

Definition of a Semester Credit Hour

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Authority: Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

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Related Policies:

Additional Resources: [Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation](#)

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1. Introduction

New federal regulations essentially delegate responsibility for defining a credit hour to the accrediting agencies. SACS (4.9) now requires that “the institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that (1) conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and (2) include the federal definition of credit hour as outlined in Commission policy.”

1.1. 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.

1.2. 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.

1.3. The purpose of this policy is to clearly indicate to faculty, administrators and students SACS and ECU's expectations regarding credits, to set forth the federal regulations regarding the award of credit, and to establish the definition of "credit hour" used by East Carolina University in policies, regulations, rules and reports, in the absence of any stated exception or alternative definition.

2. Federal Definition of the Credit Hour. For purposes of the application of this regulation at ECU and in accord 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 not less than:

2.1 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

2.2 At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 2.1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. (34 CFR 668.8, July 1, 2011)