

# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Bridge to Hope  
Serving UH Welfare Recipient Students

DATE: June 4, 2014

FROM: Teresa Bill, UH Systemwide Coordinator  
Bridge to Hope 956-9313 bth@hawaii.edu

RE: Online Courses & Educational Contact Hours  
Including Intensive Summer Session Online Courses

All University of Hawai'i campuses and accelerated summer sessions, are increasing the number of "online" courses offered. It is increasingly common for all students, including First-to-Work and Bridge to Hope participants to be enrolled in online courses. This memo facilitates a consistent method for counting online courses toward VET and JST "classroom contact" hours.

The University of Hawaii executive policy (E 5.228) for all campuses regarding academic credit hours assures the accuracy of credit hours across activities earning academic credit. This standard is consistently applied to all instructional formats.

*"A credit hour . . . reasonably approximates . . . One hour of class or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time . . ."*

At least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities such as online instruction . . ."

Thus a 50-minute class meeting three times weekly (MWF) has a semester total of 40 contact hours. For accelerated summer sessions, the typical 16 week semester is compressed into 6 weeks and a 3-credit course typically meets daily for 75 minutes, or a minimum of 6.25 hours per week giving an equivalent of 37.5 contact hours for the academic session. Sometimes it is helpful to compare an online course with an equivalent "classroom" course to establish the expected contact hours. It is also helpful to review the syllabus for any discussion of required daily/week contacts via online tools such as chat or message boards.

Both the University of Hawai'i and the First-to-Work Education Policy specifically include distance learning activities under the VET (Vocational Education Training) option. The First-to-Work Education components state: "Participants involved in distance learning VET shall submit verification of attendance in the form of documentation issued by the distance learning institution or an electronic log-in and out record."

I have verified with our UH IT / Online learning staff specifically regarding verification of the student accessing online course materials. They report, "there is no tool that readily tracks [student "log in / log-out"] nor makes this information readily available to students."

Therefore, designated Bridge to Hope campus contacts or other authorized individuals (e.g. academic advisors) can engage with students and verify their online or distance learning class attendance as they do for other "on-campus" classes. It is expected that each "class credit" hour is equivalent to 1 hour of classroom contact during "traditional" 16-week semesters and 1 credit is equivalent to a minimum of 2 hours during accelerated 6-week summer sessions. Of course, additional computations will need to be made for 8-10 weeks sessions also offered.

It is easiest to remember that all academic sessions have reasonably similar hours of total contact hours over the period of time / academic session.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 956-9313.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa Bill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Teresa Bill  
Bridge to Hope, UH System-wide Coordinator

Encl: UH Executive Policy E5.228 - Credit Hour

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

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EXECUTIVE POLICY – ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

August 2011

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P 1 of 1

E5. 228 – Credit Hour

I. Introduction

This executive policy defines credit hour and directs units (UH Mānoa, UH Hilo, UH West O‘ahu, UH Maui College and UH Community Colleges) to develop a process to assure reliability and accuracy of assignment of credit hours across activities earning academic credit.

II. A credit hour

A. Is associated with an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement

B. Reasonably approximates but is not less than

- i. One hour of class or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time. OR
- ii. At least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities such as online instruction, laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work and other work that earns academic credit.

III. Units shall implement a process for assuring reliability and accuracy of assignment of credit hours across all activities earning academic credit.