

**Policy Title: Credit Hour and Instructional Modality****Effective Date:** Approved by KBOCC Board of Regents 5/11/2026**Responsible Office:** Division of Academic Affairs**I. Purpose**

This policy establishes standards for the assignment of credit hours and the delivery of instruction across modalities at Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC). It ensures academic rigor, consistency, and compliance with federal regulations and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all credit-bearing courses and instructional formats offered at KBOCC, including face-to-face, online, hybrid, and alternative delivery formats

III. Definitions

Credit Hour: A unit of academic measure representing an amount of student work defined by federal regulation (34 CFR 600.2). One credit hour is equivalent to:

- One hour of direct instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week over a 15-week semester, or
- An equivalent amount of work over a different period of time.

Contact Hour: One hour of scheduled, faculty-directed instructional activity representing the instructional time component of a credit hour. Does not include out-of-class student work.

Contact Hour Equivalent (CHE): Represents faculty-directed instructional engagement equivalent to in-person instructional time without a scheduled class meeting. Contact Hour Equivalents (CHEs) represent faculty-directed instructional activities that satisfy the 'equivalent amount of work' requirement in the federal credit hour definition (34 CFR 600.2) and must be designed to include or support Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) where applicable.

Distance Education Course: A course in which the majority of instruction and interaction occurs via distance education technologies, with faculty and students physically separated.

Learning Management System (LMS): The institutionally approved platform used to deliver, document, and support course instruction.

Out-of-Class Student Work: Academic work completed outside instructional time or required CHE activities, including reading, assignments, studying, and project work.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI): Instructor-initiated interaction that is regular, predictable, and directly related to course content, including:

- Direct instruction
- Feedback on student work
- Facilitation of discussions
- Other instructional engagement activities

RSI is required for Title IV financial aid eligibility.

IV. Policy Statement

KBOCC awards credit hours in accordance with commonly accepted higher education practices and the federal definition established in 34 CFR 600.2. All courses, regardless of delivery format or term length, must demonstrate equivalent academic rigor, learning outcomes, and total student engagement through course design, syllabus language, and/or required written learning plans

V. Credit Hour Standards

A. Standard 15-week Semester

A credit hour represents approximately 45 total hours of student work, including both instructional time (contact hours or CHEs) and out-of-class student work, per term, which may be structured differently depending on course type.

For lecture and discussion courses, one credit hour typically includes:

- 1 hour of direct instruction (or CHE) per week, and
- 2 hours of out-of-class student work per week

Other course types may distribute instructional time and student work differently; however, all courses must demonstrate equivalent total student engagement and academic rigor.

B. Accelerated or Compressed Terms

Courses offered in shorter terms must demonstrate equivalent total student work. Instructional time and student workload are proportionally increased.

C. Credit Hour Standards by Course Type

- **Lecture/Discussion:**

One credit hour equals approximately one hour of instruction (or CHE) and two hours of out-of-class student work per week

- **Laboratory:**

Typically two contact hours (or CHE) per credit hour, including supervised instruction and preparation. Additional out-of-class work may be required.

Laboratory courses may structure student work differently; however, total student engagement must meet or exceed institutional credit hour expectations.

- **Practicum/Clinical/Field Experience:**

One credit hour equals a minimum of three to four hours per week of supervised or independent practice, with total expected student hours clearly defined and documented. May include preparation, reflection, and evaluation. All experiences must be guided by clearly defined learning outcomes, include appropriate supervision, and demonstrate equivalent total student work.

- **Internship:**

Credit is based on verified hours, faculty supervision, and achievement of learning outcomes. Both faculty supervisor and site supervisor certify different aspects of the student's learning and performance. A written learning plan is required and must define expected hours, learning objectives, and evaluation methods.

- **Independent Study/Directed Study/Research**

Based on documented student work aligned with learning outcomes, with clearly defined total expected hours and required deliverables. Requires a written learning plan and regular faculty interaction.

- **Recitation and Tutorial:**

Provide structured academic support aligned with a course. Credit and workload expectations must be clearly documented.

V. Instructional Modalities

All instructional modalities must ensure equivalent learning outcomes, rigor, and student engagement.

A. Face-to-Face (C)

Instruction occurs primarily in person and meets during scheduled contact hours. LMS components are supplemental and do not generate contact hours or CHEs.

B. Online – Asynchronous (O)

Instructional activities are delivered via the LMS with no required real-time meetings. LMS is the primary instructional environment. Faculty-directed activities fulfill CHEs. Courses delivered via the learning management system must:

- Provide structured instructional activities
- Ensure regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students
- Demonstrate equivalent out-of-class student workload

C. Online – Synchronous (Z)

Instructional activities are delivered via the LMS with required real-time meetings through one or more distance education technologies.

D. Hybrid (C/O/Z combination)

Instruction combines in-person and online components. Total instructional time (combination of in-person contact hours and online instructional activities (CHEs) must collectively meet standard credit hour expectations.

E. Flexible (Hy-Flex) (C or Z)

Students choose in-person or synchronous online participation per session, with both modes instructionally equivalent.

F. Alternative Delivery (As Arranged)

Courses must maintain and document equivalent student workload, learning outcomes, and faculty oversight through clearly defined expectations and, where applicable, written learning plans.

VI. Instructional Design and Student Workload

A. Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

All courses must include regular and substantive interaction between instructors and students. In distance education, RSI must be initiated by a qualified instructor, be regular and predictable, and be directly related to course content and learning outcomes. Online faculty must ensure RSI is deliberately designed into the course through faculty-initiated interaction, not solely through student-initiated contact.

B. Contact Hour Equivalents (CHEs) Activities

CHEs are grounded in the federal credit hour definition equivalent work standard, which recognizes that instructional activity may satisfy the instructional time (contact hour) component of a credit hour without scheduled class meetings. Out-of-class student work requirements apply separately and in addition. CHE activities should be intentionally designed to support instructor presence and engagement, and in distance education courses, must align with Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements.

- Examples of CHE activities include:
 - Guided instructional modules
 - Required instructional videos with instructor commentary
 - Instructor-facilitated discussion boards
 - Faculty-guided group activities

- Formative assessments with substantive instructor feedback
- The following do not count as CHEs and count as out-of-class student work instead:
 - Independent reading without faculty guidance
 - Homework or studying
 - Unguided discussions
 - Automated quizzes without instructional feedback
 - Time logged into the LMS

C. Student Workload Expectations

Credit hours are modality-neutral. The tables below serve as the institutional reference for faculty course design and syllabus communication for lecture-based courses. For non-lecture course types, total student hours are documented in the written learning plan. These expectations serve as the institutional standard for course design, syllabus communication, and evaluation of credit hour compliance.

Standard 15-Week Semester

Credits	Weekly Contact Hrs or CHEs	Weekly Out-of-Class Work	Total Weekly Workload	Total Student Hrs (Term)
1	1	2	3	45
2	2	4	6	90
3	3	6	9	135
4	4	8	12	180

Accelerated 8-week Semester

Credits	Weekly Contact Hrs or CHEs	Weekly Out-of-Class Work	Total Weekly Workload	Total Student Hrs (Term)
1	~2	~4	~6	45
2	~4	~8	~12	90
3	~6	~12	~18	135
4	~8	~16	~24	180

Equivalent totals apply across all modalities.

D. Transparency of Student Expectations

Each course listing must clearly identify instructional modality and required meeting format and time (as applicable).

Syllabi must clearly communicate and document:

- Participation expectations
- Weekly time commitment
- Total expected student hours per week

Recommended syllabus language:

This is a [X]-credit course. Students should expect to spend approximately [X] hours per week engaged in instructional activities (class meetings, online modules, or equivalent) and at least [2X] additional hours per week on out-of-class work, for a total of approximately [45*X] hours over the term.

Faculty are encouraged to provide a general description of a typical week or module to support student planning and reinforce transparency of workload expectations.

VII. Attendance and Academic Engagement

- **Face-to-Face Courses**

Attendance is based on physical presence during scheduled class sessions.

- **Distance Education Courses**

- Attendance is defined as active academic engagement, such as:
 - Submission of assignments
 - Participation in instructor-led discussions
 - Completion of instructional activities
 - Logging into the LMS alone does not constitute attendance.

VIII. Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty are responsible for:

- Aligning credit hours with actual student workload
- Ensuring that total student workload is appropriate for assigned credit hours and is clearly documented in the syllabus or required learning plan
- Ensuring modality aligns with course delivery
- Designing courses that meet RSI requirements
- Clearly communicating expectations in syllabi

- Documenting instructional activities (contact hours or CHEs)
- Accurately recording attendance or engagement
- A writing learning plan for all arranged, independent study, directed study, internship, and research and special projects courses.

IX. Oversight and Compliance

Faculty Council reviews and approves credit hour assignments during the course proposal process.

The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring institutional compliance.

Compliance is verified through:

- Course and syllabus review
- Course schedule review
- Program review cycles

This policy operates the credit hour framework and supports compliance with federal and accreditation requirements.

X. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by regulatory or accreditation changes. The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for initiating and coordinating the review.