

Policy Title: Credit Hour Policy
Policy Type: Administrative
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Responsible Office: Office of the Registrar
Applies to: College Community
Approving Authority: Cabinet (2018)
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POLICY STATEMENT

The United States Department of Education requires that each institution develop a written credit hour policy that conforms to the definition of a credit hour as defined in the Federal Register (34 CFR 600.2 [for purposes of Federal programs and provisions related to accrediting agencies' assessment of institutions' determinations of credit hours or other measure of student work] and 602.24(f) [for purposes of title IV student financial assistance programs]).

Federal Definition of the Credit Hour: "... a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

- One hour of classroom, online, or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one-quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or,
- At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

It is important to note that there is no requirement that a credit hour exactly duplicates the amount of work in paragraph (1) as is highlighted in the provisions of paragraph (2). The requirement is that a credit hour reasonably approximate that minimum amount of work in paragraph (1).

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges provides guidance to institutions in assigning credit hours that the Carnegie unit (or credit hour), represented in point (1) above, has served as the traditional unit of measure, but the Department also recognizes that institutions are developing other measures of educational content and credit equivalency. The purpose of the credit hour policy is to ensure that credit hour measures are reasonably equivalent regardless of how institutions award credit hour to courses and program in various modes of instruction and teaching and learning formats.

A credit hour, for Federal purposes, is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates some minimum amount of student work reflective of the amount of work expected in

a Carnegie unit, in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education: key phrases “institutionally established,” “equivalency,” “reasonably approximates,” and “minimum amount.” United States Department of Education defines the relationship of a credit hour to a week of instructional time (CFR 668.3(b)(2) for purposes of an educational program and student eligibility for aid as follows:

- A week of instructional time is any seven-day period in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examination occurs, exclusive of vacation time, homework, or periods of counseling or orientation.
- In any seven-day period, a student is expected to be academically engaged through, for example, classroom attendance, examinations, practica, laboratory work, internships, supervised studio work, etc.
- In the case of distance education, academic engagement would include, but is not limited to, completing an academic assignment; taking an exam, participating in an interactive tutorial; participating in an instructor assigned study group; contributing to an academic online discussion; initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course, etc.
- Merely logging into the electronic classroom does not constitute academic engagement. In response to a question regarding how an institution applies the definition of a credit hour to asynchronous online courses, not offered in a classroom setting, the USDE responded as follows: There is no “seat time” requirement implicit in the definition of a credit hour. An institution offering asynchronous online courses would need to determine the amount of student work expected in each online course in order to achieve the course objectives and to assign a credit hour based on at least an equivalent amount of work as represented in the definition of a credit hour.

Wiley College Credit Hour Definition

The Wiley College definition of a credit hour formalizes compliance with federal and accreditation expectations and helps to provide consistency throughout the College. Wiley College follows the Carnegie unit of measure for assigning credits to its undergraduate and graduate academic courses:

- One credit is equivalent to 50 minutes (at a minimum) of class time per week for 15 weeks (12.50 hours, direct faculty instruction).
- Two credit is equivalent to 100 minutes (at a minimum) of class time per week for 15 weeks (25 hours, direct faculty instruction).
- Three-credit is equivalent to 150 minutes (at a minimum) of class time per week for 15 weeks (37.50 hours, direct faculty instruction).

An equivalent amount of work is required in courses and academic activities where direct instruction is not the primary mode of learning, such as online and hybrid courses, laboratory work, independent study, internships, practica, studio work, etc. Credits will be awarded on the basis of documented learning objectives, expected learning outcomes, and student workload expectations within a specified period of academically engaged time. Credit awarded for courses taken via

distance learning is the same regardless of delivery method; transcripts do not record delivery method. The College makes no distinction between credits earned in ground courses, versus those credits earned via hybrid or distance education means. Regardless of course delivery style (ground or online), the total time incurred during a semester is adequate to allow students to reach mastery level of the student learning outcomes. Credit hours for courses vary based on the credits awarded for a single course.

Faculty Instruction

Credits	Faculty Instruction	Total Class Minutes/Hours per Semester
1	50 minutes	750 minutes (12.50 hours)
2	100 minutes	1,500 minutes (25 hours)
3	150 minutes	2,250 minutes (37.50 hours)
4	200 minutes	3,000 minutes (50 hours)
5	250 minutes	3,750 minutes (62.50 hours)
6	300 minutes	4,500 minutes (75 hours)

Faculty Instruction and Student Preparation Time

Credits	Faculty Instruction	Student Preparation	Total Faculty/Student Minutes per Semester
1	50 minutes	120 minutes	2,550 minutes
2	100 minutes	240 minutes	5,100 minutes
3	150 minutes	360 minutes	7,650 minutes
4	200 minutes	480 minutes	10,200 minutes
5	250 minutes	600 minutes	12,750 minutes
6	300 minutes	720 minutes	15,300 minutes

Accelerated Sessions: Courses offered within the standard 15-week semester in which the credit hours offered are the same as standard semester courses. The content and substantive learning outcomes are the same. These courses must meet the definition of standard lecture contact time within the time frame the accelerated version is offered (750 minutes per credit).

Lecture/Seminar: Course focuses on principles, concepts or ideas, lecture, discussion, and demonstration. A semester credit hour is earned for fifteen, 50-minute sessions of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of student preparation time outside of class per week throughout the semester. A typical three-credit hour course meets for three, 50-minute sessions or two, 75-minute sessions a week for fifteen weeks. Most lecture and seminar courses are awarded three credits.

Laboratory: Practical application type courses where the major focus is on “hands-on” experience to support student learning (use of equipment, activities, tools, machines generally found in a laboratory). 1- 2 Laboratory credits represent a minimum of 1 hour per week of lecture or discussion plus a minimum of 2 – 4 hours of scheduled supervised or independent laboratory work.

Studio: Courses taught as applied study on a private or semi-private basis. Students receive

anywhere from 1 – 2 credits for applied music courses. Private instruction ranges from 30 to 60 minutes with independent practice as prescribed by the instructor.

Internship/Field Experience: Courses developed for independent learning and the development and application of job related or practical skills in a particular discipline. These courses allow for observation, participation, and fieldwork, and are generally offered off campus. Internship time includes a combination of supervised time by approved experts outside the college, student assignments, and time supervised by a college instructor.

- Minimum number of hours varies based on credits
 - 3 credit internship – 150 hours throughout the semester
 - 1 credit internship - 50 to 100 hours throughout the semester
 - Student teaching ranges from 1 – 12 credits - 87.50 – 562.50 hours per semester

Independent Study: Courses that permit a student to study a subject or topic in considerable depth beyond the scope of a regular course. Students meet periodically, as agreed upon with the faculty member, for the duration of the course. College faculty provides guidance, criticism, and review of the student's work. Students demonstrate competency through the completion of a final assessment either by submitting a final paper, project or portfolio, etc. as required by the faculty member. Credit hours are assigned based on the amount of activity associated with the course, faculty supervision, and amount of student outside work.

Hybrid: A course is considered hybrid (or blended) when it is composed of both online learning and classroom learning and incorporates the best features of both environments to meet the learning objectives of the course. No less than 51% of the course is to be scheduled as face-to-face, and no more than 49% of the course is to be scheduled as online. For a three-credit course, no less than 76.50 minutes (1.275 hours) a week can be scheduled face-to-face and no more than 73.50 minutes (1.225 hours) per a week can be scheduled online equaling a total of 150 minutes of instruction per week.

Online (Asynchronous): Courses where “instructors and students do not meet in the same space”. Regardless of mode of instruction, courses should be consistent in terms of quality, assessment, learning outcomes, requirements, etc. as courses offered face-to-face with the same department prefix, number, and course title. Faculty must demonstrate active academic engagement through interactive methods, including but not limited to, interactive tutorials, group discussions, virtual study/project groups, discussion boards, chat rooms, etc. Simply logging on, either by faculty or students, does not constitute active student learning. Credits hours assigned to a course delivered online must equal the number of credit hours for the same course delivered face-to-face.