Relationship of Hours to Units

Curriculum Committee

Los Medanos College uses the basic structure of the Carnegie Unit to determine the relationship of hours of student work to academic credits. As a California Community College, LMC is further bound by the regulations found in Title 5 and in the Program and Course Approval Handbook, a text maintained by the Chancellor’s Office and incorporated by reference into state regulations.

# Overview and Definitions

All calculations of units and hours are based on the total number of hours a student spends inside and outside of the classroom, expressed in distinct ratios for specific categories of courses. In this framework, 54 hours of student work, inclusive of work inside and outside of the classroom, equals 1 unit of academic credit. Title 5 requires that college award units in .5 increments when the total number of hours reaches 27 -­‐ 53 total student hours and for 2 units to be awarded once student hours reach 108.

The following definitions are derived from multiple sources, including Title 5, PCAH, SAAM, and LMC regulations and handbooks.

* + Catalog Hours: The total hours a student will spend in the classroom as recorded on the Course Outline of Record (COR) and recorded in the College Catalog. This is distinguished from Scheduling or Contact Hours.
  + Homework Hours: The total average hours an average student will spend on out-­‐of-­‐classroom assignments.
  + Student Hours: Total time a student will spend on course work, inclusive of all in-­‐class and homework hours.
  + Weekly Hours: Catalog hours divided by the term length.
  + Scheduling Hours: The number of hours a given section of a course meets in a given term.
  + Contact Hours: Counting of in-­‐class hours used to calculate FTES for apportionment. Includes separate calculations for Weekly, Daily, and Positive Attendance Contact Hours.
  + Lecture: (Ratio of In-­‐class to Homework Hours is 1:2) An instructional method that primarily utilizes full-­‐class or group content delivery. May include some small group work, presentations, and discussion.
  + Lab: (Ratio of In-­‐class to Homework Hours is 3:0.) An instructional method where students are primarily working independently or in groups to develop or practice skills in a laboratory, workshop, studio, court, field, or other specialized instructional space. Instructor supervises and directs activity at the student or small group level for most of the class period.
  + Activity: (Ratio of In-­‐class to Homework Hours is 2:1) An instructional method where the instructor switches between lecture and lab instruction in the same class period and classroom.

# Basic Calculations

For one unit of credit, the following general calculations apply:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **In-class Outside-of-class**  **Instructional Category**  **Hours Hours** | | |
| **Lecture**  {Lecture, Discussion, Seminar and Related Work) | 1 | 2 |
| **Activity**  (Activity, Lab w/ Homework, Studio, and Similar) | 2 | 1 |
| **Laboratory**  (Traditional Lab, Natural Science Lab, Clinical, and Similar) | 3 | 0 |

As per District Curriculum and Instruction Policy, 4001, it is important to note that in this and the following tables the hour values associated with each unit value represent a *minimum* number of hours for each unit of credit. In practice, there is a range of hours between the minimum values for each .5 increment and per Chancellor’s Office instructions (see attached communications) we are allowed to make local college decisions about whether or not to “round down,” but are not allowed under any circumstance to “round up”.

For example: Suppose a course has 54 lecture hours and 36 lab hours listed in the COOR. Using the math represented in the tables below, this course would equate to (54\*3 + 36)/54 = (198)/54 = 3.67 units. Under no circumstances could this course be listed as 4 units (no rounding up), however since the State Chancellor’s Office does not dictate in what partial increments we as a college choose to round down, this course could be listed as either 3.5 units or 3 units per the college decision.

There are times that the college may wish to “round down” in order to limit the decrease the cost of courses for students. This decision does not affect the student contact hours for the course that are computed and used for apportionment, nor does it affect the faculty pay hours for the course as listed in the catalog.

Additionally, in the UF contract, Article 7.2.4, the mode of instruction previously listed as “activity” is now categorized as Laboratory Type 3 and the use of the word “activity” in the course outline of record should be reserved only for courses that meet the curricular (not formally contractual) definition of “activity”. Practically, this means that most courses (including those related to physical education) that require 0 “homework” hours, and were formally categorized as “activity” for UF contract purposes should be classified as “laboratory” hours instead in the course outline of record and the catalog. The unit value for these courses will be computed appropriately using the laboratory hours computations and the faculty will be paid for these hours as defined per United Faculty Contract 7.2.3.3 as Laboratory Type 3 hours.

# Calculations for Lecture

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Units** | Curriculum Calculations | | |  | Term Calculations | | | |
| Total Catalog Hours | Total Homework Hours | Total Student Hours | Weekly Hours (18 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (9 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (8 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (6 Weeks) |
| **0.5** | 9 | 18 | *27* | 0.5 | 1 | 1.13 | 1.5 |
| **1.0** | 18 | 36 | *54* | 1.0 | 2 | 2.25 | 3.0 |
| **1.5** | 27 | 54 | *81* | 1.5 | 3 | 3.38 | 4.5 |
| **2.0** | 36 | 72 | *108* | 2.0 | 4 | 4.50 | 6.0 |
| **2.5** | 45 | 90 | *135* | 2.5 | 5 | 5.63 | 7.5 |
| **3.0** | 54 | 108 | *162* | 3.0 | 6 | 6.75 | 9.0 |
| **3.5** | 63 | 126 | *189* | 3.5 | 7 | 7.88 | 10.5 |
| **4.0** | 72 | 144 | *216* | 4.0 | 8 | 9.00 | 12.0 |
| **4.5** | 81 | 162 | *243* | 4.5 | 9 | 10.13 | 13.5 |
| **5.0** | 90 | 180 | *270* | 5.0 | 10 | 11.25 | 15.0 |
| **5.5** | 99 | 198 | *297* | 5.5 | 11 | 12.38 | 16.5 |
| **6.0** | 108 | 216 | *324* | 6.0 | 12 | 13.50 | 18.0 |
| **6.5** | 117 | 234 | *351* | 6.5 | 13 | 14.63 | 19.5 |
| **7.0** | 126 | 252 | *378* | 7.0 | 14 | 15.75 | 21.0 |
| **7.5** | 135 | 270 | *405* | 7.5 | 15 | 16.88 | 22.5 |
| **8.0** | 144 | 288 | *432* | 8.0 | 16 | 18.00 | 24.0 |
| **8.5** | 153 | 306 | *459* | 8.5 | 17 | 19.13 | 25.5 |
| **9.0** | 162 | 324 | *486* | 9.0 | 18 | 20.25 | 27.0 |
| **9.5** | 171 | 342 | *513* | 9.5 | 19 | 21.38 | 28.5 |
| **10.0** | 180 | 360 | *540* | 10.0 | 20 | 22.50 | 30.0 |

1. **Calculations for Lab**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Units** | Curriculum Calculations | | |  | Scheduling Calculations | | | |
| Total Catalog Hours | Total Homework Hours | Total Student Hours | Weekly Hours (18 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (9 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (8 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (6 Weeks) |
| **0.5** | 27 | 0 | *27* | 1.5 | 3 | 3.38 | 4.5 |
| **1.0** | 54 | 0 | *54* | 3.0 | 6 | 6.75 | 9.0 |
| **1.5** | 81 | 0 | *81* | 4.5 | 9 | 10.13 | 13.5 |
| **2.0** | 108 | 0 | *108* | 6.0 | 12 | 13.50 | 18.0 |
| **2.5** | 135 | 0 | *135* | 7.5 | 15 | 16.88 | 22.5 |
| **3.0** | 162 | 0 | *162* | 9.0 | 18 | 20.25 | 27.0 |
| **3.5** | 189 | 0 | *189* | 10.5 | 21 | 23.63 | 31.5 |
| **4.0** | 216 | 0 | *216* | 12.0 | 24 | 27.00 | 36.0 |
| **4.5** | 243 | 0 | *243* | 13.5 | 27 | 30.38 | 40.5 |
| **5.0** | 270 | 0 | *270* | 15.0 | 30 | 33.75 | 45.0 |
| **5.5** | 297 | 0 | *297* | 16.5 | 33 | 37.13 | 49.5 |
| **6.0** | 324 | 0 | *324* | 18.0 | 36 | 40.50 | 54.0 |
| **6.5** | 351 | 0 | *351* | 19.5 | 39 | 43.88 | 58.5 |
| **7.0** | 378 | 0 | *378* | 21.0 | 42 | 47.25 | 63.0 |
| **7.5** | 405 | 0 | *405* | 22.5 | 45 | 50.63 | 67.5 |
| **8.0** | 432 | 0 | *432* | 24.0 | 48 | 54.00 | 72.0 |
| **8.5** | 459 | 0 | *459* | 25.5 | 51 | 57.38 | 76.5 |
| **9.0** | 486 | 0 | *486* | 27.0 | 54 | 60.75 | 81.0 |
| **9.5** | 513 | 0 | *513* | 28.5 | 57 | 64.13 | 85.5 |
| **10.0** | 540 | 0 | *540* | 30.0 | 60 | 67.50 | 90.0 |

# Calculations for Activity

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Units** | Curriculum Calculations | | |  | Scheduling Calculations | | | |
| Total Catalog Hours | Total Homework Hours | Total Student Hours | Weekly Hours (18 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (9 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (8 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (6 Weeks) |
| **0.5** | 18 | 9 | *27* | 1.0 | 2 | 2.25 | 3.0 |
| **1.0** | 36 | 18 | *54* | 2.0 | 4 | 4.50 | 6.0 |
| **1.5** | 54 | 27 | *81* | 3.0 | 6 | 6.75 | 9.0 |
| **2.0** | 72 | 36 | *108* | 4.0 | 8 | 9.00 | 12.0 |
| **2.5** | 90 | 45 | *135* | 5.0 | 10 | 11.25 | 15.0 |
| **3.0** | 108 | 54 | *162* | 6.0 | 12 | 13.50 | 18.0 |
| **3.5** | 126 | 63 | *189* | 7.0 | 14 | 15.75 | 21.0 |
| **4.0** | 144 | 72 | *216* | 8.0 | 16 | 18.00 | 24.0 |
| **4.5** | 162 | 81 | *243* | 9.0 | 18 | 20.25 | 27.0 |
| **5.0** | 180 | 90 | *270* | 10.0 | 20 | 22.50 | 30.0 |
| **5.5** | 198 | 99 | *297* | 11.0 | 22 | 24.75 | 33.0 |
| **6.0** | 216 | 108 | *324* | 12.0 | 24 | 27.00 | 36.0 |
| **6.5** | 234 | 117 | *351* | 13.0 | 26 | 29.25 | 39.0 |
| **7.0** | 252 | 126 | *378* | 14.0 | 28 | 31.50 | 42.0 |
| **7.5** | 270 | 135 | *405* | 15.0 | 30 | 33.75 | 45.0 |
| **8.0** | 288 | 144 | *432* | 16.0 | 32 | 36.00 | 48.0 |
| **8.5** | 306 | 153 | *459* | 17.0 | 34 | 38.25 | 51.0 |
| **9.0** | 324 | 162 | *486* | 18.0 | 36 | 40.50 | 54.0 |
| **9.5** | 342 | 171 | *513* | 19.0 | 38 | 42.75 | 57.0 |
| **10.0** | 360 | 180 | *540* | 20.0 | 40 | 45.00 | 60.0 |

1. **Lecture / Lab Courses**

Lecture / Lab is the fourth basic course category, combining both lecture and lab formats in a single COR. Calculating the correct hour to unit ratios for these courses is challenging as the ratio between the two instructional methods varies by discipline and by course. The table below provides a couple of examples based on typical LMC courses.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Units** | Curriculum Calculations | | | | Scheduling Calculations | | | |
| Total Lecture Hours | Total Lab Hours | Total Homework Hours | Total Student Hours | Weekly Hours (18  Weeks) | Weekly Hours (9 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (8 Weeks) | Weekly Hours (6 Weeks) |
| **1.0** | 18 | 18 | 36 | *72* | 2.0 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 6.0 |
| **2.0** | 18 | 54 | 36 | *108* | 4.0 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 12.0 |
| **3.0** | 36 | 72 | 72 | *180* | 6.0 | 12.0 | 13.5 | 18.0 |
| **4.0** | 54 | 54 | 108 | *216* | 6.0 | 12.0 | 13.5 | 18.0 |
| **5.0** | 54 | 108 | 108 | *270* | 9.0 | 18.0 | 20.3 | 27.0 |

Note that in the example shown above for 3 units, that the Total Student Hours calculation is above the 162 minimum hours for 3 units of credit, but below the 189 hour threshold where the college would need to offer the course for 3.5 units of credit.

Again, Lecture / Lab combinations vary from discipline to discipline and between courses within disciplines. The table above provides examples, but is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive of how courses must be structured and hours / units calculated. The easiest way to determine the appropriate units is to divide the Total Student Hours (TSH) by 54. For example, if a course requires a 195 total student hours—inclusive of lecture, lab, and homework hours—then the following calculation applies:

* + 195 TSH / 54 = 3.61
  + Round down to nearest .5

# 3.5 units of credit

1. **Authority and References**

The recommendations in this document are consistent with and derived from current regulations and practices related to Unit / Hour calculations. The following specific regulations, documents, and handbooks provide the legal framework for the above calculations and recommendations:

* + Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations §55002.5
  + Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH – 7th Edition): pp. 54-61. This document is maintained by the Chancellor’s Office and is incorporated by reference into Regulations by Title 5 §55000.5.
  + California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office - Student Attendance and Accounting Manual (SAAM – 2020)
  + California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office – Hours and Units Calculations – Effective 10.05.2015
  + United Faculty Contract 2019 – 2022, Article 7.2.4 – Physical Education Course Assignment
  + United Faculty Contract 2019 – 2022, Article 7.2.3.3 – Laboratory Three Type Course Assignment
  + 4CD - Curriculum and Instruction Policy 4001

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* Shared Governance Council
* Academic Senate
* Classified Senate
* Student Senate
* Department Chairs