

Policies and Procedures

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PURPOSE

Official University Credit Hour Policy

POLICY

The semester credit hour is the unit of instruction at Creighton University. The University's Credit Hour Policy is based on courses taught in a standard 15-week semester, with expanded guidelines for courses not taught in the standard format or that are not classroom-based learning experiences. The guidelines represent a minimum baseline; it is acceptable to exceed these levels.

Standard 15-Week Semester Courses

One credit hour is constituted by a minimum of one hour of classroom or direct instruction plus a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for a semester (or its equivalent). Utilizing the Carnegie Unit, "one hour" of instruction or class work equals 50 minutes; a semester is defined as not less than 15 weeks.

An equivalent amount of student work (minimum three hours per week for a semester of combined direct instruction and out-of-class student work) must be represented for a credit hour in other academic activities such as laboratories, internships, practica, studio work and other academic work.

Courses Meeting Fewer than 15 Weeks and Blended Delivery Courses

The credit hours awarded for a course must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester.

The hours of direct instruction and out-of-class student work may consist of course activities including, but not limited to:

- Face-to-face course meetings
- Time to read assigned texts or other assigned materials
- Virtual course meetings, student-instructor, or student-student interactions
- Experiential learning activities consistent with the learning objectives of the course, such as service learning projects, research with faculty, or practicum placements
- Synthesis/processing/reflection time and activities (may be used for writing or production of creative work which may take many forms including but not limited to journals, formal papers, blogs, art, music, etc.)

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Assigned activities should reflect a reasonable expectation by the instructor of the time it would take to meet the learning objectives of the course or assignment.

Blended Course Definition: 24-74% of course work is done via distance education in which instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.

Distance Learning Courses

The credit hours awarded for a course must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester.

Evidence of parity of credit hour allocation for distance learning courses that are also offered in a face-to-face format must be documented on the “Distance and Face-to-Face Credit Hour Parity” worksheet (Appendix A).

Credit hours for distance learning courses for which parity with the face-to-face course was not indicated by the “Distance and Face-to-Face Credit Hour Parity Worksheet” or which are not also offered in a face-to-face format will be verified using the University’s “Distance Course Credit Hour Calculator” (Appendix B).

Distance Learning Course Definition: All or the vast majority (75% or more) of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other. The academic unit sponsoring the course or program will use this definition to determine if the course is a distance learning course.

Internships /Practica

The credit hours awarded for a course must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester.

Specific internship guidelines are provided at the School/College in which the course is housed.

Independent or Directed Study Courses

The credit hours awarded for a course must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester.

Independent Study courses are often offered as variable credit hours, generally 1 to 3 credits. Specific independent study guidelines are provided at the School/College in which the course is housed, however in general they should have content that is unique from other approved courses

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in the curriculum and be taught in individualized or small group sessions with the faculty member guiding it (face-to-face or distance).

The hours of direct instruction and out-of-class student work may consist of course activities including, but not limited to:

- Time spent on course-related reading or other content delivery media
- Substantive face-to-face or virtual student-instructor interaction
- Writing assignments or other forms of learning assessments
- Experiential education activities

Faculty-Led Travel Courses

The credit hours awarded for a course must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester.

The hours of direct instruction and out-of-class student work may consist of course activities including, but not limited to:

- Course meetings before, during, and after the dates of travel
- Time to read/view assigned texts
- Lectures (from the course instructor, guest lecturers, faculty/staff/students at partner institutions, guides, local residents, etc.)
- Discussion meetings (with course instructors, guest lecturers, faculty/staff/students at partner institutions, guides, local residents, peers, etc.)
- Museum, clinic, business, government building or other site visits
- Organized cultural excursions and performances that engage students with the learning objectives of the course
- Service learning projects
- Student presentations
- Synthesis/processing/reflection time (may be used for writing, discussion, or production of creative work which may take many forms including but not limited to journals, formal papers, blogs, art, music, etc.)

Correspondence Courses

The credit hours awarded for a course must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester.

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Correspondence Course Definition:

Federal Definition: 1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor, 2) Interaction between the instructor and the student is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student, 3) Correspondence courses are typically self-paced, 4) Correspondence education is not distance education.

At Creighton the minimum course completion time is 12 weeks and the maximum is six months from the date of enrollment.

AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF POLICY

The University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

APPENDIX A**Distance and Face-to-Face Credit Hour Parity Worksheet**

The purpose of this worksheet is to document the credit hour parity between a course offered at a distance and in the face-to-face format. If the response to any of the criteria is No, credit hour allocation for the distance course will be verified using the University's distance course credit hour calculator.

Name of Distance Course:**Three letter, three number designation:****Date worksheet completed:****Attach course syllabi for the distance and the face-to-face course.**

Criteria	Response	General Comments Explanation for each No response
Length of term (in weeks) is the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Course learning outcomes are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The total number of direct instruction activities is the same (add together the synchronous plus asynchronous direct instruction activities)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Number and length of reading assignments are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Level of reading assignments are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Number and length of other assignments (papers, presentations, etc.) are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Level of other assignments (papers, presentations, etc.) are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Number of assessment activities are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Level of assessment activities are the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

APPENDIX B

Distance Course Credit Hour Calculator

Documenting Credit Hours for Online Courses

Learning Activities: In Class Time & Homework

<i>Seat Time (In Classroom Time) Equivalent for Online Courses</i>	
Number of Discussion Boards # of Words Required for Initial Posting – Initial posting by student Reading DB Postings # of Words Required for Responses: Minimum required number of responses	Total discussion boards for the duration of course Required minimum number of words for initial DB postings per week. Required number of initial DB postings. Assumption: Read at 180 words per minute, students read all peers' postings for the duration of the course. Required minimum number of words for DB responses to peers. Number of responses required per DB.
Reading Instructor's feedback	Number of assignments for which students will review feedback. Assumption: 10 minutes allotted per graded assignment for the student to review instructor feedback
Quizzes	Number of quizzes during the course. Assumption: 60 minutes allotted for taking a quiz
Weekly Lecture Notes	Total of weekly lecture equivalents. Assumption: 50 minutes allotted per issuance of weekly lecture notes
Links to External Websites	Total of external websites, non-classroom websites, that students are directed to visit. Assumption: 20 minutes per URL
Midterm Exam	Assumption: 3 hours allotted for taking the

	exam,
Final Exam	Assumption: 3 hours allotted for taking the exam,

Total In-class time

<i>Out-of-Class Time Equivalent for Online Courses</i>	
Assumption is course materials are delivered electronically	Assumption: 200 words read per minute or 180 words read per minute for electronic materials
# of Pages Read in the Course Materials	Total number of pages read by students. (Include supplemental resources.)
Formal Writing Assignment Quantity: Writing Calculation: Writing Preparation Time: Researching Calculation:	Assumptions: 20 words written per minute and 30 minutes for each page of writing. 120 minutes for preparation time, 120 minutes per page of writing
# of Misc. Assignments:	Total number of assignments in the class that do not fit with any of the above entries. Assumption: 120 minutes per miscellaneous assignment
Student Studying/Preparation Time Mid Term Preparation Final Exam Preparation Quiz Preparation	Reflects the preparation/studying time for students. Assumptions: 10 hours for studying/preparation. 3 hours to take the exam, 10 hours for studying/preparation 60 minutes of prep time.

Total Out-of-Class time

Writing Calculations	
Requirement	How Many of Each
Research Paper Average number of pages Writing Calculation: Researching Calculation: Writing Preparation Time:	Assumptions: 20 words written per minute and 30 minutes for each page of writing. 120 minutes for preparation time, 120 minutes per page of writing
Case Study Average number of pages Writing Calculation: Researching Calculation: Writing Preparation Time:	Assumptions: 20 words written per minute and 30 minutes for each page of writing. 120 minutes for preparation time, 120 minutes per page of writing

Time allocated for formal writing assignments will be calculated using the above criteria. The writing calculations are then figured in the total for Out-of-Class Time.

Assumptions Used for Calculations

In order to provide a consistent approach for calculating the in-class and out-of-class equivalencies we need to use some standard assumptions. The discussion with individual instructors will provide additional context for the course and allow adjustments to be made to the calculation if needed.

Composition Speed for Discussion Board Postings: 25 words written per minute

Time provided for discussion board posting: 20 minutes per discussion board

Reading peer’s discussion board postings: read at 180 words per minute, students read all peers’ postings for the duration of the course.

Reading Instructor Feedback: 10 minutes allotted per graded assignment for the student to review instructor feedback

Quizzes: 60 minutes allotted for taking a quiz and 60 minutes of prep time

Weekly lecture notes: 50 minutes allotted per issuance of weekly lecture notes

Links to external web sites: 20 minutes per URL

Midterm Exam: 3 hours allotted for taking the exam, 10 hours for studying/preparation

Final Exam: 3 hours to take the exam, 10 hours for studying/preparation

General reading assumption: 250 words per double spaced page

Reading course materials: 200 words read per minute or 180 words read per minute for electronic materials

Miscellaneous assignments: 120 minutes per miscellaneous assignment

Composing a formal writing assignment: 120 minutes for preparation time, 20 words written per minute and 30 minutes for each page of writing

Conducting research for a formal writing assignment: 120 minutes per page of writing

Resources

Smith, Brenda D. "Breaking Through: College Reading" 7th Ed. Longman, 2004

Guide to Subject Specialists on Determining Credit Hours. Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, NW, Suite 2, Washington, DC. 2009
Credit Hour Definitions and Assignment Policies: Custom Research Brief. Education Advisory Board. 2012.

Powel, K., Stephens-Helm, J., Burgess, J., Ice, P. An Adaptive Model for Calculating Contact Hours in Distance Education Courses. American Public University System. 2012