**Guidelines on Credit Hours for**

**Hybrid/Online/Virtual College Courses**

Northcentral Technical College is a performance-based learning institution. Our courses are competency-based. In order for a learner to be successful, they must be able to meet the competencies of the course by actively participating through their performance to achieve course and program outcomes. One way to facilitate learning and to assure the student is able to meet the competencies is to consider the work and time spent in class and outside of class. In a hybrid/online/Virtual College course, it can be difficult to measure the amount of time a student spends on in class and out of class activities.

The following document is intended to serve as a guide to the development of hybrid/online/Virtual College courses at Northcentral Technical College. These recommendations have been developed on the basis of existing NTC policies, WTCS Guidelines, and federal regulations; as well as best practices in online education.

It is an instructor’s responsibility to ensure academic quality in a course regardless of delivery mode or format; including rigor and meeting credit hour requirements.

The number of credit hours for courses that meet face-to-face with an instructor is defined in the paragraph below:

**New Definition of Credit Hour (600.2) for Financial Aid program eligibility:** Institutions must demonstrate that the credit hours awarded for the amount of academic work necessary for Federal program purposes approximates the amount of work defined. A credit hour is defined 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. 2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

(Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations 600.2)

**How Does this Apply to an Online Environment?**

In an asynchronous learning environment, traditional face-to-face contact time is redefined as the time a typical student spends interacting with course content. When planning and developing an asynchronous course, you must account credit hours in the same manner as traditional face-to-face courses. This formula could vary depending on type of instruction (lab or internships have different requirements). The example below is for a lecture course only.

**For example: Student taking a 3 credit course with lecture only,**

3 credits \* 18 hours per credit = 54 hrs of contact time + 54 hrs \* 2 hrs outside student work = 108 hrs

**Total hours of online course including instruction and assessment** (including outside) **= 162 hours**

**Activities that are equivalent of “in-class” instruction would be:**

* Learning Activities directly related to course objectives (not supplemental reading)
* Viewing lectures, videos, simulations, learning objects, multimedia presentations, webquest, case studies, demonstrations,
* Have direct contact with the instructor or other students

**Activities that are equivalent to OUTSIDE student work time would be:**

* Homework Assignment
* Graded Performance-based Assessments
* Textbook/Chapter Reading
* Supplemental readings
* Quizzes/Exams

**Learning Activity Ideas**

The index features over 45 types of learning activities suitable for online and hybrid courses with practical examples drawn from a wide variety of disciplines.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Art Projects | Jigsaw |
| Article (Journal) Critiques | Journaling |
| Audio Recordings | Kinesthetics |
| Blogging | KWL |
| Brainstorming | Laboratory Experiments |
| Case Briefs | Learning Contracts |
| Case Studies | Literature Review |
| Community Action | Multimedia Presentation (Video and Film) |
| Concept Mapping | Oral Reports |
| Debate | Peer Editing / Review |
| Design Projects | Portfolios |
| Discussion Question Activities | Presentations |
| Document Analysis | Procedural Demonstration (Perform a given action) |
| Drill and Practice | Q & A (Students pose questions) |
| Essays | Quizzing |
| Fieldwork (Includes Apprenticeship) | Reflections |
| Fishbowl | Review (Play, Movie, Audio, Book, etc.) |
| Gaming | Role Playing |
| Group Debugging | Scavenger Hunt |
| Group Problem Solving | Simulations |
| Group Reports | Socratic Dialogue |
| Hypothetical Situations | Webquest |
| Ice Breakers | Web designer |
| Inductive Reasoning | Wikis |
| Interviews |  |

*This index has been adapted from the University of Illinois and further details in regards to this list can be found at* [*http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/otai/*](http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/otai/)

**WIDS also contains a library of over 400 learning activities and assessments that can be incorporated into your course.**

The following table can be used as a GUIDELINE to estimate asynchronous contact hours in an Online/Virtual Course. Please note that some of these times may differ from content or assessments in your course but this is a gauge to estimate your course development.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Interactions with Course Content** | **Time on Task Estimates** | **Examples** |
| **Course Startup** | 1 hour | Navigating Bb course for 1st time, viewing announcements, course information, syllabus, orientation documents, etc. |
| **Reading printed text (technical or descript.)** | 3 minutes per page | Textbooks and reference materials, both online and traditional. |
| **Reading (online content w/ no interactivity)** | 2 minutes per screen/slide | PowerPoint Slideshows, Case Studies, Journals, etc. |
| **Reading (online w/ interactivity)** | 4 minutes per screen/slide | Multimedia learning objects, Interactive tutorials. |
| **Video Introductions** | 1-2 minutes per video | Instructor introduction, Learning Plan overviews |
| **Lecture Capture** | 10 – 20 minutes | \*this may vary depending on length of lecture (add 5 minutes for pausing, note-taking, reviews)  **e.g.: 10 minute lecture (+ 5 min. for note-taking = 15 min)** |
| **Videos (YouTube, Library database)** | Varies | \*this may vary depending on length of video (add 5 minutes for pausing, note-taking, reviews)  **e.g.: 10 minute video (+ 5 min. for note-taking = 15 min)** |
| **Simulations and Gaming** | 15 minutes per simulation | Virtual laboratories, hands-on learning, virtual field trips, WISC-Online learning objects |
| **Practice Problems (not homework)** | 10 – 15 minutes per problem | Math, Computer Science, Case Studies, Surveys |
| **Discussion Forum** | 60 minutes per question | Reading question, generating answer, writing answer, reading other responses, replying to other posts |
| **Quizzes** | 15- 30 minutes per quiz |  |
| **Exams** | 45 – 90 minutes per exam |  |
| **Links to External Websites** | 20 minutes per URL |  |
| **Read Instructor Feedback** | 5-10 minutes per grade |  |
| **Composing a formal writing assignment** | Varies | * 60-120 minutes prep * 30 minutes per page typing |
| **Conduct Research** | 60 – 90 minutes per page of writing |  |