

Credit Hour Policy

Policy 214

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to support Appalachian State University's compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' (SACSCOC or "Commission") expectations regarding credits and federal regulations governing the award of financial aid.

1.2 As part of the Commission's review of the University seeking initial or continuing accreditation, the SACSCOC conducts reviews of the University's assignment of credit hours. Academic credit has provided the basis for measuring the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled not only in traditional classroom settings, but also laboratories, studios, internships and other experiential learning, and distance and correspondence education.

1.3 Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the common currency of academic credit to support a wide range of activities, including the transfer of students from one institution to another.

1.4 For several decades, the federal government has relied on credits as a measure of student academic engagement for the purpose of awarding financial aid.

2 Scope

2.1 This applies to all faculty, staff and students of Appalachian State University.

3 Definitions

3.1 Credit Hour

the unit by which an institution measures its course work. The number of hours assigned to a course is a measure of the outcomes expected, the mode of instruction, the amount of time spent in class, and the amount of work that is expected outside of class in order to complete all course objectives.

3.2 Semester Credit Hour

the most commonly used unit for reporting the credit earned in a class and is based on a sixteen week calendar at Appalachian State University. Across the UNC system, a class must meet for a minimum of 750 minutes for every semester hour of credit (See Appendix A). Many institutions refer to this standard as the "Carnegie Credit Hour," but a thorough review of the history of that term has revealed that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was not the source of that standard. Regardless of the actual origin of the term, the standard of two or more hours outside of class for every hour of in-class instruction is a common standard that is clearly reflected in the SACSCOC credit hour rule.

4 Policy and Procedure Statements

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All courses offered for credit at Appalachian State University (the University) must meet both internal and external accreditation standards for class contact hours and for expected out-of-class learning. Internal policies are stated in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins and are consistent with the University's accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards. The University of North Carolina Policy Manual includes specific requirements for class meeting times in section 400.1.6. Specifically, a class must meet for one hour per week for fifteen weeks for each semester hour of credit granted. Thus, a three credit hour class must have 45 scheduled class sessions on the MWF schedule; classes that meet for 90 minutes twice a week need to have 30 class meetings. These standards apply not only to traditional on-campus classes that meet face-to-face, but also to online courses, study away, and study abroad. The total number of meeting times for a course is inclusive of the scheduled final exam.

4.1.2 During the 2010-2011 academic year, Faculty Senate proposed a policy requiring at least two hours of preparation outside of class for every hour in class. That policy was approved by the University Academic Policies & Procedures Committee (AP&P) and is published as part of the Undergraduate Bulletin:

Standards of Scholarship In our mission statement, we state that Appalachian State University aims at "providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers" as well as "maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students." Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

4.2 Credit Guidelines

4.2.1 One semester credit is assigned in the following ratio of component hours per week devoted to the course of study:

1. Non-Laboratory Class Instruction

4.2.2 Lecture or Seminars:

1. Normally, one credit hour is associated with a class meeting for 50 minutes per week for an entire semester (or the equivalent 750 semester-minutes for 15 weeks of the semester).

4.2.3 Web/Web Based Majority/Web Based Hybrid - Formal presentation and interaction occurs only, primarily or partially through online communication via the internet. Presentation may incorporate elements of lecture, lab, and other activity types. Flexibility of time and location for delivery are key factors that distinguish online course from traditional courses. With Web-Based Majority or Web Based Hybrid, less flexibility and some face-to-face meeting are part of the course. Credit hours associated with this organizational type of courses should be equivalent to credit hours when a course is delivered in another format on campus. Departments/College/Schools are responsible for determination that the course delivery is equivalent.

4.2.4 Lecture/Laboratory Class Instruction

4.2.4.1 Combined Lecture/Lab or Studio - Normally, for courses that contain both a lecture and lab component 2-4 credit hours are assigned to the course. Typically that breaks down to 50-150 minutes of lecture per week (or the equivalent 750-2,250 semester minutes) and 50-200 minutes of laboratory or studio instruction (or the equivalent 750-3000 semester minutes).

4.2.4.2 Clinical - This type of instruction is reserved for courses in the health sciences discipline. May include lecture, laboratory, seminars and conferences, but the primary learning activity is by supervised "hands-on" experience. Clinical contact hours (84-126 hours per semester) are determined in most cases by program accreditation bodies. Normally, these courses meet 1-2 days per week for 5.6 to 8.4 hours per week (or the equivalent of 5,040-7,560 semester minutes). Semester credit is 2-3 credit hours.

4.2.5 Laboratory Class Instruction

4.2.5.1 Laboratory - Normally, once credit hours is associated with a class meeting for 50-150 minutes per week for an entire semester (or the equivalent of 750-2,250 semester-minutes for 15 weeks).

4.2.5.2 Studio - Two to four semester credit hours are associated with a class meeting 100-200 minutes per week

4.2.5.3 Performance/Recital/Ensemble - Zero to one semester credit hour is associated with each of the School of Music performance based courses. Normally courses meet once a week for 100-250 minutes (or the equivalent of 1,500-3,750 semester-minutes for 15 weeks).

4.2.5.4 Physical Education/Outdoor/Activity Based - One semester credit hour is associated with a class meeting 50 minutes per week for an entire semester

4.2.5.5 Conversational Foreign Language - One semester credit hour is associated with a class meeting 50 minutes per week for an entire semester.

4.2.5.6 Lesson/Individual Instruction - One semester credit hour is associated with a class meeting 100-150 minutes per week for an entire semester (or the equivalent of 1,500 -2,250semester minutes for 15 weeks).

4.2.6 Independent Study

4.2.6.1 Experiential, Research, Individual Study, Student Teaching - Credit hours associated with this type of instruction will be assigned credit depending upon the amount of activity associated with the course, faculty supervision, and student outside work activity.

4.2.7 Continuing Education –Other Credit

4.2.7.1 Study Abroad/Study Away - Credit hours associated with these types of courses should be equivalent to credit hours when a course is delivered in another format on campus. OIED and the Overseas Education Committee are responsible for

ensuring course delivery is equivalent (See Appendices B, C).

4.2.7.2 Short course/conferences/workshop - These units of credit are usually assigned to continuing education work accomplished during short courses, conferences or workshop. Typically, 10 hours of contact type equates to 1 CEU, although this can vary from state to state.

4.3 Types of Credit Awarded by Appalachian State University

4.3.1 Regular Credit: Credit earned for regularly offered collegiate courses of instruction that meet the requirements of a degree program.

4.3.2 Thesis Credit: Students who are judged by the thesis or dissertation committee chair to be making satisfactory progress in the term of enrollment will be assigned a grade of IP (in progress) by the chair for that term. Students who are not progressing satisfactorily will be assigned a grade of U. This credit allows measure of the expected amount of work and the resources used, while the student actually earns zero degree credit hours. Examples: Master's thesis/Doctoral Dissertation

4.3.3 Transfer Credit: Appalachian State University Students will be granted credit for hours earned at other accredited institutions. The North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement dictates that students who have earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree from any North Carolina Community College have met the general education requirements of any University of North Carolina campus. In addition, completion of the UNC Common Core at one of the North Carolina Community Colleges satisfies general education requirements. Individual courses taken at other institutions are articulated to Appalachian State University by the appropriate department. Courses that have been previously reviewed and approved for University credit are kept in a database maintained by the Office of Transfer Articulation and are automatically articulated to University credit. Courses not previously approved may be submitted to the appropriate department for review.

4.3.4 Credit by Examination: Upon the recommendation of a graduate student's committee and with the approval of the chair of the department in which it is listed, one graduate course may be challenged by examination. Credit by examination may not be used to repeat a course. Anyone seeking to pursue credit by examination must be a degree- or certificate-seeking student at Appalachian or must be working towards credit for teacher licensure. If arrangements can be made with the appropriate department chair, a fee of \$50.00 is charged for the examination. A receipt from the Student Accounts Office must be shown to the department chair before final approval can be given and the examination can be administered. If the examination is passed, credit without grade will be noted on the student's transcript. The department chair will notify the Graduate School using the credit by examination form, to prompt the Registrar to enter the credit on the permanent record and notify the cashier to reimburse the faculty member who administered the examination. If the examination is not passed, no notation is made on the transcript.

4.4 Dual Degree/Middle College/Etc.

4.4.1 Life Experience

Persons interested should see the Coordinator of Credit for Life Experience in the University College Academic Advising Office. In exceptional cases, credit can be awarded for prior non-college-based learning if the credit sought is related to the student's degree program (i.e. general education, major or licensure requirements). Assessment of prior learning can commence only after a student has been admitted to the University and has declared a major.

The student will first meet with the designated Academic Advising representative who will help in defining the areas or disciplines in which appropriate creditable learning may have occurred. Actual assessment is conducted by a faculty member in the appropriate academic area. A \$100.00 fee for each area of assessment will be charged. Payment is made to the Student Accounts Office.

Note: Anyone seeking credit for life experience must be either a candidate for an undergraduate degree at Appalachian or taking courses for teacher licensure. Credit for life experience cannot be used to repeat a course, nor can it be used to meet the University's residency requirements for graduation.

Summary of Semester Credit Hours Guidelines					
Instructional Type	Weekly Student Class Hours	Preparation Weekly per Class Hours	Semester Minutes Class/Prep	Number of Semester Credit Hours Awarded	Notes
Non-Laboratory Class Instruction					
Lecture	1 to 4	Required	750-3,000/1,500-6,000	1 to 4	
			750 to		

Seminar	1 to 3	Required	2,250/1,500-4,500	1 to 3	
Web/Web Based Majority/Web Based Hybrid	3	Required	2250/4,500	3	
Lecture/Laboratory Class Instruction					
Combined Lecture/Lab	3 to 5 class hours	varies 2,250-3,750/0	4		
Combined Lecture/Studio	1-5 class hours	varies	750-3,750/0	2 to 4	
Clinical	5.6 to 8.4 class hours (84 to 126 contact hours per course)	varies	750-3,750/0	3	
Laboratory Class Instruction					
Laboratory	1 to 3 class hours	varies	750-2,250/0	1	
Studio	2 to 4 class hours	varies	750-2,250/0	2 to 3	
Performance/Recital/Ensemble	2-5 rehearsal hours	varies	750-2,250/0	0 to 1	
Physical Education/Outdoor/Activity based	3 hours	varies	750-2,250/0	1	
Conversational Foreign Language	3 hours	varies	750-2,250/0	3	
Independent Study					
Instructional Assistant	0	varies		1	
Lesson/Individual Instruction	1 to 3	varies	750 to 2250/0	varies	
Practicum	0	varies		varies	
Research	0	varies		varies	
Student Teaching	0	varies		12	
Thesis/Dissertation	0	varies		1 to 3	
Field Experience	0	varies		varies	
Independent/Individual Study	0	varies		varies	
Internship	0	varies		1 to 12	
Continuing Education--Other Credit					
Study Abroad/Away	1 to 3 hours	varies	varies	1 to 6	Depends on length of trips
Individual Study	0	varies		varies	
Short course/conferences/workshops	10 class hours		500/0	1 CEU	

5 Additional References

5.1 Appendices

[Appendix A: UNC Policy Manual Statement on Credit Hours](#)

[Appendix B: Study Abroad, Study Away, and other Short Term Courses](#)

[Appendix C: Approval Process for Short-Term Study – Away Courses \(Includes any short-term course offered within U.S Borders\)](#)

[Appendix D: Examples of Classes That Meet Appalachian State University Credit Hour Guidelines](#)

5.2 Supporting Documentation

1. [UNC "The UNC Academic Calendar," Section 400.1.6 of the UNC Policy Manual](#)
2. [SACSCOC 2011. "Credit Hours Policy"](#)
3. [Appalachian State University Undergraduate Bulletin](#)

4. [Appalachian State University Policy on Internet/Web-Based Courses](#)
5. [AOEP Proposal Form](#)
6. [Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Between The University of North Carolina and The North Carolina Community College System](#)
7. [Transfer Equivalency Course Search](#)
8. [Undergraduate Bulletin](#)

6 Authority

7 Contact Information

8 Original Effective Date

August 30, 2012

9 Revision Dates