Baker University – School of Professional and Graduate Studies

**Definition of a Credit Hour:**

As outlined in the SPGS Faculty Manual, Baker University School of Professional and Graduate Studies (SPGS) recognizes the distinction between traditional, college-age students and non-traditional, adult students who bring a wealth of professional experience to the classroom and are self-directed in their learning. As such, the educational philosophy at SPGS assumes adult learners:

1. Bring a quality and diverse life and professional experience to the classrooms,
2. Learn best when the subject is of immediate use and can be applied to real life,
3. Are self-directed and benefit from collaborative learning experiences

The principle of self-direction and cooperative learning are specifically addressed in the SPGS educational framework. The framework of the SPGS teaching and learning model is driven, in large part, by an andragogical perspective which means we seek to create a learning environment where students can most fruitfully learn. More information about the teaching and learning model can be found in the “Adult Learners” section of this book.

In complement to the general Carnegie Unit equivalency, the guidelines outlined in this document will aid Chairs, Lead Professors, and Learning Services in determining if a new course warrants 1-3 (or more) credit hours. Additional credit hours, beyond 3 credit hours, can be justified, if the burden from one or more of the criteria listed below is significantly higher than would be required within a traditional three credit hour course. All existing courses will be evaluated for credit hour assignment by examining the course through the general benchmarks of the Carnegie Unit (CU).

In addition, each syllabus will include the following statement to ensure faculty and students are aware of what is expected of them when enrolled in an SPGS course:

**Credit Hour Definition and Associated Course Expectations:** Consistent with best practices in higher education, Baker University subscribes to the federal definition of the “credit hour” endorsed by the Higher Learning Commission. Driven by intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement, the ‘credit hour’ is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of classroom (or direct faculty) instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week for the duration of the course enrollment period. A 3-credit-hour course, for example, requires approximately 40-45 instruction (or instructional equivalency) hours, roughly 80-90 out-of-class work (self-directed) hours and approximately 120-135 total instructional hours over the course of 5, 6, and 7 week terms. In that this course carries 3 hours of credit, approximately 42 hours of classroom instruction have been planned over the scheduled 6-week period. In addition, students are expected to spend roughly 84 hours (14 hours per week) on out-of-class assignments which include: a) assigned text readings, b) reading-related exercises and associated Moodle forum postings, c) unit evaluation and final exam preparation, d) outside/application-based assignments, e) statistical and other homework problems, and f) presentation preparation.”

The following pages provide a framework for each SPGS delivery model.
### 5 week courses (3 credit hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPGS Carnegie Unit Calculation for a 3 Credit Hour Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-class “seat” time</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ground Classes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Engagement for Ground Classes:**
- **Traditional Ground Instruction = 20 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning for four consecutive hours each week for five weeks. This time is used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may ask questions and participate in discussions.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 20-25 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course
    - Two weekly substantive posts to Moodle in response to questions posted by the faculty member.
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 20-25 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty assigned exercise that shows relevancy and application to daily learning objectives.

**Engagement for Online Classes:**
- **Traditional Online Instruction = 20 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning in conjunction with the first three pillars of the meta-cognitive process (Introduce, Instruct, and Assess). Videos, forums, articles, and text-based lectures/notes may be used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may interact with the instructor and peers on a weekly basis. This will generally be done through weekly discussion questions facilitated by the instructor.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 20-25 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 20-25 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty driven assignment that ties theory/discussions to application (Please see possible assignments for relevancy on page XXXX)
# 6 week courses (3 credit hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Classes</th>
<th>In-class “seat” time</th>
<th>Out-of-class “seat” time</th>
<th>Total “seat” time</th>
<th>CU Calculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>4 Hour meetings</td>
<td>3-4 Hours of instructional equivalencies</td>
<td>7-8 total engagement hours each week</td>
<td>42-48 total hours of engagement each course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>13 hours homework each week (with reading)</td>
<td></td>
<td>78 Hours of Homework total each term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Online

| Engagement     | 4 hours of Writing, Participation, and Peer Engagement | 3-4 hours of instructional equivalencies | 8-9 total engagement hours each week | 42-48 total hours of engagement each course |
| Homework       |                      | 13 hours homework each week (with reading) |                  | 78 Hours of Homework total each term |

### Engagement for Ground Classes:
- **Traditional Ground Instruction = 24 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning for four consecutive hours each week for six weeks. This time is used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may ask questions and participate in discussions.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 18-24 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course
    - Two weekly substantive posts to Moodle in response to questions posted by the faculty member.
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 18-24 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty assigned exercise that shows relevancy and application to weekly learning objectives.

### Engagement for Online Classes:
- **Traditional Online Instruction = 24 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning in conjunction with the first three pillars of the meta-cognitive process (Introduce, Instruct, and Assess). Videos, forums, articles, and text-based lectures/notes may be used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may interact with the instructor and peers on a weekly basis. This will generally be done through weekly discussion questions facilitated by the instructor.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 18-24 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 18-24 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty driven assignment that ties theory/discussions to application (Please see possible assignments for relevancy on page XXXX)
### 7 Week Courses (3 Credit Hours)

**SPGS Carnegie Unit Calculation for a 3 Credit Hour Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>In-class “seat” time</th>
<th>Out-of-class “seat” time</th>
<th>Total “seat” time</th>
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<td><strong>Ground Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>4 Hour meetings</td>
<td>2-3 Hours of instructional equivalencies</td>
<td>6-7 total engagement hours each week</td>
<td>42-49 total hours of engagement each course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 hours homework each week (with reading)</td>
<td></td>
<td>80 Hours of Homework total each term</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>4 hours of Writing, Participation, and Peer Engagement</td>
<td>2-3 hours of instructional equivalencies</td>
<td>6-7 total engagement hours each week</td>
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<td></td>
<td>80 Hours of Homework total each term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Engagement for Ground Classes:**

- **Traditional Ground Instruction = 28 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning for four consecutive hours each week for seven weeks. This time is used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may ask questions and participate in discussions.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 12-18 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course
    - Two weekly substantive posts to Moodle in response to questions posted by the faculty member.
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 12-18 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty assigned exercise that shows relevancy and application to weekly learning objectives.

**Engagement for Online Classes:**

- **Traditional Online Instruction = 28 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning in conjunction with the first three pillars of the meta-cognitive process (Introduce, Instruct, and Assess). Videos, forums, articles, and text-based lectures/notes may be used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may interact with the instructor and peers on a weekly basis. This will generally be done through weekly discussion questions facilitated by the instructor.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 12-18 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 12-18 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty driven assignment that ties theory/discussions to application (Please see possible assignments for relevancy on page XXXX)
### Engagement for Ground Classes:
- **Traditional Ground Instruction = 32 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning for four consecutive hours each week for eight weeks. This time is used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may ask questions and participate in discussions.
- **Instructional Equivalencies = 32 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course:
    - Two weekly substantive posts to questions in Moodle in which students are required to respond to the faculty member and 1-2 of their peers before the next class session.
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 32 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When, where, and how they meet is entirely up to the group).

### Engagement for Online Classes:
- **Traditional Online Instruction = 32 hours**
  - The instructor facilitates learning in conjunction with the first three pillars of the meta-cognitive process (Introduce, Instruct, and Assess). Videos, forums, articles, and text-based lectures/notes may be used to introduce key concepts/theories/etc. so that students may interact with the instructor and peers on a weekly basis.
- **Instructional Equivalencies (collaborative learning) = 24 hours**
  - The instructor provides one of the following in each course:
    - Group project(s) that take approximately 24 hours to complete (students meet outside of class. When, where, and how they meet is entirely up to the group)
    - Faculty driven assignment that ties theory/discussions to application (Please see possible assignments for relevancy on page XXXX)
Determining the out-of-class “seat” time by course:

The time allotted to instructional equivalencies will be determined by examining the course through the general benchmark of the Carnegie Unit (CU) of time and the following five categories (1) Bloom’s Taxonomy, (2) Depth of subject matter, (3) Application, (4) Tradition, and in some cases, (5) Andragogy.

SPGS employs a scale “Low,” “Medium” or “High,” which refers to the depth, expectation, or intensity of the category aligned with CU time. If the general contact time is within the traditional CU timeframe and the course content averages in the “high” level use of Bloom, depth of subject matter, and application, then the course will require more out-of-class “seat” time. If the course averages in the “medium” or mid-level use of Bloom, depth of subject matter, and application, then it would require 30 minutes less per week. If it averages in the “low” or low-level use of Bloom, depth of subject matter, and application, then it would require 30 minutes less per week. However, to ensure sensitivity to discipline and the unique nature of courses, this rubric is intentionally designed to provide Chairs, Lead Faculty, and Adjunct Instructors only with a guideline, not a prescribed calculation.

Lastly, most courses at SPGS can be compared to similar courses found at other universities. A comparison of assigned credit hours to other universities is recommended; however, there is no requirement that such comparisons mandate particular course credit hour equivalencies because Lead Faculty may include additional or reduced content in courses, as deemed appropriate by the Lead Faculty, department, or School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DEPTH, REQUIREMENT OR INTENSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Bloom’s Taxonomy/Time</td>
<td>High/Medium/Low - Application of Bloom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Depth of subject matter/Time</td>
<td>High/Medium/Low - Depth of Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Application/Time</td>
<td>High/Medium/Low - Requirement of Applied Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Tradition in higher education</td>
<td>What is typically found at other institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 If Applicable: Andragogy/Time</td>
<td>High/Medium/Low - Requirement for student contribution from life experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upper/Lower Level Course Definition:
1. Prerequisites
2. Prior Learning
3. Traditional or typical sequence

Upper-level courses require a substantial amount of previously-mastered content. The material offered in upper-level courses traditionally builds upon content from entry-level or foundational curriculum. For example, if a course provides the basic or elementary elements of a particular discipline, that course would most traditionally be seen as lower-level; however, if the course builds on content and information from its own discipline or multiple courses within various disciplines, it is often considered an upper-level course at the undergraduate level. The choice of upper or lower level should
not be based on rigor. The choice does relate to depth and the need for prerequisite "course" content (not life experience).

In most cases, lower-level courses provide foundational elements, while upper-level courses are more strategic and complex. Having said this, there may be exceptions to this standard because of the unique nature of the discipline that can be defined by Chair, Lead Faculty, or Dean. Another consideration is tradition in higher education, in which courses normally offered in a sequence and typically provided in the "third traditional year," may receive an upper-level ranking.

**SPGS Definition of Terms**

**Seat Time:**

At Baker University SPGS, seat time for an on-ground course is defined as a combination of time spent in a classroom and time spent in instructional equivalencies outside a classroom. The total amount of seat time per credit hour is 13-14 hours. For a 5-week 3 credit hour course, this equates to 8 hours of seat time/week. For a 6-week 3 credit hour course, this equates to 7 hours of seat time/week. For a 7 week 3 credit hour course, this equates to 6 hours of seat time/week. In an on-ground course, time spent in a classroom is 4 hours per week of a course, typically meeting from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Instructional equivalencies are structured, instructor-mediated or assigned activities that occur outside of the classroom that can include, but are not limited to, discussion boards, chat rooms, blogs, case studies, lecture materials, group projects, and field trips. These activities are directly related to course objectives, measurable, and equivalent to an activity conducted in the classroom. Time spent on instructional activities is 4 hours/week in a 5-week 3 CR course, 3 hours/week in a 6-week 3 CR course, and 2 hours/week in a 7-week 3 CR course.

**Instructional Equivalencies (see the IDH for more options):**

**Group Projects:** Student learning is developed and enhanced through collaborative and group participation. Collaborative learning activities are strongly recommended in every course at Baker University SPGS. Because of the diverse commitments of adult learners, groups are not required to meet face-to-face outside of class. In-class time is given to groups to collaborate on group projects where most of the work is expected to be completed outside of class.

**Substantive Posts:** A substantive post contributes to the understanding and application of ideas through reflection, analysis, and elaboration.

**Assignments of Relevance and Application:** To improve student motivation, participation, and attitudes towards course content, assignments should show relevance to course objectives and the real world. Our adult students are relevancy-oriented and appreciate seeing a reason for learning something. SPGS strives to create an environment where learning can be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them.
Engagement:

Engagement at Baker University SPGS is defined primarily by student attendance. In order for students to be successfully engaged in a course, they must be in attendance. Our attendance policy states that under no circumstances may a student miss more than 30% of a course and receive credit for the course. Online attendance is defined as the completion of at least two significant activities in the course during the class session. A significant activity may include submitting a forum post, an assignment, an assessment, or other contribution that advances the learning process for a student/other students in the course.

Homework:

Baker University defines homework as research, reading, or any preparatory work done outside of instructional time. The learner takes primary responsibility for homework.

**Individual Homework Activities and Estimated Time for Completion:**

- 1 page of a research paper = 2 hours (1 hour of research and 1 hour of writing)
- 1 page of a reflection (no outside references) = 1 hour
- 10 pages of reading from the text = 1 hour
- Preparation for a 10 minute presentation = 1 hour
- Searching for Current Event Articles for discussion in class = 1 hour
- Preparing for a 30+question exam = 2 hours
- Video, Lecture-capture, etc. that are viewed outside of class = varies depending on length