

## CREDIT HOUR POLICY

### **I. General Policies**

- A. The definition of a credit hour unit is based, in general on contact hours plus independent work. In this policy, the term *contact hour* refers to time spent in required instructional contact with the course instructor.
- B. For undergraduate courses, each credit hour in lecture or discussion courses will typically require 50 minutes (one classroom hour) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work for each week of a fifteen week semester (for a total of 45 hours per unit per semester).
- C. For graduate courses, each credit hour in lecture or discussion courses will typically require 50 minutes (one classroom hour) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and three hours of out-of-class student work for each week of a fifteen week semester (for a total of 60 hours per unit per semester).
- D. Since “seat time” is the federal standard for measurement with regard to the credit hour, in courses such as those offered online to which this standard may not apply, a credit hour shall be measured by an equivalent amount of work by students as defined by the appropriate University policies.
- E. Guidelines for common course types are provided below. For courses that do not fall into one of the categories listed below, the course description must explain the conditions for credit which must reasonably approximate the standard for lecture and discussion courses. For instance, conditions for credit may be addressed by number of contact hours per week and/or expected time spent in independent work.
- F. Courses may be offered for variable credit hours (either for a range of credits in a single term, or for a different number of credits from one term to another).

## II. Guidelines for Common Course Types for Undergraduate Courses

Course Type	Typical Number of Student Hours <u>in Class</u> Weekly per Unit	Typical Number of Student Preparation/Activity Hours <u>Out of Class</u> Weekly per Unit	Minimum <u>Total</u> Hours per Unit	Number of Semester Credit Hours Earned across 15 Weeks
<i>Lecture, seminar, discussion, recitation</i>	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours weekly	1 unit
<i>Activity supervised as a group</i> (laboratory, field trips, practicum, workshop, group studio, physical education)	2-3 hours	0-1 hour	3 hours weekly	1 unit
<i>Independent study, individual studio, tutorial, culminating experience:</i> study given initial guidance, criticism, review and final evaluation of student performance by a faculty member	0-1 hour: time spent in initial guidance, criticism, review and final evaluation of student performance	2-3 hours	45 hours per semester	1 unit
<i>Practice</i> (supervised clinical rounds, visual or performing art studio, fieldwork)	0 – 1 hour	2-3 hours in supervised and/or independent practice	3 hours weekly	1 unit
<i>Practicum/Internship</i>	N/A	variable	45 hours per semester	1 unit
<i>Credit by Examination:</i> student showing mastery through credit-by-examination	N/A	N/A	N/A	Units assigned at the discretion of the University
<i>Sessions</i> (e.g. summer sessions, intersessions, special sessions, shortened sessions, term sessions)	Variable but proportional to hours spent for the same activity during a regular term	Variable but proportional to hours spent for the same activity during a regular term	45 hours	Units assigned proportionately to those earned for the same activity during a regular term; units assigned at the discretion of the University with no more than one credit per week of full-time study

## III. Guidelines for Contact Hours for Credential Courses (to be determined)

## IV. Guidelines for Contact Hours for Common Course Types for Graduate Courses

### A. Lecture or Discussion

One weekly contact hour per credit.

## **B. Seminar**

For each seminar, the average number of weekly contact hours may range from 2/3 of an hour to 2 hours per credit

(1) There may be *fewer* contact hours per week for seminars which have higher expectations for outside independent work.

(2) There may be *more* contact hours per week for seminars which have lower expectations for outside independent work.

## **C. Laboratory**

One to four weekly contact hours per credit.

(1) There may be *fewer* contact hours per week for laboratories which have higher expectations for outside independent work.

(2) There may be *more* contact hours per week for laboratories which have lower expectations for outside independent work.

## **D. Independent Study (including Culminating Experience)**

Contact between instructor and student is required, but variable and not necessarily on a weekly basis.

## **E. Experiential (e.g. Internship/Practicum/Field Experience)**

Contact between instructor and student is required, but variable and not necessarily on a weekly basis.

(1) *Fewer* contact hours will be necessary for an experiential course in which a considerable amount of the student's time is devoted to reading, research, and other academic activities to which the field experience is supplemental. *More* contact hours will be necessary if the academic component involves a less significant proportion of the student's time.

(2) *Fewer* contact hours in the setting will be necessary for an experiential course in which the student receives a significant amount of supervision and instruction from a regular member of the faculty. *More* contact hours in the setting will be necessary if the student receives less direct supervision, or less time devoted to instruction, from the faculty.

## **F. Short Courses**

The following guidelines will be used to determine the appropriate credit for post-baccalaureate courses of shorter duration than the regular full- or half-term offerings.

(1) In short courses, the total number of contact hours and independent work expected will be equivalent to a multiple of 15 times the weekly amount given in each category above. For example, a lecture or discussion course should have 15 contact hours per credit hour since these courses would normally have one contact hour per credit hour per week.

(2) All short courses shall consist of at least three separate meetings for each credit hour and shall extend over a duration of at least five days.

**V. Implementation of the Credit Hour Definition**

- A. In order to address the WASC requirement to monitor the implementation of Sacramento State's credit hour definition, for courses in the course approval process, course proposals should clearly indicate the course type. It is not the intent of the Credit Hour Definitions given in this document to describe all individual courses across the University, but rather to describe typical practices within course types. Programs proposing courses whose expectations lie significantly outside of those delineated in the Definitions above shall provide a justification within the course proposal.
- B. For existing courses, each department will review their current courses and determine if each course adheres to the guidelines delineated in this Credit Hour Definition Policy. Existing courses that have expectations that lie significantly outside of those delineated in this policy shall provide a justification for the deviations. Departmental course credit hour review will be requested every five years by the Office of Academic Affairs.

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*Approved by the Faculty Senate, March 20, 2014*

*Approved by President Gonzalez, April 9 2014*