

## **Credit Hour Policy and Procedures**

Consistent with U.S. Department of Education guidelines, Widener University equates one credit hour with 15 instructional hours (where an instructional hour is defined as 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction, plus 10 minutes of transit time between instructional periods) and a minimum of 30 hours of out of class student work. Because of the growth in online and hybrid courses, the university has also adopted instructional time equivalencies for alternative instructional activities associated with online coursework. The document describing these equivalencies is appended to this policy and procedures statement.

To ensure fidelity with this credit hour policy, the university's registrar monitors the scheduling of all courses involving traditional face-to-face instruction to determine that the number of scheduled instructional hours corresponds to the credit hour value associated with the courses. In the event that there is a discrepancy between scheduled instructional hours and the credit hour value of a course, the registrar informs the dean of the school or college in which the course is being offered, and it is the responsibility of the dean to resolve that discrepancy. In the case of hybrid and online courses, the dean of the school or college in which such courses are being offered is responsible for documenting that the total instructional time allotted for the course (using the university's approved instructional time equivalencies) corresponds to the credit hour value associated with the course.

**Approved by Deans' Council, November 13, 2014**

**Widener University**  
**Alternative Instructional Equivalencies for Online/Hybrid Courses**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has requested that institutions establish criteria for determining what online activities constitute the equivalent of classroom instruction for uniform implementation across the institution. The activities that are equivalent of classroom instruction would best be: directly related to the objectives of the course/program; be measurable for grading purposes; have the direct oversight or supervision of the faculty member teaching the course and in some form be the equivalent activity conducted in the classroom. The equivalent content should not be: homework assignments or time spent (a calculation based on the amount of time a student spends accomplishing a task. (PDE memo, March 14, 2008)

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rate of Equivalency</b>
Blogs, journals, logs	Students' opportunity to apply learned concepts or for reflection on learning experiences; to be shared with instructor and/or classmates for thoughtful analysis, feedback and assessment.	1 private posting = ½ hour instruction 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates' postings) = 1 hour instruction
Case studies & problem solving scenarios*	In-depth analysis requiring utilization of higher order analytical skills which relate to course objectives and is shared with instructor and/or classmates for feedback and assessment.	1 case study analysis & posting = 1-3 hours instruction
Chat rooms for class or group projects	Instructor led opportunities for collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation & feedback. (Chats are posted for review.)	1 hour chat = 1 hour instruction
Conference calls	Instructor led opportunities for collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation & feedback. (When possible, calls to be recorded for review.)	½ hour call = ½ hour instruction
Discussion board	Instructor guided or mediated threaded discussion that directly relates to course objectives and which has specified timeframes, expectations for participation, and thoughtful analysis.	1 posting (requires reading all postings) = ½ hour instruction 1 posting (requires reading all postings and reply to a minimum of 5) = 1 hour instruction
Field trips or tours (to include virtual tours)	Students participate as individuals or in groups in analyzing an activity and preparing a paper or presentation, to be shared in whole or in part with instructor and/or classmates.	(Facilitator or Instructor Led) – 1 hour tour = 1 hour instruction  (Student(s) alone without instructor or facilitator) - 1 hour tour plus reflection paper = 1 hour instruction
Group project	Instructor mediated culminating activity with specific learning objectives; students collaborate via e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face contact to research, analyze, synthesize, and prepare project with instructor receiving periodic updates and providing guidance to group.	1 hour per week for duration of project
Guided project	Instructor mediated culminating individual project with specific learning objectives; student and facilitator collaborate via email, chat, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face to research, analyze, synthesize and prepare project with instructor receiving periodic updates and providing guidance and feedback.	1 hour per week for duration of project
In-Class instruction, presentations & tests	Instruction, presentations, and tests provided in person in live classroom setting.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction

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Instructional CDs, Powerpoints, videos*	Instructor mediated to expand upon and clarify course concepts and objectives.	Reviews and posts response to 1 unit = 1 hour instruction
Lecture activity - video, written or audio	Opportunity for students to develop questions, comments, or observations, to be shared with classmates and instructor through discussion board postings or participation in chat rooms.	Reviews 1 lecture & posts response = 1 hour instruction
Library research* (instructor led)	In-depth instructor led opportunity for students to research scholarly articles or professional journals that relate to course objectives; to be shared with class in a designated manner.	1 five page project = 1 hour instruction 1 3-5 page paper = 1-2 hours of instruction
Online quizzes	Opportunity for instructor to assess students' subject knowledge and provide feedback on students' progress.	1 hour test = 1 hour of instruction
Reflection paper or article review*	Instructor guided activity for students to apply learned concepts and relate practices to personal experiences or apply higher order analytic skills in assessing scholarly articles or professional journals.	1 private posting = ½ hour instruction 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates' postings) = 1 hour instruction
Field based - learning project	Instructor led project with specific learning objectives that integrates field activities with academic study; faculty provides guidance, support, and feedback to students and student shares experience and reflection with fellow classmates via emails, chats, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face.	1 hour per week for duration of project
Web-conferencing	Instructor led desktop to desktop or classroom video streaming instruction for collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation and feedback. (i.e., Wimba)	1 hour webinar = 1 hour instruction
Web-Quest* (Internet research)	Instructor guided opportunity for students to research information on the Internet that enhances student learning and addresses specific course outcomes; findings shared with the instructor and classmates.	1 in-depth posting = 1 hour instruction

**\*Researching, PowerPoint/video reviews, webquest activities, reading articles, etc. are considered “homework” assignments. The Rate of Equivalency denoted pertains to posting, reviewing, sharing, and providing student-to-student and/or instructor-to-student feedback.**

Please note **14 hours per credit** of instruction must be provided (42 hours for a 3 credit course). Please include this in all alternate-learning syllabi.