

D. Determining Allowable Contact Hours

For SCH and CEU program formats, the institution must assign consistent and appropriate ratios of contact hours to SCH or CEU for each course in the program according to the ratios and parameters established by Coordinating Board guidelines. A chart showing the allowable range of contact hours is available in the [WECM Protocol Manual](#). A CEU course with fewer than seven contact hours of instruction will not generate state funding. An exception may be permitted when the specific type and length of instruction is required by a local, state, or national licensing, certifying, regulatory, or accrediting agency. No lecture/lab CEU course may have more than 176 contact hours. CEU external learning courses must follow the same contact hour limits as SCH external learning courses.

E. Types of Instruction

1. Lecture: Instruction that presents new material with additional cognitive and/or affective learning outcomes is classified as *lecture*.
2. Laboratory: Instruction that provides skill development, application, and practice of knowledge under direct supervision of college personnel is classified as *laboratory* instruction. Activities conducted in simulation facilities to develop or practice skills are also classified as laboratory activities.
3. External learning experience: Instruction that involves the presentation or application of knowledge in a workplace setting is classified as an *external learning experience*. The integration of knowledge gained through the external experience with previously learned concepts or practices is included in the instructional design of the external learning experience. For definitions of specific types of external learning experiences, see "Characteristics of External Learning Experiences" in Chapter Three.

A maximum of 47 contact hours of clinical experience may be included as laboratory experience in SCH lecture/lab courses, while continuing education courses may include a maximum of nine (9) contact hours of clinical experience. All clinical experiences that exceed these limits must be designated as separate clinical courses.

F. Assignment of Semester Credit Hours and Continuing Education Units

For lecture/classroom instruction per 16-week semester, a ratio of one SCH to one contact hour (1:1) must be used. If the instruction is compressed into less than a 16-week semester, the course must still require the same number of contact hours as it would in a long semester.

Example of an eight-week summer course:

8 lecture hours per week = 64 total contact hours.

64 total contact hours/16 weeks is equivalent to 4 hours/week.

Therefore, the course is assigned 4 SCH.

For on-campus laboratory instruction per 16-week semester, a ratio of one SCH to between

two and four laboratory contact hours (1:2, 3, or 4) must be used. Therefore, one SCH can be earned for two, three, or four contact hours per week of laboratory instruction. For allowable hours of external learning experience ratios, see tables in the [WECM Protocol Manual](#).

Example of a four SCH course with lecture and laboratory:

3 lecture contact hours/week = 3 SCH

3 laboratory contact hours/week = 1 SCH

Total for the course = 4 SCH

For continuing education units, a ratio of 1 CEU to 10 contact hours is used. The total number of contact hours is divided by 10 to determine the number of CEU, which may be expressed as a decimal. (For example, 17 contact hours equals 1.7 CEU.) Additional information about continuing education units is available at the [International Association for Continuing Education and Training](#).

G. Special Topics Courses

Special Topics courses are available for temporary use or transitional content and should be used only when course content does not exist in a current WECM course. Topics may address recently identified current events, knowledge, and skills pertinent to the technical area and relevant to the occupational development of the student. The college specifies discipline-specific outcomes for a Special Topics course. Special Topics courses are available for certain rubrics within each six-digit CIP code and are identified by a "9" in the third digit of the course number.

Although Coordinating Board approval is currently not required for the content of a Special Topics course, *audit penalties may apply if colleges are not careful to include only legitimate workforce education content and avoid non-fundable community education courses.* Colleges must submit a Special Topics form through the electronic submission process prior to the end of the semester in which the course is offered.

H. Local Need Courses

Content that is not contained in the WECM and that will be offered repeatedly over several years is most appropriate for Local Need status. Evidence of need for the course must be substantiated by support from business and industry in the local geographical area. A Local Need course must be submitted to the Coordinating Board and approved at least 30 days prior to instruction to qualify for state funding. The Coordinating Board course report audit will verify whether colleges have submitted all Local Need course forms. Local Need courses are identified by a "7" in the third digit of the course number.