

Calculating Credit & Notional Hours

Guidelines:

- Undergraduate: [Definition of Credit Hours for The UWI](#)
- Graduate: [Guidelines for credit system for graduate taught courses/programmes](#)

Operational Definitions

Contact hours is used very broadly, to refer to the **amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by a learner in direct learning or contact with the teaching/ training staff of a programme**. In The UWI context this refers to instructional hours such as for lectures, and tutorials.

Notional learning hours refer to all the time a student would spend on a course, on average, to achieve the learning outcomes. The calculation of notional learning hours takes into account contact hours, self-study, supervised labs, directed learning activities workshops, projects, internships or time spent in workplace or fieldwork and Assessment.

Undergraduate course credits are calculated on the basis of notional hours. Notional hours are usually calculated on a per week basis. For example, ONE (1) credit is equivalent to three notional hours of learning per week per semester for a 12-week semester. Therefore, one lecture (taught) or seminar credit hour represents 1 hour per week of scheduled class/seminar time and 2 hours of student preparation time. Over an entire semester (12 weeks), this formula represents at least 12 hours of class time and 24 hours of student preparations. A 3-credit course would therefore be 9 notional hours of learning. When calculating notional learning in The UWI context, one Credit or three notional hours of learning per week per semester may include:

- One contact hour (instructional hour) and Two hours out- of- class student work per week per semester; Or
- Two or Three hours of supervised laboratory work per week per semester; Or
- Four to Six hours of directed learning activities (including project work, research work, practicums and internships) undertaken by the student out of class per week per semester.

ONE credit hour is equivalent to three notional hours of learning per week per semester. A contact hour represents the measure of scheduled instruction given to students and is dependent on the instructional format for the course.

1-hour contact + 2 hours out of class= 3 notional hours

The out of class activities include, but are not limited to independent study and reading, preparation for contact hours, coursework, revision and summative assessment.

Type	Duration (Number of weeks)	Notional hours (includes contact hours)	Credits
Lecture (contact)	12 weeks (1 instructional hour per week and 2 hours out of class work/home = 3 notional hours per week)	12 contact hours + 24 out of class student hours = 36 notional hours semester	1
Tutorial (contact)	12 weeks (1 hour per week and 2 hours out of class work = 3 notional hours per week)	12 contact hours, 24 hours independent work = 36 notional hours per semester.	1
Supervised lab work/supervised activity	12 weeks (2 hours per week and 1 hour preparation, 3 notional hours per week)	24 hours in lab 12 hours preparation = 36 notional hours per semester	1
Total:	12 weeks	108	3

An example for a 3-credit course. Note that this is an estimate but the minimum number of notional hours should be 108 per semester

Undergraduate 3 credits

Type	Duration (Number of weeks)	Notional Hours (includes contact hours)	Credits
Lecture	12	36	1
Tutorial	12	36	1
Labs	8	16	1
Other (e.g.)	12	20	
Total:	12	108	3

Undergraduate 4 credits

Type	Duration (Number of weeks)	Notional Hours (includes contact hours)	Credits
Lecture	12	36	1
Tutorial	12	36	1
Labs	12	24	2
Other (e.g.)	12	48	
Total:	12	144	4

Example of an **online** 3 credit course

Type	Duration (Number of weeks)	Notional Hours (includes contact hours)	Credits
Online Lecture (Synchronous)	12	36	1
Asynchronous Assignments, activities, self-directed learning)	12	48	2
Asynchronous (Discussion Forum)	7	24	
Total:	12 weeks	108	3

Example of a **blended** (Hybrid) 3 credit course

Type	Duration (Number of weeks)	Notional Hours (includes contact hours)	Credits
Lecture Online (Synchronous)	4	8	
Lecture (FTF)	8	16	
Tutorials	12 (online and/or FTF)	24	
Asynchronous Assignments, activities, self-directed learning)	12	48	
Asynchronous (Discussion Forum)	3	12	
Total:	12 weeks	108	3

Graduate Studies & Research

The system for allocating credits at the postgraduate level is based on the formula that 1 credit is equivalent to:

- 12 Lecture contact hours,
- 24 hours of laboratory work, supervised field assignments, seminars, or formal group discussions or,
- 48 hours non-supervised research work.

The credit range for *Postgraduate Diploma* programmes is 20 – 25 credits

The credit range for *Taught Masters* programmes is 35 – 45 credits.

Programmes which fall outside these credit ranges will require the explicit approval of the Board for Graduate Studies and Research.

Example of graduate 3 credit Taught Master's

Type	Duration (Number of weeks)	Contact Hours	Credits
Lecture	12	12	1
Project	8	24	1
Other	10	24	1
Total:	12		3