

AR 4023 Hours and Units

References:

Title 5: 55002, 55002.5, 55256.5
Code of Federal Regulations: 34 CFR 668

This document will define the specific relationship between hours and units for the Rancho Santiago Community College District.

I. Hour Requirements for One and Two Units of Credit

One unit of credit is 54 hours of total student learning hours (lecture, laboratory, and/or outside of class work).

Two units of credit is 108 hours of total student learning hours (lecture, laboratory, and/or outside of class work).

II. Minimum Unit Increment and Thresholds

The unit increment is 0.1 units for courses with 0.1-0.5-unit values. The minimum unit increment is 0.5 units for courses with more than 0.5-unit values. As a result, the number of units for a course is either 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, or a multiple of 0.5 units for any courses greater than 0.5 units.

The total student learning hours required to reach a unit value are treated as a threshold. Examples of common thresholds are:

Units	Hour Threshold	Units	Hour Threshold
0.1	6	1	54
0.2	11	1.5	81
0.3	17	2	108
0.4	22	2.5	135
0.5	27	3	162

If the number of total student learning hours is between thresholds, then the unit value for the course will be the unit value for the maximum crossed hour threshold. For example, if a course has 120 total student learning hours, then the maximum crossed hour threshold is 108 hours and the unit value would be 2.

III. Standard Formula (Relationship) for Hours and Units of Credit

Courses not classified as cooperative work experience use the following formula for calculating units of credit for *0.1-0.5-unit courses*:

Divide the total of all student learning hours
(lecture, laboratory, and/or outside-of-class hours)
by 54, then round down to the *nearest 0.1 units*.

Courses not classified as cooperative work experience use the following formula for calculating units of credit for *more than 0.5-unit courses*:

Divide the total of all student learning hours
(lecture, laboratory, and/or outside-of-class hours)
by 54, then round down to the *nearest 0.5 units*.

Expressed as an equation

$$\frac{[\text{Total Contact Hours} + \text{Outside-of-class Hours}]}{54} = \text{Units of Credit}$$

The result of this calculation is then rounded down to the nearest .5 increment. For example, if a course contains 180 total student learning hours (36 lecture, 72 lab, and 72 outside-of-class hours), then the unit calculation is as follows:

$$\frac{36 + 72 + 72}{54} = \frac{180}{54} = 3.33,$$

which is rounded down to 3 units of credit.

Definitions for terms used above:

- *Total Contact Hours*: The total time per term that a student is under the direct supervision of an instructor or other qualified employee as defined in §58050-58051. This number is the sum of all contact hours for the courses in the lecture and laboratory instructional categories. Contact hours for courses may include hours assigned to either or both instructional categories.
- *Outside-of-class Hours*: Hours students are expected to engage in course work outside of the classroom. Federal and state regulations for credit hour calculations are based on the total time a student spends on learning, including outside-of-class hours. As a matter of standard practice in higher education, lecture course formats require two hours of student work outside of class for every hour in-class. Course formats must provide an equivalent total number of student learning hours as typically required for lecture, with the ratio of in-class to outside-of-class work prorated appropriately for the instructional category.

Total student learning hours are provided using common ratios of Total Contact Hours to Outside-of-Class hours. The terms that correspond to these ratios are below:

Instructional Category	In-class Hours	Outside-of-class Hours
Lecture	1	2
Laboratory	3	0

III. Cooperative Work Experience

Title 5 (§55256.5c) specifies the following relationship between hours of work experience and units of credit:

One unit of credit is 60 hours of non-paid work experience or 75 hours of paid work experience.

IV. Clock Hour Courses / Programs

Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 (§668.8k2iA) defines clock hour programs. Programs that meet this definition are required to use a federal formula for determining appropriate units of credit. This formula is outlined in the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 (§668.8l).

V. Sample Calculation Table for Semester Hours and Units (54 Hours = 1 Unit)

Lecture	0.5 Units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
Outside-of-class Hours	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270

Laboratory	0.5 Units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270
Outside-of-class Hours	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270

VI. Apprenticeship Exception

Apprenticeship is allowed to use one unit of credit for 48 hours of total student learning hours (lecture, laboratory, and/or outside of class work) because of the nature of their industry and in that it makes most sense based on their curricular needs.

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