

**Addition to University Handbook:  
Section F: Instruction – Academic Procedures  
F115: Credit Hour**

**With additional instruction placed in Department Head’s Manual**

**Background: Proposed by Credit Hour work group and approved by CAPP**

**Approved by FS Academic Affairs on December 20, 2011**

**Approved by Faculty Senate on February 14, 2012**

**Credit Hour**

**F115 One Credit Hour:** the amount of effort required to attain a specific amount of knowledge or skill equivalent to three hours of effort per week for 15 weeks. Any combination of contact time and effort outside of class is allowed. Common practice is for one academic hour of credit to be composed of a lecture or class to meet for one hour (50 minutes) per week, with two hours per week of outside assignment and study effort expected each week for 15 weeks. A laboratory class period equivalent to an academic hour of credit would either meet for one three-hour period each week for 15 weeks with all effort by the student expected to be completed during the laboratory period; or one two-hour laboratory period with one hour of student effort expected outside the class period, each week for 15 weeks. Shortened academic sessions (including condensed semesters, intersession classes, or summer classes) are expected to maintain an equivalent amount of time (contact and outside of class time) as those classes in the 15-week semester. It should be noted that the judgment of the amount of academic effort that comprises one hour of credit for any class is ultimately a faculty decision, from the development of the course syllabus to the approval through Faculty Senate. For further detail please see the Department Head’s manual: <http://www.k-state.edu/academicpersonnel/depthead/contents.html>

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**The following information is to be placed in the Department Head’s Manual and elsewhere as needed:**

- A. Contact Period:** For a regular semester session, each academic day is divided into standard contact periods of 50 minutes each and a 10-minute period for travel time between classes, or a standard 75-minute contact period and a 10-minute period for travel time between classes. To accommodate special needs of faculty, approval may be given to hold classes at non-standard times. Depending on the credit hours assigned to a course and the type of classes used for the course, different combinations of these standard contact periods could be used.
- **Lecture/recitation classes:** For each credit hour assigned, a course containing lecture or recitation classes will typically have one 50-minute standard-contact-period class each week during the semester.
  - **Laboratory/studio classes:** For each credit hour assigned, a course containing laboratory or studio classes will typically have a class with three sequential 50-minute standard-contact-periods each week during the semester, or two sequential 50-minute standard-contact-periods each week during the semester, plus one hour of effort assigned

outside of class. Traditionally, the extra 60 minutes outside of class is for writing reports or completing graphics or studio assignments.

- **Internship/practicum/independent study/individual instruction classes:** For each credit hour assigned, the amount of effort required to complete the class and its assignments is equivalent to the amount of effort required for lecture or laboratory classes with the same credit. Thus, any combination of contact time and effort outside the contact time would equate to three hours of effort each week for 15 weeks.
- **Distance/online classes:** For each credit hour assigned, the amount of effort required to complete the class and its assignments is equivalent to the amount of effort required for a similar or the same lecture or laboratory class with the same credit. Thus, any combination of contact time (online synchronous or asynchronous work) and effort beyond the contact time would equate to three hours of effort each week for 15 weeks.

**B.** The following requirements define the amount of contact and outside of class time in minutes for standard class periods during a five-day week. Lengths of sessions shorter than 15 weeks are also discussed.

**1. For the 15-week semester:**

A one-credit-hour lecture or recitation course will typically have one 50-minute contact period each of 15 weeks, for a total of 750 minutes of contact time (final exam in the 16<sup>th</sup> week). It is expected that the average student would also spend two hours of effort outside of the class per week for this one hour of credit on assignments, reading, homework, and other work. Thus, the total time expected would be 2250 minutes (750 in class plus 1500 outside of class) per semester for one hour of course credit.

For a two-credit-hour class, the expectation would be for a total of 1500 minutes of contact time in the class and 3000 minutes of time spent outside of class, or 4500 minutes of total time. For a three-credit-hour class, the expectation would be for a total of 2250 minutes of contact time in the class and 4500 minutes of time spent outside the class, or 6750 minutes of total time. As more credit hours are added to lecture or recitation classes, the expected time in and outside of class would simply be multiples of the above examples.

For a one-hour laboratory/studio class, two example formats are described below.

- A format requiring three sequential standard-contact-periods will typically have 170 minutes of contact time in the laboratory/studio for each of 15 weeks, for a total contact time of 2550 minutes for the semester.
- A format requiring two sequential standard-contact-periods plus one hour of work outside of class will typically have 110 minutes of contact time in the laboratory/studio for each of 15 weeks, plus 60 minutes of work outside of class per week, for a total of 1650 minutes in class and 900 minutes outside of class, or 2550 total minutes for the semester.

As laboratory/studio classes add more credit hours, the total effort would simply be multiples of the above time requirements.

## 2. For Shortened Academic Sessions:

Since the final exams for shortened session classes are given during the final class periods, there may be slightly fewer minutes expected for the classes. Examples are shown below for some standard summer and intersession courses.

- **Eight-week summer session class:** A three-credit-hour lecture or recitation course has the equivalent of a 60-minute class period every day for 38 class days. This schedule results in 2280 minutes of contact time, with the expectation of another 4560 minutes of time spent outside of class, for a total time expected of 6840 minutes.
- **Six-week summer session class:** A three-credit-hour lecture or recitation course has the equivalent of 80-minute class periods every day for 28 class days. This results in 2240 minutes of contact time, with the expectation of another 4480 minutes of work outside of the classroom, for a total time expected of 6720 minutes.
- **Four-week summer session class:** A three-credit-hour lecture or recitation course has the equivalent of 120 minutes of class contact every day for 19 class days. This schedule results in 2280 minutes of contact time, with the expectation of another 4560 minutes of time spent outside of class, for a total time expected of 6840 minutes.
- **Three-week intersession class:** A three-credit-hour lecture or recitation course has the equivalent of 160 minutes of class contact every day for 14 class days. This provides a total of 2240 minutes of contact time, with the expectation of another 4480 minutes of work outside of the classroom, for a total time expected of 6720 minutes.

## 3. Special Policies Relating to Intersession:

As course sessions are shortened, the amount of time expected for students' work outside of class makes it extremely challenging, if not logistically impossible for the average student to take more than three hours during an intersession. For example, in a three-week three-credit-hour course, students would be expected to be in class for nearly three hours each day, and spend an average of nearly 4.5 hours per day working outside of class over the 18 total days (14 class days plus 4 weekend days). For this reason, students are not allowed to take more than 4 credit hours of courses during any three-week intersession. In addition, courses taught during intersession must abide by the policy that each credit hour of the class requires at least one week of class-related time.