
POLICY ON CREDIT HOURS

All Chapman University courses are offered on the basis of credit hours or units. One credit hour of coursework requires one face-to-face contact hour per week between a faculty member and a student, and two hours of assigned coursework per week on the part of the student outside of the classroom for a regular semester. The typical three-unit course requires three contact hours per week and six hours of assigned coursework per week, or 45 contact hours and 90 hours of assigned coursework for a regular semester (15 weeks). Note that some classes meet beyond the scheduled class times based on the credits listed, and that the number of contact hours and assigned coursework in lab courses, individually directed courses, non-traditional media-based courses, and travel courses is tailored to the type of course and/or course objectives.

Lab courses are courses that have a strong skill component and typically require a special room, equipment, or fieldwork experience for students to utilize to enhance their learning. One credit of a lab course requires a minimum of three contact hours, which may include a minimum of three hours of face-to-face contact hour per week between a faculty member and a student, or a combination of face-to-face contact hours and assigned coursework to total three contact hours of engagement per week of instruction for a regular semester.

Individually directed courses provide a more in-depth interaction between student, faculty member, and course materials or research project. Since, typically, a student works one-on-one with a faculty member and receives an intensified experience of personalized education, the contact hours and amount of assigned coursework are tailored to the nature of the coursework and may exceed the minimum requirements given below.

1. *Reading and Conference Courses* require a minimum of 5 hours of instructor-student contact per credit hour, and a minimum of 30 hours of outside work per credit hour per semester.
2. *Individual Study and Research Courses* require a minimum of 5 hours of instructor-student contact per credit hour, and 30 hours of outside work per credit hour per semester. In these courses the program is designed by the faculty member and the student working collaboratively, and approved prior to the start of the term.
3. *Graduate Thesis Units* require a minimum of 5 hours of instructor-student contact per credit hour, and 30 hours of outside work per credit hour per semester. Students registering for graduate thesis units pursue graduate research or a project in collaboration with a thesis or project advisor.

Travel courses are courses that occur primarily off-campus such as elsewhere in the United States or abroad. Travel courses are measured in weeks, with each week garnering a maximum of one credit unit. Each credit unit requires a minimum of 15 hours of contact or experience, and 30 hours of assigned coursework or experience per credit hour. For courses that have two weeks of travel, 15 contact hours are required before and/or after travel.

Nontraditional Courses

1. *Online Courses* are courses that have few or no face-to-face contact hours between a faculty member and a student. Instead, student/faculty contact is mediated by the web. This contact can be either synchronous (e.g., chat or virtual classroom) or asynchronous (e.g., a discussion board). Whether synchronous or asynchronous, a faculty member is expected to offer course-related content to a student that engages a student for a total of 45 hours over the semester for a three-unit course. Student engagement may include some discussion with other students; however, it is expected that a faculty member will monitor and participate in discussion and provide an appropriate level of feedback at regular intervals during the semester. As with traditional courses, there should be a total of 90 hours of additional assigned coursework over the semester for a three-unit course.
2. *Blended Courses* are courses with both face-to-face contact in a classroom setting and web-mediated contact between a faculty member and a student. Web-mediated contact can be either synchronous (e.g., chat or virtual classroom) or asynchronous (e.g., a discussion board). Web-mediated contact may include some discussion with other students in the class; however, it is expected that a faculty member will monitor and participate in discussion and provide an appropriate level of feedback at regular intervals during the semester. The total combined contact hours (face-to-face and web-mediated) should sum to 45 hours over the semester for a three-unit course. As with traditional courses, there should be a total of 90 hours of additional assigned coursework over the semester for a three-unit course.

Courses Governed by Accrediting Agencies

Law school travel courses are offered credit per ABA Standards as per the “criteria for approval of foreign summer and intersession programs established by ABA-approved law schools”, which stipulates that courses shall award no more than 1.5 semester credit hours for each week of the program. Courses shall not be in class more than 220 minutes per day, excluding breaks. Credit shall be stated in terms of credit hours according to the following formula: one semester hour for each 700 minutes of class time or equivalent or one quarter hour for each 450 minutes of class time or equivalent. ABA standards require that the program shall include visits to legal institutions in the host country. However, time allocated for visits to legal institutions normally is not considered time spent in class and is not calculated in the 220 maximum class minutes per day; credit may be awarded for extra-curricular lectures and field trips only when the content is academic in nature and specially related to the class for which the credit is awarded. If credit is given for externship placements (e.g., in a law firm, government office, or corporation), then faculty supervision must be individualized and integrated with classroom work to ensure that the credit allowed is commensurate with the educational benefit to the participating student. If credit is given for Distance Education components, those components and credits must comply with the requirements of Standard 306 and the Interpretation of that Standard.