

# California Lutheran University

## Online and Blended Education Credit Hours

*Follow-up to July 27, 2015 discussion*

### Introduction

During our July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, participants reviewed the background data provided in Section II of this follow-up document and discussed what online activities should count as instructor-led hours (for purposes of Carnegie Hours) in Cal Lutheran's online and blended courses. One of the key concepts guiding the discussion was offered by Maria Kohnke. She pointed out that consistency between face-to-face and virtual classrooms are important when it comes to accreditor review. For example, a final exam that is administered in the classroom under faculty supervision could be considered faculty-led in the virtual classroom. The following table summarizes the majority consensus.

Activity	Instructor-led	Independent hours	Discussion
<b>Face-to-face time with instructor</b>	√		All "seat-time" in blended courses; field trip or international study course with faculty; attending live presentation with instructor
<b>Discussion board or blog (instructor-led)</b>	√		Class/group DB with "strategic presence" by the instructor
Discussion board or blog (student-led)		√	Separate discussion board for student/group interaction where there is no instructor strategic presence
<b>Synchronous chat (instructor-led)</b>	√		Attendance at the live chat or watching the archive of the chat and completing the faculty-required assignment
Synchronous chat (no faculty present)		√	e.g., student lounge, group hang-outs
<b>Pre-recorded lectures (academic)</b>	√		Created by faculty, other academics or guest speaker with faculty collaboration
<b>Video/audio files</b>	√		Academic-quality content selected by faculty or live presentation recommended by instructor; time includes actual running time of the video or live event, plus reasonable estimate for reflection and rewind review
<b>Mid-term and final exams (test time)</b>	√		Actual allotted time to take the exam (e.g., 2 hours)
<b>Quiz (e.g., 15 minutes)</b>	√		Actual allotted time given for a "pop quiz (e.g., 15 minutes)
<b>Term paper feedback (limited)</b>	√		Time to review and reflect on detailed faculty feedback. Suggested allocation is 15 minutes for every 10 pages.
<b>Journaling</b>	√		When instructor strategically plans what student needs to write and feedback is provided
Student preparation for taking the mid-term exams, final exams and quizzes		√	student preparation time is independent
Practice tests, pre-tests, homework		√	Generally independent; any preparation time is independent
Term paper research and writing		√	Time for research and writing is independent
Reflection journaling		√	Individual reflection on learning
Readings and review of course materials		√	
Library or internet research		√	
<b>Group presentations with faculty present</b>	√		
Group work on projects/cases		√	
Independent projects/cases		√	
<b>Computer simulations or virtual labs (instructor-led)</b>	√		With planning and "strategic presence" by faculty
Computer simulations/labs (student-led)		√	No active involvement by faculty needed
<b>Faculty-required individual or group consultations (e.g., field work)</b>	√		Scheduled interaction in which each student is expected to meet with instructor (virtually, phone, etc.); faculty meeting on site with student and internship supervisor
Voluntary consultations/mentoring with instructor (i.e., "office hours")		√	Consultations which are not mandatory and replicate "office hours" are independent hours
Guided activities by teacher assistant		√	

## Section II: Background Context:

Department of Education (October 29, 2010)

“Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published” <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf>

- “An institution is responsible for determining the credit hours awarded for coursework in its programs in accordance with the definition of a credit hour for Federal program purposes... The definition provides several critical flexibilities for the institution in determining the appropriate amount of credit hours for student coursework.”
- “There is no ‘seat time’ requirement implicit in the definition of a credit hour. An institution that is offering asynchronous online courses would need to determine the amount of student work expected in each online course in order to achieve the course objectives...”
- “We recognize that complex institutions with multiple degree levels may not have rigidly uniform policies and procedures related to the credit hour across a variety of disciplines... however, institutions must have policies and procedures that ensure sufficient consistency to gain the confidence of accrediting agencies through peer review...”

School of Management (2011): Implementation of CLU Policy on Carnegie Hours

“In Spring 2011, the University has adopted a new policy on the definition of the so-called Carnegie hours. In essence, the definition says that one credit unit equals one hour of instructor-led activities and two hours of independent work over 15 weeks. For a 3-unit course, this results in 45 hours of instructor-led activities and 90 hours of independent work, and 60/120 hours for a 4-unit course, respectively. As this puts most of our 3-unit and 4-unit classes in the 11-week programs out of compliance, there is a need to make adjustments to all courses. For a variety of reasons, it makes most sense to harmonize these adjustments across all graduate programs at the School of Management:

1. In addition to the normal class times of 3 (4) hours over 11 weeks, all graduate courses must therefore add additional activities in the amount of 12 (16) hours over the period of a term. At the School of Management, these activities will be online.
2. All such online activities must be on the university’s standard online platform (currently Blackboard).
3. Potential online activities include live-chats (please note that Blackboard currently only allows for text chats), discussion boards, collaborative writing exercises and the like. Please note that any such activity must be instructor-led (as opposed to independent); it therefore requires active direction and involvement by the instructor.
4. Details on any such activity, especially on grading, times and deadlines must be clearly stated in the syllabus.
5. Activities designed to make up for the differences between traditional class time and the Carnegie Hours requirements other than online activities (e.g. field trips) are possible, but require separate approval by the Program Director and the Dean or Associate Dean.
6. In order to provide proper documentation, a detailed workload statement (see the following example) has to be included in all syllabi.

Activity	Instructor-Led		Independent		Remarks
	Weekly	Course	Weekly	Course	
Readings of required text			3	24	Over eight weeks, uneven distribution
Weekly Classes	3	33			Includes final exam
Article Assignment				6	Average, varies by student and article
Blog Post		2			Average, varies by student
Discussion Board I		4			Average, varies by student and stage of discussion
Discussion Board II		4			Average, varies by student and stage of discussion
Final Exam Preparation				30	Average, varies by student
Final Paper				30	Average, varies by student
Consultations with instructor		2			Average, varies by student
<b>SUM</b>		<b>45</b>		<b>90</b>	

8-week online programs seem to be in compliance so that no significant changes to the hours are necessary. Nevertheless, 8-week programs also need to demonstrate that they are in compliance using a workload statement. In order to meet federal requirements, all courses must be in compliance after July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

Example of online Carnegie Hour matrix:

Activity	Weekly		Total Course	
	Instructor-Led	Independent	Instructor-Led	Independent
Required readings (text, articles, etc.)		4		32
12 pre-recorded lectures	1.5		12	
Other (webinars, module resources)	1		8	
8 weekly live chats	1.5		12	
8 weekly discussion board (or blogs)	1.5		12	
7 weekly quizzes and homework		2		14
1 group project (averaged across course)		1.5		12
1 independent case		2		16
Final Exam (review, text, prep)		2		16
Consultations with professor	0.25		2	
	5.75	11.5	46	90

### Asynchronous Online Education Credit Hours by the Book

by Frederick Carl Prasuhn, *Internet Learning*, Volume 1(1): Fall 2012, 63-79.

[http://www.ipsonet.org/files/Prasuhn\\_-\\_7X10.pdf](http://www.ipsonet.org/files/Prasuhn_-_7X10.pdf)

- “The concern, therefore, is the awarding of credit hour values to instructional forms that do not have a set class time or a measurable amount of instructional time.” (65)
- “Following the Program Integrity Issues (2010) ruling a credit hour became the intended amount of work that occurs within one classroom instructional hour plus two student study hours resulting in 45 learning hours per term per credit.” (68)
- “..a letter from Ochoa (2011), U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary, Office of Postsecondary Education. In the letter Ochoa described the new credit hour definition as noninvasive and that it removed the former credit hour’s ‘seat time.’ Thus institutions were permitted the freedom in instruction as long as the learning outcomes and achievement were reasonably equal to the learning of one instructional hour and two student study hours per week per credit.” (69)
- “In essence, each institution maintains the most control and duty for credit hours and related learning. Each institution has its own process for developing, reviewing and approving course work and credits. When accreditation review occurs, institutions are evaluated on how well standards are met relational to the school’s mission and purpose.” (69)
- “..the commission realizes that the accreditation and review process are ‘not an equalizing force, measuring every institution by a uniform set of quantitative standards....The reliance of following acceptable higher-education practices permitted variance, but assumed basic academics were compatible.’” (70)
- “Data collected from documents and during interviews indicate three factors: (a) credit hours measure time and not what is learned; (b) responsibility for choosing credit hour values is at the local institution level; (c) no policy exists that translate asynchronous online education into credit hours.” (71)
- “The DOE reaffirmed local duty in the Program Integrity Issues (2010). Also, the DOE reiterated that accrediting commissions were obligated to ensure member institutions were meeting standards. The DOE’s ruling also requires institutions and commissions to have procedures in place indicating how consistent credit hour choices are made.” (72)

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