



ADMINISTRATIVE **PROCEDURE**

4022

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

HOURS AND UNITS

This document will define the specific relationship between hours and units at College of the Desert.

I. Hour Requirements for One and Two Units of Credit

One unit of credit is 54 hours of total student learning hours (lecture, activity, laboratory, and/or outside of class work).

Two units of credit is 108 hours of total student learning hours (lecture, activity, laboratory, and/or outside of class work).

II. Minimum Unit Increment and Thresholds

The minimum unit increment is 0.5 units. As a result, the minimum number of units for a course is a multiple of 0.5 units.

The total student learning hours required to reach a unit value are treated as a threshold. Examples of common thresholds are:

Units	Hour Threshold
0.5	27
1	54
1.5	81
2	108
2.5	135
3	162

If the number of total student learning hours is between thresholds, then the unit value for the course will be the unit value for the smaller of the two thresholds. For example, if a course has 120 total student learning hours, it falls between the 108 and the 135-hour thresholds. The smaller threshold is 108 hours, so the unit value would be 2.

III. Standard Formula (Relationship) for Hours and Units of Credit

Courses not classified as cooperative work experience use the following formula for calculating units of credit:

Divide the total of all student learning hours
(lecture, laboratory, activity, and/or outside-of-class hours)
by 54, then round down to the nearest .5 units.

Expressed as an equation:

$$\frac{[\text{Total Contact Hours} + \text{Outside-of-class Hours}]}{54} = \text{Units of Credit}$$

The result of this calculation is then rounded down to the nearest .5 increment. For example, if a course contains 180 total student learning hours (36 lecture, 72 lab, and 72 outside-of-class hours), then the unit calculation is as follows:

$$\frac{36 + 72 + 72}{54} = \frac{180}{54} = 3.33, \text{ which is rounded down to 3 units of credit}$$

Definitions for terms used above:

- **Total Contact Hours:** The total time per term that a student is under the direct supervision of an instructor or other qualified employee as defined in §§58050 - 58051. This number is the sum of all contact hours for the course in all calculations categories, including lecture, recitation, discussion, seminar, laboratory, activity, clinical, studio, practica, to-be-arranged, etc. Contact hours for courses may include hours assigned to more than one instructional category, e.g. lecture and laboratory, lecture and activity, lecture and clinical.
- **Outside-of-class Hours:** Hours students are expected to engage in course work outside of the classroom. Federal and state regulations for credit hour calculations are based on the total time a student spends on learning, including outside-of-class hours. As a matter of standard practice in higher education, lecture and related course formats require two hours of student work outside of class for every hour in-class. All other academic work, including laboratory, activity, clinical, studio, practica, to-be-arranged, etc. must provide an equivalent total number of student learning hours as typically required for lecture, with the ratio of in-class to outside-of-class work prorated appropriately for the instructional category.

Total student learning hours are provided using common ratios of Total Contact Hours to Outside-of-Class hours. The terms that correspond to these ratios are below:

Instructional Category	In-class Hours	Outside-of-class Hours
Lecture (Lecture, Discussion, Seminar, and Similar)	1	2
Activity (Activity, Lab with Homework, Studio, and Similar)	2	1
Laboratory (Traditional Lab, Natural Science Lab, Clinical, and Similar)	3	0

IV. Cooperative Work Experience

Title 5 (§55256.Sc) specifies the following relationship between hours of work experience and units of credit:

One unit of credit is 75 hours of paid work experience.

One unit of credit is 60 hours of non-paid work experience.

V. Clock Hour Courses/ Programs

Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 (§668.8k2iA) defines clock hour programs. Programs that meet this definition are required to use a federal formula for determining appropriate units of credit. This formula is outlined in the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 (§668.81).

VI. Sample Calculation Table for Semester Hours and Units (54 Hours= 1 Unit)

Lecture	0.5 units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
Outside-of-class Hours	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270

Activity	0.5 units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180
Outside-of-class Hours	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270

Lab	0.5 units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270
Outside-of-class Hours	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270

Reference: Title 5: 55002, 55002.5, 55256.5; Code of Federal Regulations: 34 CFR 668

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