

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS / SEMESTER CREDIT HOUR and DEFINITIONS

The assignment of credit hours at Northern Wyoming Community College District (NWCCD) conforms to commonly accepted practices in higher education. These practices align with the following federal definition of a credit hour:

Credit hour: 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 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 academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practicums, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. 34CFR 600.2 (7/1/2011)

Guided Minutes/Contact hours: Academic activities at NWCCD are expressed in terms of guided minutes. Fifty (50) guided minutes is equivalent to 1 contact hour of faculty-student interaction (not necessarily synchronous) to meet specified learning objectives.

NWCCD evaluates all course offerings in terms of the unit of academic credit, a semester credit hour.

NWCCD defines an academic credit by the number of guided minutes a student spends engaged in a particular academic activity. Guided minutes can include traditional classroom time, laboratory time, internship or practicum time, or time spent working with an on-line instructor. The student is granted credit upon successful completion of those prescribed minutes. These times are designated below for each kind of instructional method.

A. Lecture Courses: Lecture courses are defined as courses which may include lectures, recitations, discussions, and similar teaching approaches. Lecture-based courses must meet a minimum of 750 minutes (15 contact hours) per academic semester for each credit hour.

- Lecture Courses represent a minimum time commitment of 750 guided minutes (15 contact hours) of in-class activities and 1500 minutes (30 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

B. Laboratory Courses: Laboratory-based courses, including science and occupational training, involve hands-on learning to develop skill training and/or proficiency in a specific

subject and must meet a minimum of 1500 minutes (30 contact hours) per academic semester for each credit hour.

- Occupational laboratory courses represent a minimum time commitment of 1500 guided minutes (30 contact hours) of in-class work and 0 minutes (0 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.
- Occupational lab courses in the Health Sciences represent a minimum time commitment of 1500 guided minutes (30 contact hours) of in-class work and 750 minutes (15 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.
- Laboratory courses not dedicated to occupational training represent a minimum time commitment of 1500 guided minutes (30 contact hours) of in-class work and 1500 minutes (30 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

C. Lecture/Lab Courses: Lecture/lab courses integrate lecture and laboratory components and must meet a minimum of 1125 minutes (22.5 contact hours) per academic semester to equal one semester credit hour.

- Occupational Lecture/lab courses represent a minimum time commitment of 1125 guided minutes (22.5 contact hours) of in-class work and 1125 minutes (22.5 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.
- Lecture/Lab courses not dedicated to occupational training represent a minimum time commitment of 1125 guided minutes (22.5 contact hours) of in-class work and 2250 minutes (45 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

D. Lecture/Studio Courses: Lecture/studio courses integrate lecture and studio components where students develop skills related to draft and design with instructional help. Lecture/studio classes must meet a minimum of 1500 minutes (30 contact hours) per academic semester calendar for each credit hour.

- Lecture/studio courses represent a minimum time commitment of 1500 guided minutes (30 contact hours) of in-class work and 3000 minutes (60 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

E. Studio Courses: Studio courses require more time and allow students to practice what is learned through lecture and demonstrations using specialized equipment and facilities. Studio must meet a minimum time commitment of 1700 guided minutes (34 contact hours) of in-class work per academic semester calendar for each credit hour.

- Studio courses represent a minimum time commitment of 1700 guided minutes (34 contact hours) of in-class activities and 3400 minutes (68 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

F. Lesson Courses: Lesson-based courses are designed to develop and expand performance skills through private instruction, technical studies, and performances. Lesson courses must

include a minimum of 450 minutes of lesson time (9 contact hours) per student per academic semester for each credit hour.

- Lesson-based courses represent a minimum time commitment of 450 guided minutes (9 contact hours) of in-class activities and 1800 minutes (36 hours) of arranged practice time completed per student per academic semester for each credit hour.

G. **Practicum Courses:** Directed practicums are designed especially for the preparation of students that involve the supervised practical application of previously studied theory. Practicums are internally driven, based on competencies, and are closely related to a course or field of study. Practicum courses require students to complete a minimum of 2250 minutes (45 experience hours) of course/on-site time per academic semester for each credit hour earned.

- Practicum courses represent a minimum time commitment of 750 guided minutes (15 contact hours) of in-class activities, 1500 minutes (30 experience hours) of on-site minutes, and 750 minutes (15 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

H. **Clinical Courses:** Clinical courses emphasize skill training and proficiency in a professional setting under the direct supervision of an instructor. These courses must meet a minimum of 2250 minutes (45 contact hours) in an academic semester for each credit hour.

- Clinical courses represent a minimum time commitment of 2250 guided minutes (45 contact hours) of in-class activities and 1500 minutes (30 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

I. **Internship Courses:** Internship courses require broad application of knowledge gained through course work. A variety of work is included and is directed by an external agency with an output product such as a paper, presentation, demonstration, or portfolio. Internship courses must include a minimum of 3000 minutes (60 experience hours) of course/on-site time per academic semester for each credit hour.

- Internship courses represent a minimum time commitment of 3000 minutes (60 experience hours) of on-site time and 750 minutes (15 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

J. **Cooperative Education Courses:** Co-ops courses are employer directed. Students may complete work journals and should receive employer ratings. Interaction should take place between a college representative and the employer on context and student progress. Co-op courses must include a minimum of 3750 minutes (75 employment hours) of on-the-job training time per academic semester for each credit hour earned.

- Cooperative education courses represent a minimum time commitment of 3750 minutes (75 employment hours) of on-site time and 375 minutes (7.5 hours) of self-directed work completed per academic semester for each credit hour.

Please note that instructional method is used to designate time/minutes required for use in the creation of new courses and revision of current courses. This does not limit courses to the method of delivery used(i.e. on-line, compressed video, flexible learning, self-directed learning, independent study, etc.). NWCCD offers courses delivered in alternative formats, i.e. online, hybrid, or independent study, which have limited or no face-to-face interaction with an instructor. The college assumes students who have successfully completed courses in these formats have met the in-class and out of class time requirements outlined in this procedure.

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