

Guidelines for Determining Contact and Credit Hours for Faculty-Directed Study Abroad Programs

1. Purpose

These guidelines establish a consistent process for determining the appropriate number of academic credit hours for faculty-directed study abroad courses at Kansas State University. Because the courses may be delivered in an intensive or non-traditional format, credit must be based on the academic substance of the course and the total amount of student learning effort rather than solely on the number of days spent abroad.

The guidelines represented in this document are informed by NAFSA's Best Practices for Determining Credit for Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs and work in conjunction with Kansas State University's credit-hour definition and curriculum approval processes.

2. Foundational Principles

- A study abroad course must meet the same standards for academic rigor, faculty oversight, student learning, assessment, and total student effort as a comparable course delivered on campus.
- The location of the course does not, by itself, justify the awarding of academic credit. Credit is awarded for documented academic learning, not for travel, cultural exposure, or time spent in another country.
- All activities counted toward academic credit must be intentionally connected to the approved course learning outcomes.
- The course syllabus must include a program itinerary that indicates how lectures, discussions, site visits, field experiences, assignments, and assessments contribute to academic credit (see Academic Credit Calculation).

3. K-State Credit Hour Policy

In accordance with K-State policy, one semester credit hour represents approximately 37.5 hours (2,250 minutes) of total academic effort, comprised of 50 minutes of direct instruction per week over 15 weeks (750 minutes) in addition to 100 minutes of independent student work per week over 15 weeks (1,500 minutes). Any combination of time for direct instruction and effort outside of class is allowed.

A common distribution is as follows:

Credit Hours	Direct Instruction or Structured Academic Engagement	Independent or Out-of-Class Work	Total Academic Effort
1	12.5 hours	25 hours	37.5 hours
2	25 hours	50 hours	75 hours
3	37.5 hours	75 hours	112.5 hours
4	50 hours	100 hours	150 hours
5	75 hours	150 hours	225 hours

3. Activities Included in Credit Hour Calculations

Direct instruction: Academic engagement led or actively facilitated by a K-State instructor or another qualified individual designated by the instructor. Examples include faculty lectures, workshops and supervised labs, guest lectures, faculty-facilitated discussions, student presentations conducted under faculty supervision, and synchronous instructional activities conducted before or after travel.

Structured academic engagement: Required academic experiences outside a traditional classroom that are directly connected to course learning outcomes. Examples include faculty-guided visits to museums and businesses, field observations conducted using faculty-provided questions and protocols, interviews or meetings with local experts or community members, supervised research or fieldwork, and structured debriefing immediately associated with an experience. Only the portion of time at a location involving purposeful academic engagement **related to the course topic** should be counted toward academic credit hours.

Independent or out-of-class academic work: Required student effort completed without direct faculty supervision. Examples include homework, reflective journaling, work on individual and group projects, preparation for presentations, data analysis, and student and exam preparation.

4. Activities Not Included in Credit Hour Calculations

Transportation time, meals without a structured academic purpose, free time, recreation, shopping, independent sightseeing, sleep or rest periods, social gatherings, informal interaction with local residents, routine logistical meetings, and health, safety, and administrative orientations are generally not included in credit hour calculations.

5. Intensive Program Design

The compressed nature of a faculty-directed study abroad course does not reduce the total amount of student effort required. Faculty must demonstrate that students can reasonably complete the academic work during the designated course period. Academic expectations should not create schedules that require excessive instructional and independent work in addition to full days of travel.

For example:

A three-credit course requires approximately 112.5 total hours of academic effort. A two-week course awarding three credit hours would therefore require an average of eight hours of academic effort per day ($112.5 \text{ hours} / 14 \text{ days} = 8.04 \text{ hours/day}$) if all work were completed within 14 consecutive days. Given this fact, a substantial portion of the academic work should therefore be completed before departure or after return.

6. Review and Approval

The faculty member of record is responsible for preparing the syllabus, academic itinerary, and credit-hour calculation. The college and appropriate curriculum bodies retain responsibility for approving the course and the number of credits awarded.

Academic Credit Calculation

Scenario 1: Eight-Day Trip

Activity	Activity Category	Hours Required
Two pre-travel faculty seminars (90 min each)	Direct instruction	3 hours
Pre-travel assigned readings and paper	Independent work	7 hours
Faculty led museum visit	Structured engagement	3 hours
Faculty led cemetery visit	Structured engagement	3 hours
Guest lecture	Direct instruction	1.5 hours
Two-faculty-led debriefings	Direct instruction	2 hours
Required journaling	Independent work	6 hours
Post-travel paper	Independent work	12 hours
		37.5 hours total = 1 credit

Summary:

Direct instruction	6.5 hours
Structured engagement	6 hours
<u>Independent work</u>	<u>25 hours</u>
Total	37.5 hours

Scenario 2: Two-Week International Business Course

Activity	Activity Category	Hours Required
Pre-Travel		
Four faculty seminars (100 min each)	Direct instruction	6.7 hours
Assigned readings and case analyses	Independent work	15 hours
Country and industry research	Independent work	10 hours
Team preparation for company visits	Independent work	5 hours
During Travel		
Three faculty lectures (75 minutes each)	Direct instruction	3.75 hours
Four guest presentations (75 minutes each)	Direct instruction	5 hours
Five structured company visits (150 minutes each)	Structured engagement	12.5 hours

Two government visits (120 minutes each)	Structured engagement	4 hours
Four faculty-led debriefings (60 minutes each)	Direct instruction	4 hours
Required field notes	Independent work	10 hours
Team preparation for in-country presentation	Independent work	5 hours
Student presentations	Direct instruction	2.5 hours
Post Travel Work		
Faculty led synthesis session	Direct instruction	2 hours
Country comparative analysis paper	Independent work	20 hours
Revision and reflection assignment	Independent work	7 hours
		112.45 hours = 3 credits

Summary:

Direct instruction	23.95 hours
Structured engagement	16.5 hours
<u>Independent work</u>	<u>72 hours</u>
Total	112.45 hours