

I. Overview

All credit-bearing degrees and certificate programs are approved by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE). Calculation of credit hours follows Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board Policy 5.11, which are consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's definition of a credit hour.

II. State and Federal Credit Hour Definitions

Federal Credit Hour Definition: 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 not less than:

- One hour of classroom or direct instruction and a minimum of two hours of 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 of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- At least an equivalent amount of work as required in 1 of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practical, studio work, and other academic work leading toward the award of credit hours. 34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)

III. Standards for Determining Credit Hours

A credit hour is an amount of work that reasonably approximates not less than

- One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two clock hours of out-of-class work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or at least the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph 1 of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

The regulations make an exception to this definition in the case of programs that are subject to one of the clock-hour/credit-hour conversion formulas as described below:

- A semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
- Conversion: Number of clock hours in the credit-hour program/37.5 U.S. Department of Education definition of a clock hour:
- A 50-to-60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;
- A 50-to-60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or
- 60 minutes of preparation in a correspondence course

Generally accepted standards under the Arkansas Division of Higher Education include:

- 1 semester credit for each 12.5 hour or 750 minutes of lecture
- 1 semester credit for each 25 hours or minimum of 1500 minutes of laboratory instruction
- 1 semester credit for 37.5 hours or minimum 2250 minutes of clock, clinical, practicum, internship, shop instruction, or other self-paced learning

IV. Course Type and Modality Definitions**LECTURE/SEMINAR**

Courses focus on principles, concepts or ideas, lecture, discussion, and demonstration. A semester credit hour is earned for fifteen, 50-minute sessions of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of student preparation time outside of class per week throughout the semester. A typical three-credit hour course meets for three, 50-minute sessions or two, 75-minute sessions a week for fifteen weeks. Most lecture and seminar courses are awarded three credits.

ACCELERATED TERMS

Courses offered within the standard 15-week semester in which the credit hours offered are the same as standard semester courses. The content and substantive learning outcomes are the same. These courses must meet the definition of standard lecture contact time within the time frame the accelerated version is offered (750 minutes per credit).

LABORATORY

Practical application courses are those courses where the major focus is “hands on” experience to support student learning (use of equipment, activities, tools, machines generally found in a laboratory). Science laboratory classes will meet 2-3 hours per week to equal one semester credit hour. Technical Skills laboratory classes will meet three hours per week to equal one semester credit hour.

INTERNSHIP/FIELD EXPERIENCE

Courses developed for independent learning and the development and application of job related or practical skills in a particular discipline are classified as Internship/Field Experience. These courses allow for observation, participation, and fieldwork, and are generally offered off campus. Internship time includes a combination of supervised time by approved experts outside the college, student assignments, and time supervised by a college instructor. The minimum number of hours varies based on credits assigned to each internship course.

- 1 credit hour internship = 50 hours throughout the semester

PRACTICUM/STUDENT TEACHING

Courses developed for independent learning and the development and application of job related or practical skills in a particular discipline are classified as Practicum/Student Teaching. These courses allow for observation, participation, client evaluation, fieldwork, and are offered off campus. Practicum time includes a combination of supervised time by approved experts outside the college, student assignments, and time supervised by a college instructor.

CLINICAL PLACEMENT

Supervised experiences where students are afforded an opportunity to apply skills and techniques acquired from assessment and intervention-oriented course material are classified as clinical placement. Number of hours varies by academic program based on clinical placement site hour requirements and student assignments. Clinical courses and fieldwork will meet the minimum required by the respective professional accrediting or regulatory agency.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Courses that permit a student to study a subject or topic in considerable depth beyond the scope of a regular course is titled independent study. Students must interact with the faculty member on a regular and substantive basis to ensure progress within the course. College faculty provide guidance, criticism, and review of the student's work. Students demonstrate competency through the completion of a final assessment either by submitting a final paper, project or portfolio, etc., as required by the faculty member.

HYBRID

A hybrid course is considered hybrid (or blended) when it is composed of both online learning and classroom learning and incorporates the best features of both environments to meet the learning objectives of the course.

ONLINE (ASYNCHRONOUS)

These courses are where "instructors and students do not meet in the same space." Regardless of mode of instruction, these courses are consistent in terms of quality, assessment, learning outcomes, requirements, etc., as courses offered face-to-face with the same department prefix, number, and course title. Faculty must demonstrate active academic engagement through interactive methods, including but not limited to, interactive tutorials, group discussions, virtual study/project groups, discussion boards, and chat rooms. Simply logging on, either by faculty or students, does not constitute active student learning. Credits hours assigned to a course delivered online must equal the number of credit hours for the same course delivered face-to-face.

V. Ensuring Compliance

The academic calendar is set by the Vice Chancellor for Academics and approved by the Administrative Cabinet. The semester start and end dates are selected to ensure the minimum number of days for all courses offered. All calculations will be consistent with state statute, federal, and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements.

Adopted: October 5, 2022