Credit Hour Definition

UNIVERSITY POLICY #252

Authority:
Approval Date: May 11, 2016
Effective Date: May 11, 2016
Revision History: None
President's Signature: On File

SECTION 1: Purpose

1.1 This policy is intended to describe and guide the determination of credit hours awarded for all courses and programs, regardless of academic level, at West Liberty University. West Liberty University hereby adopts the Federal Definition of the Credit Hour as described below.

SECTION 2: Federal Definition of a Credit Hour

2.1 For purposes of this policy and in accordance with federal regulations, 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:

2.1.1 Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week 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

2.1.2 At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in Item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the Institution including laboratory work, internships, practice, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

SECTION 3: Application of Credit Hour Policy

3.1 This credit hour policy applies to all courses at all levels (graduate, professional, and undergraduate) that award academic credit (i.e. any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University) regardless of the mode of delivery including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. Academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

3.2 The expectation of contact time inside the classroom and student effort outside the classroom is the same in all formats of a course whether it is fully online, a hybrid of face-to-face contact with some content delivered by electronic means, or one delivered in lecture or seminar format. Syllabi for courses that have less structured classroom

schedules, such as research seminars, independent studies, internships, practice, and studio work, as well as accelerated, online and hybrid classes, or any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours, at a minimum, should clearly state learning objectives and expected outcomes that meet the standards set forth above.

SECTION 4: Academic Calendar

4.1 West Liberty University adheres to the Carnegie unit for contact time (750 minutes for each credit awarded). The annual Academic Calendar is established in accordance with WLU Procedure 246: Academic Calendar. The Academic Calendar must have a minimum of 750 minutes of instruction per credit hour. The standard meeting times for courses are a 50-minute, Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule and a 75-minute, Tuesday-Thursday schedule. For the standard 3-credit hour course, 2,250 minutes of instruction are required. The calendar is planned with a minimum of 42 Monday-Wednesday-Friday meeting days and 28 Tuesday-Thursday meeting days. The policy allows an examination period to be counted in the minutes of instruction. The calculation for summer sessions follows this same standard of 750 contact minutes for each unit of credit which means longer class meeting times over the course of the two summer terms. While courses offered in accelerated or other non-traditional formats may include reduced instructor-led instruction time, they will include correspondingly larger amounts of independent or collaborative instructional activities. In all cases, course objectives and student outcomes will be the same for a course, no matter its timing or the delivery method.

4.2 The University Provost maintains the official Academic Calendar on its website: https://westliberty.edu/provost-office/academic-calendars/. In addition, the Academic Calendar is published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

SECTION 5: Curriculum Review

5.1 The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate Studies Council are charged with following the policy on credit hours in their review and approval of ail courses and for certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the credit hour standard. The determination of credit hours is made when a new course or a revision to an existing course is proposed. The submitted syllabus and/or course description and materials are examined for contact time as well as for assignments and evaluation mechanisms.