

Undergraduate and Graduate Course Standards

Undergraduate Standards

Undergraduate courses assume that students possess basic general education and writing skills but limited or no content knowledge. The initial focus is on content acquisition, gaining a fundamental understanding of the field. As this is being acquired, students are also introduced to important skills and given opportunities to practice them in controlled circumstances. Whenever possible, assignments in major courses mirror the work students might do in the workplace. Collectively, the knowledge and skills students acquire prepares them to meet or exceed undergraduate department program objectives.

Graduate Standards

Because our graduate programs do not require bachelor's degrees in a related field, graduate students are only expected to possess general research and writing skills, not content knowledge. Because of their higher level of achievement, graduate students are expected to learn about a new field of study and transition to higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy at an accelerated rate. Graduate courses have an increased focus on research and academic writing, regularly requiring students to engage with recent journal articles in their field. There is also an elevated expectation regarding adherence to style manuals, preparing students for academic writing. Collectively, the knowledge and skills students acquire prepares them to meet or exceed graduate department program objectives.

Graduate courses that are cross-listed with undergraduate courses must demonstrate a clear and distinct difference between what graduate and undergraduate students are completing, comprising at least 20% of the course workload. This can include:

- Completing additional assignments associated with shared readings.
- Requiring an additional textbook and accompanying assignments.
- Adding additional steps and/or length to shared assignments.
- Other suitable alternatives.

Online Standards

Per U.S. Department of Education requirements concerning regular and substantive interaction (RSI) in distance education,¹ all online courses must contain at least two of the following activities:

- Providing direct instruction
- Assessing or providing feedback on a student's course work
- Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency
- Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency
- Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.²

¹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-09-02/pdf/2020-18636.pdf>

² HLGU's online courses consistently meet or exceed this requirement.

Residential and Online Alignment

The following standards are in place to ensure that an equivalent education is provided in residential and online courses:

- Course objectives for residential and online courses must be identical.
- Courses require identical artifacts for assignments utilized for Student Learning Improvement (SLI) objectives.
- Textbooks should be identical unless an ideal textbook can only be utilized in one modality, in which case an equivalent textbook will be used in the other course.
- When possible, identical assignments will be utilized for both modalities, allowing for differences between residential and online learning.
 - Example 1: Requiring discussion questions for an online course in place of participation discussions during a residential class.
 - Example 2: Having students record themselves presenting a paper in place of presenting in front of a residential class.

Credit Load Calculator

Credit Load

Courses must include approximately 42.5 hours of work per credit hour (127.5 hours for a 3-credit course). Per credit, residential classes will spend 12.5 hours in class and 30 hours completing homework. For a 3-credit course, students will either have three 50-minute class periods or two 75-minute class periods per week.

The total work required for a course will be within 15% of the standard work hours for a course. For example, in a three-credit course, the total work must be within 108.5 hours and 146.5 hours.³

Task	Description of Activities	Total Time
Direct Instruction (residential only): Lectures, demonstrations, labs, etc.		
Independent Content Acquisition: reading, podcasts, and videos.		
Discussions		
Research		
Writing		
Presentations		
Quizzes (including studying)		
Exams (including studying)		
Practicum Hours/Internship		
Performances/Projects/Additional assignments		

Total Work (hours): _____

³ Exceptions include clinicals, practica, and field experience courses, which may exceed the maximum hours to comply with standards from external bodies.

Activity Calculations

If there is a span of requirements (i.e., 3-5 pages), then use the middle value as a guideline for credit calculations. The following are estimates for load calculations. If you use a number outside of the given number/range, this must be justified in the description of the activity above.

Direct instruction:

- This is calculated using the Carnegie hour, wherein 50 minutes of direct instruction equals 1 hour of work.

Content Acquisition:

- PowerPoints = 5 minutes per slide
- Fiction work = 30-45 pages per hour
- Non-technical work = 20-30 pages per hour
- Technical work = 10-15 pages per hour
- Audio recording = 1-for-1 ratio
- Video = 1-for-1 ratio

Discussions (with 2-3 replies):

- Reflection based discussion = 1 hour
- Content-based discussion = 2-3 hours
- Research-based discussion = 2-4 hours

Research:

- Locating/surveying popular websites = 30 minutes per source
- Locating/surveying academic books = 1 hour per source
- Locating/surveying peer-reviewed journal articles = 1-2 hours per source

Writing:

- Case study reflection = 1 hour per page
- Reflection paper = 1 hour per page
- Narrative work = 1 hour per page
- Analysis/argument paper = 2 hours per page
- Revisions/editing = 30 minutes per page
- Peer Review = 30 minutes per page

Presentations

- PowerPoint Creation = 30 minutes per slide
- Speech preparation = 30 minutes per minute

Quizzes (including studying):

- Open-book quizzes = 30 minutes per chapter
- Closed-book quizzes = 1 hour per chapter

Exams (including studying):

- Midterm/Non-standard exams = 6-8 hours
- Cumulative exams = 15-20 hours

Practicum Hours/Internships

- 1-for-1 ratio
- Lesson Plan Preparation 4-for-1 ratio

Performance/Projects/Additional Assignments

- Determined by instructor

Balancing Course Load

Course workload should be balanced, with student work for any given week being roughly equivalent, with a minor increase for midterms and final exams and projects. For a fifteen-week, 3-credit course, students should have roughly 8 hours of work per week. For an eight-week course, students should have roughly 15 hours of work per week.

Example residential week for 15-week course:

- 3 hours of direct instruction
- 1 hour of technical reading (10-15 pages)
- 1 hour closed book quiz (one chapter)
- 3 hours of writing (3-page case study review)

Example online week for 8-week course:

- 2 hours of technical reading (10-15 pages)
- 2 hours of discussions (one reflection over each chapter)
- 2 hours of closed book quiz (two chapters)
- 3 hours of writing (3-page case study review)
- 7 hours of midterm