

## **Guidelines for establishing the lecture/lab ratio for a course**

Courses at UNR that are 3 credits are typically listed in the catalog as 3 + 0 for the lecture/lab ratio, indicating a course that meets for 3 hours (50 minutes) of lecture and zero additional hours.

Accreditation guidelines typically expect that contact hours correspond to credit levels associated with a course. A course with 3 hours of lecture per week during a 15-16 week semester is equated with 3 student credit hours. A student is expected to have additional outside work of 6 hours per week (studying, homework, etc.) on average for a typical 3 credit lecture class.

A typical lab course would be equal to 1 student credit hour for each 3 hour lab per week. The lecture/lab ratio would be shown as 0 + 3, 1 credit.

For a course with both 3 hours of lecture and 3 hours of laboratory, the lecture/lab ratio would be 3 + 3, 4 credits.

The term lecture/lab ratio is a bit of a misnomer because the “lab” portion of the ratio can be used for many different types of course formats. It is not uncommon to have large enrollment lecture courses that devote one hour a week to discussion sessions that are in a small enrollment format, requiring multiple sections to accommodate all of the students from the lecture.

A course with 3 hours of lecture and one hour of discussion per week would have a lecture/lab ratio of 3 + 1, 4 credits. This is listed differently from a 4 + 0, 4 credit class, to designate that the course enrollment is subdivided into multiple sections for the one hour per week.

The value of the information on lecture/lab ratios is at least two fold. This is information for students allowing them to know what to expect in planning their schedules. The information is also used by the Room Scheduling office to determine time allocations for a course.

The UCCC will determine whether or not the lecture/lab ratio proposed for a new course or for the revision of an existing course is acceptable. Generally, to be acceptable, the lecture/lab ratio should align correctly with the expected teaching format for the course and typical work loads for students. If a department is proposing a lecture/lab ratio that is non-traditional, the department should provide an explanation for the UCCC to review.

### **Examples of typical ratios for a 3 credit course**

3 + 0 for a course that will be taught in three 50-minute periods per week for 15 weeks, or two 75-minute periods, or one 150-minute period

2 + 1 for a course that will be taught in two 50-minute periods per week or one 100-minute period and will have one additional 50-minute period per week in which the students are divided into multiple smaller sections

2 + 3 for a course that will be taught in two 50-minute periods per week or one 100-minute period and will have one additional 3-hour lab period per week in which the students are divided into multiple smaller sections

1 + 6 for a course that will be taught as one 50-minute lecture period per week and will have two additional 3-hour lab periods per week in which the students are divided into multiple smaller sections

0 + 9 for a course that has no formal lecture periods. Such a course would typically have three 3-hour lab periods per week

no lecture/lab ratio – this is appropriate for non-formal courses such as independent study, thesis, dissertation, internships, etc.