



Definition of a Credit Hour

Approval Authority: Academic Vice President

Revised: October 16, 2012

Cedarville University defines a semester credit hour as 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 hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. For non-traditional academic course credit, at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities leading to the award of credit hours as defined in procedures established by the University.

In accordance with federal guidelines and commonly accepted practices in higher education, Cedarville University operates on a 50-minute hour for definition (1) as it relates to direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two additional hours per week for definition (2) as it relates to other non-direct instructional activities.

The academic rigor, depth or breadth of the subject matter being covered, or quality of instruction can be represented within a set of intended learning outcomes in ways that are often not direct variables of the time in class. This policy on time required for granting academic credit is intended to be a minimum standard across all degree levels and disciplines of the university. The use of an “equivalent amount of work” allows for differences in these variables and also allows for variations on how that work is accomplished. Examples outside the standard classroom setting could include online instruction, hybrid instruction mixing classroom and out-of-classroom instruction or other types of activities such as those outlined in the procedures of the University. Including those other modes of instruction a separate procedural statement allows those equivalencies to be addressed by the University as they are established.

Credit Hour Equivalencies

Approval Authority: Academic Vice President

Revised: December 4, 2025

The definition of a credit hour at Cedarville University is provided in general terms in the policy statement on that subject. What follows are interpretations of that policy for the current instructional methods codes used at the University and minimum standards for assigning credit hours to classes using those methods. Unless otherwise noted, it is assumed that the standard of two hours of work outside the instructional setting for every hour in direct instruction applies.

- Activity Course (ACT) – An activity course is one in which students are receiving instruction from a faculty member while actively engaged in a sport or physical activity.

ACT – A minimum of 1050 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as three 50-minute sessions or two 75-minute sessions per week for a 7-week period for one credit. Standards on additional work outside the instructional setting may not apply.

- Clinical (CLN) – Students serve in a clinical setting under the supervision of the faculty.

(CLN) – A minimum of 2700 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as 6, 60-minute contact hours per week for a 15-week period for two credits. Standards on additional work outside the instructional setting may not apply.

- Ensemble (ENS1 or ENS2) – Ensemble classes are primarily music courses in which the faculty member is directing a group of student musicians. Large ensembles (ENS1) are those that are advertised in the course catalog and offered annually. Public student performances are often included as a requirement for the course. Chamber ensembles (ENS2), or small ensembles are generally not offered every year and are created based on student availability and interest.

ENS1 or ENS2 – A minimum of 750 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as one, 50-minute contact hour per week for a 15-week semester.

- Field Experience (FLD, FE1, FE2, FE3, FE4) – In field experience courses, students are scheduled in a practical working environment for varying hours. Students work directly with preceptors, supervisors, or school teachers in a variety of organizations, depending on the subject of the experience. Supervisors delegate duties and evaluate the students' performance. Faculty generally visit sites throughout the semester and are also available by phone for emergency consultations. Faculty members frequently assist supervisors in establishing goals and learning objectives for students. Faculty members prepare materials for the supervisors, monitor and assess students' progress, and meet with each student as needed during the semester. Standards on additional work outside the instructional setting may not apply.

FLD, FE1, FE2, FE3, FE4 – A minimum of 2520 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as 14 weeks of three-quarter-time work (30 hours per week) for 10 credit hours.

*Note – Education does 600 hours over 12 weeks for 12 credits or 3000 minutes per credit.

- Hybrid (HYB) – Hybrid courses are those that combine two or more other instructional methods in accomplishing the educational objectives of a course. Minimum standards for the assignment of credits for a Hybrid course are determined by the standards of the instructional methods used within the course, calculation using the proportion that each of those standards are used to deliver the course.

- Instructional Lab Hour (ILB) – An instructional lab hour includes educational activity in which the faculty member is actively engaged in instruction with students in a laboratory setting. Instructional lab time generally requires completion of a minimum of two hours of additional work by the students outside of the scheduled lab time for each hour of lab time.

ILB – A minimum of 1320 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as one 110-minute laboratory hour per week for 12 weeks of the semester.

- Internship/Cooperative Education (Formerly INT or COOP) – Internship or Co-op experiences are those where the student completes a work experience in an area related to the field of study for which they receive academic credit. Students work directly with a supervisor other than the faculty member. Standards on additional work outside the instructional setting may not apply.

Internships or Co-ops follow the standard for field experiences listed previously.

- Laboratory Hour (LAB) – A laboratory is an educational activity in which students will be conducting experiments, perfecting skills, or practicing procedures under the direction of a faculty member. It is anticipated that much of the work will be conducted within the lab setting but generally requires completion of a minimum of one half hour to one hour of additional work by the students outside of the scheduled lab time.

LAB – A minimum of 1320 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as one 110-minute laboratory hour per week for 12 weeks of the semester.

- Instructional Hour (LEC) – An instructional hour is a fifty (50) minute period during which the teacher guides the educational experience of students, applying any combination of instructional methods such as lecture, discussion, demonstration, the use of audio-visual materials or techniques, and/or other active learning strategies.

LEC – A minimum of 750 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as one fifty-minute hour per week for a 15-week semester

- Private Lesson (LES) – Private lessons are scheduled, one-on-one sessions between a student and a faculty member designed to build the skill of the student in musical performance, or in the performance of a specific skill.

LES – A minimum of 450 minutes = 1 credit hour, generally configured as one 30-minute contact hour of individual instruction per week for a 15-week semester. For private lessons it is expected that work outside the classroom will exceed the standard. Students are encouraged to practice at minimum, an additional 7 hours per week in addition to the lesson time.

- **Online Instruction (ONL)** – Online courses are those where all instruction is provided through the Internet. Technology is used to ensure students regularly interact with the instructor and with other students. Tools such as chat rooms, discussion strings, videoconferencing sessions, e-mail, and group projects are used to ensure a high level of interaction in the course. The credit hours for a fully-online course are determined in the same manner as a section of the course offered in a different format. For courses that may not have previously been delivered in other formats, the developing faculty member and approving entities within the curricular approval process must rely on review of the outcomes of the course and the activities used to gain and demonstrate proficiency in those outcomes to determine the “equivalent level of work” to a more traditionally offered course. Comparisons to other, similar courses taught in more traditional formats may be used as a benchmark for assigning credit hours. Curricular proposals for such courses should include those justifications and comparisons for consideration by those approving the proposal.
- **Out of Class Experience (OUT)** – An Out of Class course is one in which a student and the faculty member arrange for the student to complete the objectives and requirements of an existing course outside the setting of a scheduled course section. Objectives must include all those achieved within the regular course section and assessments must be used that verify accomplishment of those objectives and allow for an assignment of a grade for the course. Use of out of class experiences is often a result of scheduling conflicts that would prevent a student from making progress toward completion of their degree program. Credit hours assigned for an out of class experience are equivalent to those assigned for the same course taught using other instructional methods.
- **Participation Course (PRT)** – Participation courses are those in which students receive credit for their participation in activities related to the field of study such as attendance at concerts, site visits, etc. No other assessment measures are generally used to determine the quality of work or the mastery of course content. Participation courses generally are assigned zero credit hours.
- **Travel Course (TRV)** – A travel course is one in which the objectives of an existing course, or objectives intended to provide advanced study (similar to an independent study course) are achieved through traveling off campus to a site where the subject may be experienced first-hand by the student. Provided the instructional objectives are equivalent, credits assigned for a travel course are the same as those assigned to the equivalent course taught in other formats.