

**University of California**  
**FACULTY INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY TYPES:**  
**Guidelines for Classifying Courses**

### **Background**

The 18 Faculty Instructional Activity Types described below are intended to capture the range and variety of course-based faculty instructional activities. Using these categories to classify all undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses is a first step in a process designed to improve the way UC reports General Campus Faculty Instructional Activities both internally and to the Legislature. This component of the reporting process deals only with formal faculty instructional activities delivered through credit-bearing courses and is a part of a more comprehensive reporting system, which recognizes that faculty instructional activities extend beyond credit-bearing courses and uses other means to convey this to the Legislature.

Several of these instructional types are synonymous, but separate categories are established to recognize key terminology differences across UC's disciplines. Departments (and other instructional units) are asked to classify courses in accordance with the nature of the instruction in the course and the terminology used in the discipline for that type of instruction.

### **Faculty Instructional Activity Types**

**Lecture:** A course in which the primary goal is the transfer of a body of knowledge from an instructor to a group of students through didactic instruction. This is accomplished by the instructor presenting that body of knowledge in a primarily oral form, supplemented by required reading and problem assignments appropriate to the discipline. While there may be discussion, question and answer, and other forms of interaction between instructor and student, the primary means of accomplishing the desired transfer of knowledge is via presentations made by the instructor in a variety of media appropriate to the topic. Colloquia should be categorized as Lecture.

**Lecture plus Supplementary Activity, e.g., Laboratory or Discussion:** A course that is a unified combination of a Lecture course and a Laboratory-Skills/Techniques, Fieldwork, or Discussion Section (including those led by graduate students) in which the primary goal is the transfer of a body of knowledge from an instructor to a group of students through didactic instruction. (Note that a Discussion Section is not an Instructional Activity Type because it is a secondary, generally non-credit bearing, section.) Students enroll in the two components as a single course, and a single grade is issued for the combined instructional experience. The relative distribution of lecture activities and laboratory activities will vary depending upon the particular course but it will usually be the case that the lecture activities and the laboratory activities are delivered in different places and at different times. Other courses given for credit and graded separately and having required concurrent enrollment are not supplemental activities. Laboratory courses that have a relatively small lecture component and where most of the class time is spent in the laboratory should be classified as Laboratory-Skills/Techniques.

**Seminar—Topical:** A course conducted in a seminar format (i.e., in a small classroom setting where the faculty member and the students consider concepts and exchange ideas through discussion, research papers, presentations, and/or performances) in which the topic is defined by the professor and the primary goal is the transfer of a body of knowledge. The nature of the work to be completed for course credit is very similar for all enrolled students.

**Seminar—Research/Creative Development:** A course conducted in a seminar format (i.e., in a small classroom setting where the faculty member and the students consider concepts and exchange ideas through discussion, research papers, presentations, and/or performances) in which the primary focus of the seminar is on-going research/creative work being conducted by the participants in the seminar. Student presentations, papers and/or projects are a major component of the seminar. The specific work to be completed for course credit will differ for each enrolled student. Most laboratory research meetings would be in this category.

**Conference:** A form of Individualized Study in which a student and a faculty member meet on a regular, one-on-one basis to discuss on-going work such as a research project, dissertation work, or other academic issues.

**Fieldwork—Research:** A course that takes place in a field location in which the primary objective is for the student to gain experience in research methodologies and practices utilized in the discipline or profession. Fieldwork is commonly associated with the physical sciences, human development, and social work where the sites provide direct access to specimens, structures, social situations, and clients. Students are usually expected to produce a research product that includes the collection of data and/or direct client interaction, analysis, and the writing of a report. The specific work to be completed for course credit will differ for each enrolled student. In general, these courses are advanced courses for which the student has mastered or is in the process of mastering the basic content and methodologies of the discipline. On occasion, these courses are taken in tandem with Fieldwork—Skills/Techniques courses as a distinct component of a fieldwork experience.

**Fieldwork—Skills/Techniques:** A course that takes place in a field location in which the primary objective is for the student to acquire mastery of techniques and principles that are best learned in the field setting. Fieldwork is commonly associated with the physical sciences, human development, and social work where the sites provide direct access to specimens, structures, social situations, and clients. The specific work to be completed for course credit is very similar for all enrolled students. On occasion, these courses are taken in tandem with Fieldwork—Research courses as a distinct component of a fieldwork experience.

**Individualized Instruction:** A course in which a faculty member and a student directly negotiate the content of the course and the method by which the student will meet the goals of and receive credit for the course. Students work with a great degree of self-direction, but their progress is dependent upon the guidance and review of a faculty member. These courses include those in which masters or doctoral students register while conducting thesis and dissertation research and writing theses and dissertations. In Individualized Study courses, students may carry out activities in a research laboratory, conduct research in a library or similar intellectual environment, and/or develop a creative product such as a series of paintings, an extensive computer project, or a performance. Individualized Study courses may also involve the faculty member and the student agreeing upon a set of readings that the student will use as the starting point for the production of a paper or other scholarly work such as a musical composition or other creative activity. (In the old categorization method, many courses of this type are categorized as Independent Study.) Individualized Study courses typically meet on an ad hoc basis at a location convenient to both the faculty member and student.

**Internship:** A course in which students carry out all or a major part of the work at an off-campus site. The site is selected because its characteristics allow for a beneficial experience that could not be achieved on campus. Often the professionals at the internship placement site take an

active role, along with the faculty member, in shaping student experience, and these professionals at the site provide a substantial degree of guidance and feedback. The responsibility for the form of the internship and evaluation of the student's performance, however, is the responsibility of the faculty member. This course type shares some features of fieldwork courses.

**Laboratory—Research:** A course that takes place in a laboratory setting in which the primary, but not exclusive, objective is for the student to gain experience in the production of new knowledge in a laboratory setting. Students are usually expected to produce a research product that includes the collection of data, analysis of those data, and the writing of a report. The specific work to be completed for course credit will differ for each enrolled student.

**Laboratory—Skills/Techniques:** A course that takes place in a laboratory setting in which the primary, but not exclusive, objective is for the student to acquire mastery of techniques and principles that are best learned in a laboratory setting. Students typically gain hands-on experience in the use of equipment and procedures, and they conduct, analyze, and write up a set of specified laboratory exercises. The specific work to be completed for course credit is very similar for all students enrolled in the specific course. This course type also includes foreign language courses in which the primary focus is the acquisition of listening and speaking skills in the language being taught and courses whose primary objective is to advance students' composition and rhetoric skills.

**Legal/Medical Clerkship:** A form of Internship generally used in the context of medical or law school curricula that usually takes place in an off-campus location, such as a hospital or courthouse.

**Practicum:** A course in which the primary goal is to enhance the student's previously acquired knowledge and abilities by applying them to real cases or situations that are carefully supervised by the instructor. This course type is most typically used in fields such as clinical psychology, social welfare, and other healing arts to describe a course in which the student is having his or her first supervised experience in delivering interventions.

**Practicum—Teaching:** A course in which faculty members formally prepare students, especially teaching assistants, who are responsible for instructing other students in discussion, laboratory, or other class settings (primarily secondary sections) to meet their teaching responsibilities. Such instruction may be relevant to a particular course, or it may be in anticipation of future teaching.

**Project:** A course in which a faculty member guides one or more students, typically a group of students, in solving a complex problem specified by the faculty member. The primary goal is to gain knowledge of how complicated systems work and why successful solutions must consider multiple aspects of a problem. This instruction type is typically used in engineering, management, and some other professional disciplines.

**Studio—Production/Creative Development:** A course that takes place in a studio setting in which the primary, but not only, objective is for the student to gain experience in the production of major creative works in a studio setting. Students are expected to enhance the development of their work, which might be perfecting a performance, creating a series of paintings, a musical composition, a film, a public performance or exhibition (including design of specific aspects such as production set, lighting or costume design), or similar creative output(s).

**Studio—Technique:** A course that takes place in a studio setting in which the primary, but not only, objective is for the student to acquire mastery of techniques and principles that are best

learned in a studio setting. For example, students gain hands-on experience in the technique and creative application of a musical instrument, film or video equipment, the paint brush, computer graphic programs, or control of the voice, etc. The nature of the work to be completed for course credit is very similar for all enrolled students.

**Tutorial:** A course where a faculty member meets with a very small group of students with the aim of facilitating their mastering a body of knowledge. The role of the faculty member is to assist and guide the student's progress rather than present information in a didactic fashion. Tutorials will tend to meet at a regular time and place.