How To: Configure Contact and Work Hours for Instructional Formats

The systemwide Senate Regulation 760 states that “The value of a course in units shall be reckoned at the rate of one unit for three hours’ work per week per term on the part of a student, or the equivalent.” The Berkeley COCI has defined work and how contact hours correlate to unit value in the COCI Handbook 2.3.1: Designation of Unit Value.

In short:

**Instructor Contact Hours:** Any time spent where there is instructor and student interaction. This can be face-to-face in a classroom or done electronically via online discussion boards.

**Outside Work Hours:** Any time spent where the student is engaged with course activities such as reading, writing, or research outside of the contact hours.

COCI uses the general rule that there should be one instructor contact hour per unit, per week in a term. Meaning that in a four-unit course offered in a standard 15-week term there would be four hours of instructor contact time per week.

**Example A**

In Example A, the course is valued at 4 units. Knowing that COCI’s general rule (one contact hour per unit per 15 weeks), this course has three contact hours dedicated to lecture and one contact hour dedicated to discussion. Knowing that, per SR 760, there should be at least 12 hours of total work (3 hours x 4 units = 12) means that there should be at least 8 hours of outside work (4 + 8 = 12).
Summer Formats

Recognizing that every department has unique pedagogy and scheduling needs, COCI provides the Estimated Total Number of Required Hours of Student Work Per Week Chart to use as a guideline. This worksheet outlines the minimum number of total hours (contact hours + outside work hours) that a course must include to justify the course unit value. The worksheet provides this total for different term lengths and is directly tied to the course’s unit value. Anytime a course includes terms shorter than 15-weeks they must be scheduled equivalent to a 15-week offering.

To support the Estimated Total Number of Required Hours of Student Work Per Week Chart, the Contact Hours Conversion Chart is designed to provide the minimum number of instructor contact hours a course must include in a shorter term, based on what the contact hours are in the standard 15-weeks term. The most important distinction between the two charts is that the first is based on the course’s unit value, the second is based on the course’s contact time during a standard term.

Example B

How do you figure out what the equivalent contact hours and outside work hours are? Go to the charts. Knowing that in 15-weeks there were three hours of lecture and one hour of discussion, look at the Contact Hours Conversion Chart and see what the equivalent hours are for the 8-weeks term:
Once you enter the equivalent contact hours in CMS you will need to then enter the outside work hours. This time, go to the Estimated Total Number of Required Hours of Student Work Per Week Chart. You know that this course is 4 units (same course as in Example A), so you need 22.5 total hours per week in 8-weeks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>15-week (f/sp)</th>
<th>10-week</th>
<th>8-week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowing that you already have 8 hours a week allocated for instructor contact time (LEC: 6 + DIS: 2 = 8), that means the remaining 14.5 hours are for outside work (8 + 14.5 = 22.5).

**Important Note**: CMS can only check that SR 760 is being met (three hours of total work, per week, per unit, in 15-weeks). When that is correct the system will display a green checkmark. *What CMS cannot verify is if shorter terms are being offered equivalently to the 15-weeks term.*

Looking below you see two green checkmarks:

But these two versions of the course are not being offered equivalently. The students in the 8-weeks version are meeting with the instructor for the same number of hours per week, but almost half the number of weeks as the students in the 15-weeks version. *The students in each group are not having equivalent instructor time.* COCI will flag this as a problem, but CMS won’t.
Instead, the contact hours in the summer version need to be increased as from Example B, copied below:

Now students in the 8-weeks version have more hours per week than the 15-weeks students, but those hours are equivalent between the two offerings.