-2 hours of effort outside the classroom. For graduate and professional courses taught in lecture format, 2-3 hours of outside work is expected for each academic hour of contact time as well."

Source: https://catalog.tulane.edu/glossary/

Workload Calculation and Recommended Quantities

To set faculty up for success in meeting the requirement, we have developed a simple guide to follow as they work through each module of building an online course. Many have not considered the amount they might need for readings, video length, or etc., so we recommend using this as a starting point for gathering materials. This guide is also very flexible. For example:

- If a student has a paper due at the end of the course, factor in that time for each module you expect the student to work on the paper.
- If a student is working on a project, determine a reasonable amount of time that they might spend each week for each step of the project.

The following guide provides suggestions and substitutes. We know every course is different, but for a new instructor, this could also help determine where to start when gathering resources.

Workload Calculator Overview

The following table is based on a 12-module (with a final assessment module) structure. If 3 credit hours equals 45 (50 min) clock hours per credit, the total number for clock hours in a course is 112.5 or 8.5 hours per module.

CONTACT HOURS: RECOMMENDED

TARGET TYPE	TARGET QUANTITIES AND RATE	TARGET HOURS	RESEARCH
Introductions for Readings and Videos	1000 words (180 wpm)	0.09	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs
Readings	8000 words (180 wpm)	0.74	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs (refer to page density when working with documents)
Lecture Video	7 minutes (1.5x watch rate)	0.18	Taylor et al., 1960, as cited in Hiebert et al. 2014
External Videos	14 minutes (1.5x watch rate)	0.35	Taylor et al., 1960, as cited in Hiebert et al. 2014

INDEPENDENT WORK: RECOMMENDED

TARGET TYPE	TARGET QUANTITIES AND RATE	TARGET HOURS	RESEARCH
Practice Exercises	1 hour (estimated time)	0.50	Consensus of departments' IDs
Application Activities / Projects	1 (estimate- 2x the time for a novice comparted to an expert)	4.50	Consensus of departments' IDs
Discussion Post (250 words)	1 discussion = 1 hour	1.00	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs
Discussion Responses (250 words)	2 responses = 1 hour	1.00	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs

CONTACT HOURS: SUBSTITUES OR ADDITIONS

TARGET TYPE	TARGET QUANTITIES AND RATE	TARGET HOURS	RESEARCH
Lecture Text	1500 words (180 wpm)	0.14	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs
Podcasts	X minutes (1.5x watch rate)	0.00	Taylor et al., 1960, as cited in Hiebert et al. 2014
Presentation (Slides/ Images)	X # of slides (2 min per slide)	0.00	Consensus of departments' IDs
Practice Questions	X # of questions (1.5 min per question)	0.00	Consensus of departments' IDs
Case Studies	X # number of words (500 words = 1 hour)	0.00	Casotti et al., 2013
Zoom Session	X number of hours (straight time)	0.00	Consensus of departments' IDs

INDEPENDENT WORK: SUBSTITUES OR ADDITIONS

TARGET TYPE	TARGET QUANTITIES AND RATE	TARGET HOURS	RESEARCH
Group Activities	X # of hours (estimate time)	0.00	Consensus of departments' IDs
Quizzes	X # of questions (10 questions = .5 hours or 3 min per question)	0.00	Consensus of departments' IDs
Narrative Essay	500 words = 1 hour	0.00	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs
Argument Paper	500 words = 2 hours	0.00	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs
Research Paper	500 words = 4 hours	0.00	https://cte.rice.edu/workload and consensus of departments' IDs

References

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