

Contact Hours Guidelines for Study Abroad Programs

Opportunities for educational experiences outside the classroom constitute the *raison d'être* for study abroad programs. Nevertheless, contact instructional hours within a traditional academic setting provide the important context and foundational understanding students need to receive the full academic benefit from participation in a study abroad program.

For on-campus classes there are no contact hour formulae for guest speakers, taking a class to the library, etc. Similarly we recommend not imposing contact hour formulae for program inevitabilities such as time spent traveling or waiting in line. Likewise, we do not recommend that study abroad directors be required to calibrate individually visits to museums and other locations, tours, and so on. For study abroad, however, there is a distinction between out-of-class direct contact hours and out-of-class indirect contact instructional hours. Direct contact involves mandated instructor-led activities with a clear educational purpose such as cultural tours, meetings with officials, visits to laboratories or manufacturing sites, and seminars with students at local universities. Indirect contact instructional hours involve activities required of students but not directly supervised by the instructor. Examples include, but are not limited to, fieldwork and service-learning activities. The activities counting as direct or indirect out-of-class instructional hours must be designed to take special advantage of the study abroad experience. Therefore, they would not include, for example, homework assignments, take-home exams, studying, and similar activities commonly undertaken as part of traditional classes unless these activities would count as contact instructional hours in a counterpart regular UGA course.

In order to provide numerical guidance concerning the contact instructional hours required for study abroad classes receiving UGA credit, we note the following:

1. 1 credit hour is equivalent to 15 official contact instructional hours.
2. An official contact hour is equivalent to 50 minutes of actual contact time.
3. Therefore a 3 credit course requires 45 official contact hours or 37.5 hours of actual contact time.

For purposes of calculating the contact instructional hours necessary for UGA credit for a study abroad course:

1. An out-of-class *direct* contact instructional hour is equivalent to an in-class contact hour. For example, a 150 minute instructor-led or guided tour equals 150 minutes of classroom instruction.
2. An out-of-class *indirect* contact instructional hour equals 0.5 in-class contact instructional hour.
3. A minimum of 50% and a maximum of 80% of the total contact instructional hours for the course must be in-class or direct contact hours. The specific percentage ($50 \leq \text{total contact instructional hours} \leq 80$) and balance between in-class and direct contact instructional hours should reflect what is appropriate for the particular study abroad course and, therefore, should be considered as part of the course approval process.
4. Any deviations from these rules must be justified as part of the regular course approval process. Otherwise, a course syllabus outlining the allocation of student time, topics of study, and other standard syllabus items will be the basis for determining whether the contact hour requirement is satisfied.