

University Curriculum Committee  
**Guidelines for Courses with Varying Credit Hours**  
(Presented to the Faculty Senate, 11-6-07)

Courses such as independent studies, independent research, selected readings, selected topics, etc., that will vary in the number of credit hours based on the volume of content covered or work performed, should be carefully documented. The general principle is that the proposal should clearly indicate the volume or depth of work in proportion to the number of credit hours assigned.

The following is an example of the catalog copy for a proposed economic course. Other proposed courses would follow a similar format for the marked catalog copy and substitute the specialty area (i.e. technology, nursing, etc) for economics:

**4521, 4522, 4523. Independent Study and Research in Economics (1,2,3) (F,S,SS)**  
P: Consent of instructor and dept. chair. Extensive or selected readings taken from modern economic research monographs or in specialized areas of economics in which student has taken one or more courses.

The proposal should contain all the elements of a standard course proposal. To address the uniqueness of courses with varying credits, proposed syllabi should identify how the topic will be chosen and it should include a listing of potential topics areas. This list does not need to be exhaustive, but should give a student or faculty member an idea of what type of coverage would be appropriate.

The proposal should include a syllabus for all three courses and should progress in depth based on the 1, 2, and 3 hour courses. Using the previous example the following course objectives could be:

The students will:

1. Select a research question relevant to the specific course topic
  
2. Identify and review economic theories and models relevant to the research question and explain how they apply to the question
  
3. Identify empirical data resources relevant to the question and explain how the data would be used in the models to address the question

4. Compile relevant empirical data identified in (3), above, and demonstrate their application in the theories and models identified in (2), above
  
5. Submit a draft(s) of the economic analysis paper to the instructor for review. The instructor will critique the manuscript and make suggestions for revision, before the student can submit a final comprehensive paper that satisfies objectives (1) through (4).

For the 1 hour course, course objectives 1-3 should be completed, in the two hour course, 1-4 and the three hour course, 1-5. Of course, proposals will have different areas which increase according to the increase in hours for the course (i.e. number of contact hours or length of final paper). The key is that there are clear identifiable ways to equate what needs to be completed for the different number of credits.

A completed and approved package submitted by the Economics Department can be found at: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/ucc/12-14-06-UCC-Agenda.cfm> for additional examples.

These are just guidelines for courses with varying credit. Please contact the University Curriculum Committee Chair or a committee member if you have questions or need additional guidance.