

Calculating Contact Hours for Online and Asynchronous Courses

While synchronous contact hours for a course are typically easy to identify, it's often not as clear which asynchronous student engagement tasks qualify as contact hours. Essentially, asynchronous tasks that include a substantial amount of instructor interaction or oversight can qualify as contact hours. This page will detail the difference between contact and non-contact hours related to both common synchronous and asynchronous student tasks. Additionally, each section below offers a few examples of tasks that qualify as contact hours and how they can be implemented in Isidore.

Online Synchronous Activities

Synchronous activities in an online course are often the easiest to identify as contact or non-contact hours. Typically, tasks in this category consist of live class meetings, live required office hours, and instructor-led or mediated student groups.

Online Asynchronous Activities

Contrary to the straightforward nature of synchronous activities, asynchronous activities can be harder to determine if they are considered contact or non-contact. Many non-contact student tasks can be converted to contact hours by increasing the level of instructor involvement in the activity.

For example, threaded discussions between students may not qualify unless the instructor is involved as a mediator or replying to student messages and pushing the conversation forward. An "unmediated" discussion activity or group collaboration could still count as contact hours if the instructor assesses it in some way. This happens during class time in face-to-face courses. Students group up to talk, solve problems together, etc. and the instructor makes sure students participate, but does not always mediate until the wrap-up at the end.

For the same reason, videos that are not created by the instructor or are not considered "UD" videos can count as contact hours as long the activity isn't overused in the course. This is like when you watch a video in class together. The assumption is there is a student assessment predicated on the content. Again, this should be limited, but there are courses where it might be appropriate for it to represent perhaps 10-20% of the content.

The most common form of asynchronous contact hours is through pre-recorded video lectures. However, recorded guest lecturers, interviews with experts, and videos that include Q&A with the instructor can also qualify.

Examples of Contact and Non-Contact Student Activities

	Contact Hours	Non-Contact Hours
Synchronous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Live class meetings via Zoom• Live required office hours• Guided live student study groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online study groups• Live editing student group projects
Asynchronous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recorded video lectures by instructor• Recorded video lectures by guest expert• Pre-recorded interviews with an expert• Instructor mediated online discussion forums• Moderated video viewing/discussions• Required communication with faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion boards• Readings• Homework assignments• Student blogs• Optional supplemental videos

If you'd like more information about any of the activities above or how to implement them in Isidore, please reach out to onlinelearning@udayton.edu.