

The UTSA Definition of a Semester Credit Hour

Students are awarded credit for classes on the basis of “seat time” in class and out-of-class student work. UTSA uses Carnegie units to measure credit awarded to students for course work. A Carnegie semester unit of credit for students is equal to a minimum of three hours of work per week for a semester. For example, for lecture classes, a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least one hour (a 50-minute period) per week of “seat time” in class and two hours per week of out-of-class student work for 15 weeks. For laboratory classes, one semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of a minimum of three hours of laboratory work per week for 15 weeks. Hence a standard three semester credit hour lecture class meets for a total of at least 45 contact hours for a semester, plus at least an average of 6 hours outside of the classroom activities per week for a 15 weeks. 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. For class offered in a shortened format, the hours are prorated so the classes contain the same total number of hours as if the classes were scheduled for a full 15-week semester.