

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

Section: Academic Administration Section Number: 2.____

Subject: Semester Credit Hour Definition Date of Present Issue: 03/05/17

Date of Previous Issues:

PURPOSE:

To provide an institutional definition of the semester credit hour and formalize that definition through institutional policy readily available for students, faculty and the general public.

DEFINITIONS:

In accord with federal regulations, state guidelines and the Higher Learning Commission standards, LSSU defines a semester credit hour as follows:

A [semester] 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:

(1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours. 34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)

<http://policy.hlcommission.org/Federal-Regulation/assignment-of-credits-program-length-and-tuition.html>

LSSU defines “one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction” as 50-60 standard minutes. Hour totals for a course include time used for evaluations, tests and final examinations. The amount of credit awarded for any activity should be in keeping with the learning outcomes; evidence of student achievement must be documented.

Course learning outcomes are defined by the school and approved as part of a curriculum review process which includes recommendations from the University Curriculum Committee – a majority-faculty body with representation from every school and the Administration. Outcomes are established independently of the modality of course delivery such that the credit hours for a course title will not change if the course is offered in face-to-face sessions with synchronous faculty-student interaction, in blended (hybrid) delivery, or in a fully online course.

Student-led tutoring, such as Supplemental Instruction or Structured Learning Activities, provides peer-support to reinforce, expand and strengthen understanding of course content. Credit is not awarded for student-led tutoring, tutoring activities do not contribute to calculation of course grade, and participation **cannot** be required.

The standard University semester is 15 weeks, including the final examination week. Courses scheduled for compressed schedules carry the same academic credit hours, meet the same student

learning outcomes, and share the same expectations for an equivalent amount of work as defined by the semester credit hours, as a normally scheduled course.

All definitions and standards apply to all instructional modalities and instructional locations, including dual enrollment, Early-Middle College, Regional Centers, online, and blended (hybrid) courses.

TYPES OF COURSES ¹ (hours indicated represent the minimum requirements)

Clinical – courses that require observation, participation, client/pupil studies, etc. Specific programmatic accreditation requirements, or applicable state regulations may set higher standards, but shall not be lower than the base of 1 credit hour awarded for each three (3) hours of clinical experience per week for a total of 45 hours in a 15-week semester.

Individualized/Directed Study – courses that are based on consultation and guidance from an instructor with meeting times established as TBA. One credit hour shall be awarded for each three (3) hours of student work per week for a total of 45 hours in a 15-week semester.

Laboratory – courses where the instructor provides direct supervision of student creative or investigational work, whether individually or in small groups, in a controlled experiential learning environment requiring specialized equipment and/or facilities. Laboratory hours are determined by the amount of time the student would spend to conduct specific faculty directed activities, including the development of written laboratory reports. Travel to and from distant experiential learning locations is not part of laboratory time. One credit hour shall be awarded for each three (3) hours of student work per week for a total of 45 hours in a 15-week semester.

Lecture – courses focused primarily on one-way communication (irrespective of modality) from instructor to students, but may be combined with elements of in-class discussion or other individual or group learning activities. One credit hour shall be awarded for each one (1) hour of lecture combined with two (2) hours of out-of-class work per week for a total of 45 hours in a 15-week semester. The course syllabus should identify the out-of-class work required to meet the credit hour standard.

Lecture/Laboratory – courses which have both lecture and laboratory component have credit awarded as though each were considered separately. A course with a designation of SCIN100 Science (1,2) 2 cr would require for each of the 15 weeks, one (1) hour of lecture instruction per week, two (2) hours of student work outside of class per week for the lecture, two (2) hours per week of supervised laboratory instruction, and one (1) hour per week of student work outside of lab – for a total of 45 hours for lecture and 45 hours for lab – 90 hours total.

Recitation – an optional component of a course where the instructor provides guided study to reinforce and apply course content in problem solving and other activities similar to the assignments in the course. One credit hour shall be awarded for each one (1) hour of Recitation combined with two (2) hours of out-of-class work per week for a total of 45 hours in a 15-week semester. The course syllabus should identify the out-of-class work required to meet the credit hour standard.

Practicum/Internship – courses where the title or course description define the course as a practicum or internship, including cooperative education courses. Students receive credit for practical, degree-related experiences gained outside the classroom or laboratory. One credit hour shall be awarded for

¹ http://policies.wayne.edu/academics/14-1-policy_on_course_schedule_types_credit_hours_and_delivery_modes.php

each three (3) hours of student work per week for a total of 45 hours in a 15-week semester. Additional departmental requirements may also be denoted in the course description

MODALITIES OF COURSE DELIVERY:

The credits awarded for a particular educational experience will be based on the credit determination derived from the course type, irrespective of the modality used for course delivery, including delivery through online and blended types.

Standard – a traditional modality for courses where the instructor meets and interacts with students in the same physical space for 100% of the instructional time. Sometimes referred to as face-to-face, grounded instruction it is always synchronous and may include lectures and/or structured whole class or group discussions and other activities. Courses delivered in a standard modality may incorporate the use of online learning management systems, like Moodle, to support student learning through activities such as the viewing of documents, participation in asynchronous discussions, and submitting assignments in fulfillment of the requirement for out-of-class student work.

Other – Courses which are not delivered in a traditional modality must meet the same credit-hour requirement as standard courses, including evidence of active student engagement through structured synchronous and/or asynchronous interactions with students. Such interactions may include web-based delivery, online learning management system tools such as chats, discussion boards, written responses to student posts, feedback on student writing and other course assignments, etc. “Time spent logged into a learning management system does not constitute active faculty teaching or active student learning.”²

Blended – a course modality where instructors interact with students in the same physical space for less than 100% of the instructional time with the remainder of the instructional time provided through forms of distance education. Sometimes referred to as hybrid courses, courses delivered in this modality must demonstrate active student engagement.

Online – a course modality where instructors interact with students for 100% of the course through one or more forms of distance delivery, including web-based interaction and online learning management systems.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

- <http://www.lssu.edu/cmscatalog1617/academic-policies.php>
- <http://policy.hlcommission.org/Federal-Regulation/assignment-of-credits-program-length-and-tuition.html>
- <https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/definition-credit-hour>
- <https://wiki.fortlewis.edu/display/POL/Academic+Credit+Hour>
- <https://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf>
- <https://www.inverhills.edu/Policies/pdfs/Academic/Credit-Hour-Policy-3-36-2.pdf>

Revision Date	Revision Summary	Revision Made By	Title/Dept.
3-1-2017	Formalize credit hour policy in alignment with Federal definition that addresses all delivery modalities.	D. Finley	Provost

² https://www.cmich.edu/office_president/general_counsel/Documents/p05008.pdf