

# EARNING CREDIT IN ONLINE COURSES

Recommendations from The Office of Online Learning

February 2016

## In general, hybrid and online courses cover the same content as a traditional course.

**Hybrid:** 50 to 85% of course interaction and content is online. 15 to 50% of the course is face-to-face.

**Online:** Course interaction and content is 85 to 100% online.

## How are credits calculated?

The Office of Online Learning receives many inquiries about ensuring semester credits are appropriately earned in hybrid and online courses. Simply stated, hybrid and online courses must meet the same requirements as traditional courses.

To meet the semester unit of credit requirement, a course must have the following for each credit given:

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \text{ contact hour per week over 15 weeks for 15 total hours} \\ + \\ 2 \text{ hours outside work over 15 weeks for 30 total hours} \\ = \\ 45 \text{ hours total per credit} \end{array}$$

## Contact Hours & Outside Work

For traditional courses, contact hours and outside class work make up the course credit. However, adjustments are made for hybrid and online courses. UTSA policy specifically states, "Online, hybrid, and individual instruction classes should make adjustments so that the total number of hours of work required by students is equivalent to that of a traditional face-to-face class." The key is ensuring your course is designed to have students interact with their instructor, other students, and the content in ways that are equivalent to traditional courses. This is often referred to as "time on task."

### Example of Time On Task in an Online Course for One Week

General Course Communications	30 min
Instructor Narrated Lecture	30 min
Readings	1½ hours
Reviewing Lecture and Additional Resources	30 min
Discussion Board	2½ hours
Assignment	1 hour
Quiz	30 min
Group Work Communications	1 hour
Final Project	1 hour
<b>Total Time on Task</b>	<b>9 hours</b>

## Short Semesters

For classes offered in a shortened format, the total number of contact hours and the total number of out-of-class hours of student work should be the same as if the classes were scheduled for a full 15-week semester.

## Online Teaching Activities

The Online Teaching Activity Index from the University of Illinois offers a collection of specific assignments that will assist you in incorporating time on task.

<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/otai/>

## Remember!

Contact hours and semester units of credit are intended to ensure academic quality.

- A 3 credit course needs 9 hours per week.
- Faculty are responsible for ensuring contact hours and student work hours are met.
- Department Chairs are responsible for scheduling courses so contact hours are met as well as for promoting compliance by faculty with UTSA policy.
- UTSA policy can be found in the Handbook of Operating Procedures: <http://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter2/2-51.html>