

Policy Benchmarking: Course Types & Components

I. Summary

A review of 17 ABOR and peer institutions' policy on Course and Component Types reveals that only 5 institutions have public-facing information on the subject. There is considerable overlap between the types of components distinguished. While each existing policy on this topic gives a name and definition for component types, only the University of California-Davis displays parameters for credit limits across component types. No institution indicates a set grading basis for component types within this policy.

A. Terminology Used in Policy

Of the institutions with a policy on component types, only one institution uses the term "component" consistent with the University of Arizona's definition. There are no other duplicate terminologies for component type.

NAME FOR COMPONENT TYPE	INSTITUTION
Component	University of Arizona
Component	Arizona State University
Learning Activity	University of California – Davis
Instructional Format / Class Activity Types	University of California – LA
Section Type	University of Iowa
Format	Michigan State University

B. Established Component Types – Duplicate

Every UA component type, except for Colloquium, is also an established component type at other institutions. A couple institutions have combination-type components, such as discussion/lab and lecture/lab. Component types seen at multiple other institutions, but not UA, include Clinical, Field Work, Internship, Recitation, Research, and Tutorial.

COMPONENT TYPE	INSTITUTION					
	UA	ASU	UCD	UCLA	UIOWA	MSU
Clinic(al)			X	X		X
Discussion	X		X	X	X	X
Discussion/ Lab			X		X	
Field Work			X	X		X
Individual / Independent Study	X	X	X		X	X
Internship			X			X
Lab	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lecture	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lecture/ Lab		X	X			
Practicum	X	X				X
Recitation		X		X		
Research		X		X		
Seminar	X	X	X	X		X
Studio	X	X	X	X		X
Tutorial			X	X		
Workshop	X		X			X

C. Established Component Types – Single Use

UC Davis and Michigan State University have the highest quantity of component types not seen at other institutions. These two institutions are also the only ones to include differing modality types among components, such as Hybrid and Web Electronic Discussion.

COMPONENT TYPE	INSTITUTION					
	UA	ASU	UCD	UCLA	UIOWA	MSU
Activity				X		
Autotutorial			X			
Colloquium	X					
Competency-Based Instruction						X
Conference						
Discussion/ Lecture			X			
Doctoral Dissertation Research						X
Extensive Problem Solving			X			
Extensive Writing			X			
Hybrid						X
Institute						X
Listening			X			
Master's Thesis Research						X
Online						X
Performance Instruction			X			
Practice			X			
Project			X			
Rehearsal			X			
Screening					X	
Teaching Internship						X
Term Paper			X			
Variable			X			
Web Electronic Discussion			X			
Web Virtual Lecture			X			

D. How Information is Presented

Three of these institutions format the information as a table, like the University of Arizona.

FORMAT	INSTITUTION
Paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Iowa Michigan State University
Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Arizona Arizona State University University of California - Davis University of California - LA

II. Full Policy Texts

University of Arizona

<https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/course-type-and-component-definitions>

Course Type & Component Definitions

The following definitions apply to in-person, hybrid, and fully-online classes. The associated Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) policy is provided for further clarification of each definition. For suggestions on calculating contact hours for hybrid and fully-online classes, see examples compiled by the Office of Digital Learning.

Definitions for House Numbered Courses (e.g., Seminar, Colloquium, and Workshop) are provided here and on a handout defining both standard and house-numbered course types and components.

COURSE TYPE OR COMPONENT	DEFINITION	REQUIRED CONTACT AND HOMEWORK HOURS (per ABOR Policy 2-224)
Lecture	Standard course type. Lecture courses are led by the instructor and may include a variety of pedagogy types.	At least 15 contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of 30 hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit.
Lab	A course set aside for supervised laboratory or field experimentation, observation, or practice in a field of study or a course incorporating practical experience.	Laboratory courses require a minimum of 45 contact hours per unit of credit. Field trips will be counted hour-for-hour as laboratory meetings.
Discussion	Interactional meeting typically serving as a secondary component that can include activities such as demonstrations, hands-on engagements, case studies, field experiences.	At least 15 contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of 30 hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit.
Studio	A course set aside for supervised creative and/or artistic endeavors incorporating practical	Studios must involve at least 30 contact hours and at least 15 hours of homework for each unit of credit.

	experiences and possibly individualized instruction.	<i>*Note: Music instruction and specialized types of music performance offerings must conform to the requirement for accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Music.</i>
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Course Component Handout. Compilation of information from: Standard Courses and House Numbered Courses

Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) Definition of a Unit of Credit: An hour of work is the equivalent of 50 minutes of classtime (often called a “contact hour”) or 60 minutes of independent study work. A minimum of 45 hours of work by each student is required for each unit of credit. Ordinarily, a course must cover a 1-week period for every unit of credit given. During summer sessions, however, 6 units of credit may be given over a 5-week period.

UA COURSE COMPONENT	UA DEFINITIONS	REQUIRED CONTACT AND HOMEWORK HOURS (per ABOR Policy 2-224)
Lecture (LEC)	Standard course type. Lecture courses are led by the instructor and may include a variety of pedagogy types.	At least 15 contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of 30 hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit.
Discussion (DIS)	Interactional meeting typically serving as a secondary component that can include activities such as demonstrations, hands-on engagements, case studies, field experiences.	
Proseminar and Seminar (SEM)	The development and exchange of scholarly information, usually in a small group setting. The scope of work shall consist of research by course registrants, with the exchange of the results of such research through discussion, reports, and/or papers.	
Colloquium (CLQ)	The exchange of scholarly information and/or secondary research, usually in a small group setting. Instruction often includes lectures by	

	several different persons. Research projects may or may not be required of course registrants.	
Lab (LAB)	A course set aside for supervised laboratory or field experimentation, observation, or practice in a field of study or a course incorporating practical experience.	Laboratory courses require a minimum of 45 contact hours per unit of credit.
Workshop (WRK)	The practical application of theoretical learning within a small group setting and involving an exchange of ideas and practical methods, skills, and principles.	Workshops must involve a minimum of 45 hours for each unit of credit, including a minimum of 15 contact hours, with the balance of the requirement in homework.
Studio (STD)	A course set aside for supervised creative and/or artistic endeavors incorporating practical experiences and possibly individualized instruction.	Studios must involve at least 30 contact hours and at least 15 hours of homework for each unit of credit. *Note: Music instruction and specialized types of music performance offerings must conform to the requirement for accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Music.
Individual Studies (IND)	Consists of course types including Preceptorship, Directed Research, Internship, Practicum, Independent Study, Research, Case Studies, Master's Report, Thesis, Master's Recitals, Dissertation, and Doctoral Recitals. Find individual study course type definitions here .	An hour of work is the equivalent of...60 minutes of independent study work. A minimum of 45 hours of work by each student is required for each unit of credit. Each unit of internship or practicum must require a minimum of 45 clock hours of work.
Practicum (PRA)	The practical application, on an individual basis, of previously studied theory and the collection of data for future theoretical interpretation.	

Additional information regarding contact hours for field trips, credit for courses developed under contract, and credit for former or current military members can be found [here](#).

Additional information regarding Senior-level Research or Project Courses, Small Group Courses, and Individual Studies Courses can be found [here](#). Questions about information on this handout, please contact Martin Marquez (martinmarquez@email.arizona.edu).

Arizona State University

https://provost.asu.edu/sites/default/files/page/1585/defining-course-components_6-17-19.pdf

Defining Course Components

Each course is composed of one or more components, different instructional modes or meeting types such as labs, studios, lectures and seminars.

- A course can have more than one component. However, all components must be scheduled. The primary component is always the graded component.

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Individualized Instruction (IND)	This is a class in which an individual student is provided an opportunity for original study or investigation in a major or field of specialization on a more autonomous basis. Normally a contract or plan is used, and the student is supervised by faculty or practitioners.
Integrated Lecture/Lab (LEL)	The integrated lecture/lab is a class that has some lecture and some hands-on components but does not require a separate time like a traditional lab. It is scheduled like a lecture. ABOR: "At least fifteen (15) contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of thirty (30) hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit."
Laboratory (LAB)	The hands-on, workshop component of a class is usually held in a laboratory. The laboratory time is separate from the lecture although it is often associated to a lecture. This is primarily used in science and engineering.

	<p>According to ABOR: "Laboratory courses require a minimum of forty-five (45) contact hours per unit of credit."</p>
Lecture (LEC)	<p>A lecture is the traditional method of instruction in which students are taught a subject by a member of the faculty.</p> <p>ABOR: "At least fifteen (15) contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of thirty (30) hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit."</p>
Practicum (PRA)	<p>A practicum is structured practical experience in a professional program, supervised by a practitioner and/or faculty member with whom the student works closely. Internships and student teaching fit into this category. These classes are often held off campus at a professional location. The practicum component should also be used for internships and field studies courses.</p> <p>ABOR: "Each unit of internship or practicum must require a minimum of forty-five (45) contact hours per unit of credit."</p>
Recitation (REC)	<p>A recitation is a small interactional meeting that combines formal presentation, review and interaction between the students and an instructor, and it is usually combined with a lecture as the primary component. Recitations are often lead by teaching assistants (TAs) or graduate assistants (GAs) to supplement a lecture. TAs/GAs will review the lecture, expand on the concepts and usually allow for question-and-answer time. The recitation component should also be used for courses previously categorized as discussion (also known as break-outs).</p> <p>ABOR: "At least fifteen (15) contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well</p>

	as a minimum of thirty (30) hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit.
Research (RSC)	Under the supervision of a faculty member or group of faculty, the student conducts research that is expected to lead to a specific project such as dissertation, thesis, report or publication. Assignments might include data collection, experimental work, data analysis or preparation of a manuscript. This component is appropriate to use for continuing registration, dissertation, thesis, individualized instruction, research, etc.
Seminar (SEM)	A seminar is a small class that emphasizes discussion, presentations by students, and written research papers. ABOR: "At least fifteen (15) contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, testing or evaluation, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of thirty (30) hours of student homework is required for each unit of credit."
Studio (STO)	The studio is a hands-on workshop component of design and the arts courses. ABOR: "Studios must involve at least thirty (30) contact hours and at least fifteen (15) hours of homework for each unit of credit."

University of California-Davis

https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk3876/files/local_resources/docs/committees/coci/learning_activities_final.pdf

Course Learning Activities

Learning activities with established in class and out of class hours

LEARNING ACTIVITY	ACRONYM	COCI DEFINITION	IN CLASS HOURS	OUTSIDE OF CLASS HOURS
Lecture	LEC	Instructor presentation of course materials.	1	2

Discussion	DIS	A course meeting focusing on topics presented in the main section of the course, typically involving student participation	1	2
Lecture/Discussion	LED	Combination of lecture and discussion.	1	2
Lecture/Lab	LLA	Combination of lecture and laboratory.	1	2
Discussion/Lab	D/L	Combination of discussion and laboratory.	1	2
Web Virtual Lecture	WVL	Web-based and/or technologically-mediated activities replacing standard lectures.	1	2
Web Electronic Discussion	WED	Web-based and/or technologically-mediated activities replacing standard discussion sessions.	1	2

Learning activities with no in class hours

LEARNING ACTIVITY	ACRONYM	COCI DEFINITION	IN CLASS HOURS	OUTSIDE OF CLASS HOURS
Extensive Writing	WRI	Writing assignments outside of class time, beyond the minimal GE requirement for writing experience.	0	3
Extensive Problem Solving	PRB	Problem solving outside of class time beyond time associated with other learning activities.	0	3
Term Paper	TMP	Term paper requiring both substantial research and production of written material.	0	3

LEARNING ACTIVITY	ACRONYM	COCI DEFINITION	IN CLASS HOURS	OUTSIDE OF CLASS HOURS

Extensive Writing or Discussion	W-D	Extensive Writing or Discussion.	0 or 1	3 or 2
Term Paper or Discussion	T-D	Term Paper or Discussion.	0 or 1	3 or 2
Autotutorial	AUT	Students complete interactive multimedia modules that include information content and formative assessments.	0-3	0-3
Clinical Activity	CLI	Students learn professional skills by actual practice involving patients or clients under instructor supervision.	0-3	0-3
Conference	CON	Students consult with instructors and watch other to exchange knowledge and gain skills.	0-3	0-3
Fieldwork	FWK	Instruction, observation, demonstration, and/or experimentation in non-classroom settings.	0-3	0-3
Independent Study	IND	Independent Educational Activity, supervised by an instructor.	0-3	0-3
Internship	INT	Individual Activity in work-related setting approved by instructor.	0-3	0-3
Laboratory	LAB	Instructional or experimental experiences requiring special laboratory equipment and facilities.	0-3	0-3
Listening	LIS	Assigned listening activity.	0-3	0-3
Performance Instruction	PER	Instructor led activities in the performing arts.	0-3	0-3
Practice	PRA	Students engage in training in, and understanding, development, and critique of, elements of visual, oral, and kinesthetic skills.	0-3	0-3
Project (Term Project)	PRJ	Extensive work on a major project.	0-3	0-3
Rehearsal	REH	Extensive preparation for a public performance.	0-3	0-3

Seminar	SEM	Students meet with an instructor in a small classroom setting to exchange ideas through discussion, research papers, and reports.	0-3	0-3
Studio	STD	Students work in a studio setting to develop technical and creative skills such as painting, music, drama, dance or design.	0-3	0-3
Tutorial	TUT	Supplementary (or remedial) individualized instruction.	0-3	0-3
Variable	VAR	Varies depending on instructor and other factors.	0-3	0-3
Workshop	WRK	Students practice in a workshop environment.	0-3	0-3

University of California-LA

<https://ucla.app.box.com/s/v9vf0js91wf73olvx0xr1fq7hm7vgvh>

Instructional Format (Activity Type) and Hours

Classes are categorized according to the following instructional formats or class activity types.

FORMAT	DESCRIPTION
ACT (Activity)	Students develop technical or creative skills such as painting, music, drama, or design.
CLI (Clinic)	A group meeting devoted to the analysis and solution of concrete problems or to the acquiring of specific skills or knowledge. Students learn professional skills by actual practice with clients.
DIS (Discussion)	A subsection of a course focusing on topics presented in the main section of the course (usually a lecture). Substantial student participation is required.
FLD (Fieldwork)	Work done in the field to gain practical hands-on experience and knowledge through firsthand observation; work done to gather data through interviewing or observing subjects in the field. Students participate in

	short or extended field trips in nonclassroom settings.
LAB (Laboratory)	Under supervision, students engage in testing and analysis, carry out experiments, observe demonstrations, and learn proper use of special equipment and facilities.
LEC (Lecture)	Formal discourse or instruction given by an instructor about a topic in a discipline.
REC (Recitation)	Students take part in oral presentations and exhibitions involving substantial participation.
RGP (Research Group)	In-depth investigation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts or the revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts.
SEM (Seminar)	Students meet with an instructor in a small classroom setting to exchange ideas through discussion, research papers, and reports.
STU (Studio)	Students work in a studio setting to develop technical and creative skills such as painting, music, drama, dance, or design.
TUT (Tutorial)	Students are supervised by an instructor on a one-on-one basis to pursue an agreed upon individual course.

University of Iowa

<https://help.maui.uiowa.edu/section-creation-section-set>

Section Types

A section is an instructional unit used to divide a course.

Section type is the mode of instruction for a section. There are several different section types, which are listed and defined below.

Section Type Definitions

Stand-Alone: A stand-alone section does not have any additional section types associated with it.

Lecture: A lecture is a section type used in conjunction with one or more other section types (e.g., discussion, lab, etc.) that bring together a group as a single unit for a given class meeting.

Lectures have either a **Mandatory** or a **Preferred** relationship with their discussions, labs or lab/discussions.

- In courses with **Mandatory** relationships, students choose a discussion or lab section and are automatically registered for the lecture that is related to that discussion or lab section.

- In courses with Preferred relationships, students must choose both a lecture and a preferred section when registering. Credit hours in Preferred relationships are placed on the lecture sections.

Discussion: A discussion is an instructional unit used in conjunction with a lecture that denotes a non-laboratory situation. This term must be used to include all instructional units whose description could be categorized as recitation, conference, or drill.

Lab: A lab is an instructional unit used in conjunction with a lecture that requires a room with specialized facilities and equipment.

Lab/Discussion: A lab/discussion is an instructional unit used in conjunction with a lecture and combines the course offerings elements of a lab and discussion into one unit for registration.

Additional Time: Additional time sections are created when two or more courses, or courses with more than one section (sections must have different time/location information) meet together at a shared time for instruction (but NOT to watch a film).

Screening: A screening section is set up when students meet to watch a film.

Independent Study: Independent study is an individual instruction section that is not a formally structured class. Typically, this involves one-on-one instruction with a specific faculty member and student.

Michigan State University

<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s502>

Course Formats and Credits

The formats described in this document apply to courses in which credits are earned. (For the definition of a credit, refer to Credits.)

In all courses for credit, regardless of format, there will be instructor evaluation of individual learning. In this document, instructor is defined as a person authorized to teach the course by the administrator of the academic unit that administers the course.

The formats acceptable for courses offered for credit are those listed below. Two or more of the formats listed may be combined; for example, lecture and laboratory, discussion and online and/or lecture and hybrid.

Lecture

Definition: A regularly scheduled class in which the instructor takes the dominant role and the primary emphasis is on transmitting a body of knowledge or information and explaining ideas or principles. Student comments or questions will be accommodated as circumstances permit. In some courses, students may be expected to participate in classroom activities by means appropriate to the subject matter, such as discussion, performance, etc. Information regarding required text and reading list is provided.

Recitation

Definition: A regularly scheduled interactive class in which the instructor supplements lectures by clarifying concepts and responding to student questions. Students may be expected to participate in classroom activities by means appropriate to the subject matter through discussion, solving problems, or group learning. Papers, projects, etc., may be assigned.

Discussion

Definition: A regularly scheduled class in which a group of students, under the direction of the instructor, considers predetermined topics, issues, or problems and exchanges evidence, analyses, reactions, and conclusions about them with one another. Papers, projects, etc., may be assigned. A list of topics for discussion; basic texts, reading list, or other materials are specified. Enrollment normally limited.

Seminar

Definition: A regularly scheduled class in which a small group of students is engaged, under the leadership of the instructor, in research or advanced study. Topics may be interdisciplinary or highly specialized. Maximal opportunity for peer exchange is provided. Instructor provides broad outline of possible topics and procedures. Enrollment normally limited to 15 students.

Laboratory

Definition: A regularly scheduled class with primary emphasis on learning by doing or observing, with the burden of course activity placed on the student, under the direction and supervision of the instructor, for the purpose of giving first-hand experience, developing and practicing skills, translating theory into practice, and developing, testing, and applying principles. Manuals, needed materials, instruments, equipment, and/or tools are provided, or recommendations are made for their acquisition.

Studio

Definition: A regularly scheduled class with primary emphasis on student activity leading to skill development and the enhancement and encouragement of the student's artistic growth. Needed materials, instruments, equipment, and/or tools are provided, or recommendations are made for their acquisition. Evaluation of individual learning may include public display of proficiency and/or evaluation by faculty other than the student's instructor. Each student receives from the instructor an end-of-semester assessment of accomplishment.

Online

Definition: A class in which all instruction is delivered in an online environment. Online courses are classified as on-campus courses. Course content may be delivered in one of the following formats: Asynchronous instruction provides learning materials and requirements for online interaction with faculty and other students. The course will not have required attendance at regularly scheduled meeting times. Includes deadlines for completion of learning objectives and testing (may be proctored) to meet course requirements. Synchronous instruction requires online interaction at scheduled meeting times as posted on the schedule of courses page. A synchronous class has required attendance and includes deadlines for completion of learning objectives and testing (may be proctored) to meet course requirements.

Hybrid (Blended)

Definition: A class that blends online instruction with required or scheduled in-person contact, including examinations, laboratories, etc. At least 50% of the class is delivered through online instruction. Proctored examinations, texts, reading lists, and/or other materials are stipulated. Hybrid courses with on-campus meetings are classified as on-campus courses.

In the following course formats (except master's thesis research and doctoral dissertation research), a minimum combined total of 30 instructor-student contact hours and student class/study/work hours per credit per semester is expected. The division among these hours will be determined by the instructor, in consultation, as needed, with other qualified supervisors.

Workshop

Definition: An organized learning experience with the same purposes and methods as the laboratory or studio, usually offered in a concentrated period shorter than a semester. Broad outline of possible activities and procedures is provided.

Institute

Definition: An organized learning experience which brings together specialists in a given area for instruction for a concentrated period shorter than a semester. Broad outline of possible topics and procedures is provided.

Field Study

Definition: A learning experience arranged by an instructor for a student or group of students to carry out a project outside the classroom by observation, participation in a work experience, or field research. Advance planning, involving instructor and students, for activity are required.

Professional Practicum

Definition: Professional practice under supervision of an instructor, assisted, where necessary, by additional experienced professionals. Broad outline of possible topics and procedures is provided.

Clinical Clerkship

Definition: An organized learning experience which employs professional practice as a means to acquire clinical skills and apply knowledge. Broadens knowledge acquired in prior course work by providing additional instruction and experiences. Activities include supervised clinical practice, small-group instruction, lecture, independent study, etc. Instruction is delivered by multiple faculty and/or other qualified professionals in a campus or community-based clinical facility (hospital, ambulatory care center, health professional's office, practice environment, etc.) Objectives, instructional materials, and evaluation procedures are determined by faculty assigned to the clerkship.

Internship

Definition: Professional activity, under general supervision of an experienced professional, in a job situation which places a high degree of responsibility on the student. Specific job description must be approved by instructor or instructional unit. Evaluation by instructor with assistance of supervisor.

Teaching Internship

Definition: Sustained observation and practice in a classroom under supervision of an experienced teacher and a university field supervisor. Careful advance planning involving a university field supervisor, the school system and supervising teacher, as well as procedures for evaluation by the field supervisor, with the assistance of the supervising teacher are required.

Independent Study

Definition: Planned study, highly individualized, which is not addressable through any other format. Advance planning between instructor and student, with goals, scope of the project, and evaluation method are specified in writing. At least two contact hours are required for the first credit of Independent Study. Contact hours thereafter are to be determined by agreement between instructor and student.

Competency-Based Instruction (CBI)

Definition: Objectives, materials, procedures, and methods of evaluation are specified at the beginning of the course. The requirements are satisfied at the student's own pace, subject to arrangements with the course supervisor and to the university's time-period requirements. This format, as distinguished from Independent Study, will ordinarily be used in established courses. Courses by correspondence and some online courses are generally included in this format. Instructional materials and procedures developed by instructor. Frequency and nature of student-faculty contact determined at the beginning of the course.

Master's Thesis Research

Definition: Highly individualized, investigative study, usually continuing over more than one semester. Subject of research agreed to by student and research supervisor (instructor), in consultation, when required, with guidance committee. Grade deferred until completion of master's program. Exclusively 899 course number. Advance planning occurs between research supervisor (instructor) and student, with goals and scope of project prearranged; minimum contact hours per semester determined by agreement between supervisor and student.

Doctoral Dissertation Research

Definition: Highly individualized, investigative study, usually continuing over several semesters. Subject of research agreed to by student and research supervisor (instructor), in consultation with student's guidance committee. Grade deferred until completion of doctoral program. Exclusively 999 course number. Advance planning occurs between research supervisor (instructor) and student, in consultation with guidance committee.