

Motion on Policy and Procedures for Determining Credit Hours
Referred by the Academic Affairs Leadership Team

Motion:

The Faculty Senate recommends the adoption of the attached Policy and Procedures on Determining Credit Hours Awarded for Courses and Programs.

Radford University
Policy and Procedures on Determining Credit Hours
Awarded for Courses and Programs

I. Policy Statement

Radford University uses the Carnegie unit to measure semester credit hours awarded to students for course work. A semester credit hour is often measured by the number of hours of academic engagement and preparation (homework). For courses offered during a regular semester that lasts at least 15 weeks of instruction, a semester credit hour is defined as 15 hours of academic engagement and 30 hours of preparation—totaling 45 hours of student work for an academic semester credit hour.

The Radford University credit hour policy is consistent with the Federal definition of a credit hour as “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:

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. At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 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. “

(SACSCOC Credit Hours Policy Statement, <http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/CreditHours.pdf>)

Specifically:

1. For *lecture-based classes*, a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least one hour (50-minute period) per week of "seat time" in-class and two hours per week of out-of-class student work for fifteen weeks. Hence, a standard three semester credit hour lecture class meets for at least forty-five contact hours and 90 hours of outside activities per fifteen week semester
2. For *laboratory classes*, one semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of a minimum of three hours of laboratory work per week for fifteen weeks.

3. For *individual instruction classes*, e.g., independent and directed studies, the total number of hours of work required of students is equivalent to that of a traditional class that meets face-to-face.

4. For *classes offered in an alternative or compressed format*, the hours are prorated so the classes contain the same total number of hours as if the classes were scheduled for a full fifteen-week semester.

5. For *graduate and professional students*, the required academic work normally will exceed a minimum of two hours of out of class work per credit per week.

Ultimately, the responsibility for protecting the academic integrity of curricula, programs, and class schedules rests with the University's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The University may adjust its basic measure for awarding academic credit proportionately to reflect modified academic calendars and formats of study as long as it meets the aforementioned criteria. The University may also grant semester credit hours for formalized instruction in a variety of delivery modes, such as a lecture course, which also requires laboratory work and/or supervised independent study or field activities.

Regardless of the mode of instructional delivery or class scheduling, the University will assign academic credit consistently across academic programs, as well as for transfer credit. In all cases, the student learning outcomes must be equivalent.

II. Procedures for Programs/Courses Offered in Alternative Format/Mode

In the context of Radford University, programs/courses delivered through the following categories are deemed to be in alternative format or mode from the traditional, semester-based setting:

- (1) Fully Online or hybrid;
- (2) Maymester;
- (3) Wintermester;
- (4) Summer sessions (I, II, III);
- (5) Accelerate; and
- (6) Study Abroad.

For programs/courses that have gone through the approval process by the University Curriculum Committee:

- (1) Responsibility for determining the equivalence of courses delivered in an alternative format/mode should rest on each Departmental Curriculum Committee;

- (2) Each Departmental Curriculum Committee will design a systematic process to evaluate the comparability of courses delivered in alternative format/mode to similar traditional courses (for example by using a rubric or other means that can provide an objective equivalence);
- (3) For a traditional-format course to be taught in an alternative format for the first time, it would have to be submitted to the Departmental Curriculum Committee for determination of credit hour equivalency;
- (4) For courses that are only offered in alternative format/mode, the Departmental Curriculum Committee would determine that the required amount of work and student learning outcomes correspond to what would obtain if the courses were offered during a semester-based course;
- (5) Each Departmental Curriculum Committee should keep the minutes of their meetings when approval decisions about a given course are made.

New Course Proposal

For a brand new, non-traditional course proposal, Section II(b) (*Detailed Description of Conduct of Course*) of a New Course Proposal Form should include an endorsement that the Departmental Curriculum Committee has reviewed the proposal and find the contents and expected student learning outcomes to be equivalent to the work expected in a semester-based course.

III. Review and Approval Process:

1. Course developers will ensure that the required quantity of student learning per credit is equivalent to a minimum of forty-five hours of coursework over a fifteen-week semester through instructional activities that address and demonstrate student competencies in defined learning outcomes. These instructional activities should draw upon instructional practices approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
2. University Governance Bodies (e.g., the University Curriculum Committee, College Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, Departmental Curriculum Committee, and Faculty Senate) recommend to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President the appropriate semester credit hour definition and application according to the following guidelines:
 - a. The University's semester calendar will not violate any accreditation standards, federal guidelines, etc.;
 - b. The University's semester calendar will facilitate the educational attainment of the University including the process for the award of transfer credits; and

- c. A semester credit hour will be consistent throughout all the academic programs of the University.

IV. Policy Administration

1. Each academic term, the University Registrar and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will assist Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Coordinators to schedule classes in conformity to the University's semester credit hour policy.
2. Prior to the beginning of student registration, the University Registrar will deliver an official Banner system report verifying that all proposed class schedules meet the University's semester credit hour policy to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval.
3. If proposed class schedules do not meet the minimum time requirements, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will direct College Deans to coordinate with their Department Chairs and Program Coordinators to adjust class schedules to conform to the University's semester credit hour policy.
4. Periodically, the University Curriculum Committee, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Faculty Senate review the semester credit hour policy as defined by the Carnegie unit measure and forward recommendations to the President for approval.
5. The University Registrar posts the policy to the University website and includes the policy in the Radford University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

Approved by the Academic Affairs Leadership Team, October 29, 2014.