

# Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

## Academics

**POLICY NAME:** Credit Hour Definition and Assignment

**POLICY NUMBER:** 4141

---

### **A. PURPOSE**

To define credit hour at the Nebraska State Colleges in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations and provide parameters for the assignment of credit hours to courses using a variety of instructional modalities. The Federal Credit Hour definition is endorsed by the Board and paraphrased below.

### **B. DEFINITIONS**

**1. Federal Credit Hour 34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010):** 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:

- 1.1. One (1) hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two (2) hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen (15) weeks for one (1) semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten (10) to twelve (12) weeks for one quarter (1/4) hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- 1.2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.

### **C. POLICY**

#### **1. Assignment of Credit Hours**

The Board requires that:

- 1.1. Faculty shall ensure that the time involved in student learning per credit hour is the equivalent to that needed to attain the learning outcomes in comparable courses;
- 1.2. Learning outcome equivalency may be achieved through multiple course modalities;

- 1.3. Credit hour equivalencies are to be based on documented qualitative and quantitative expectations for the learning outcomes; and
- 1.4. Student learning outcome equivalencies reflect differences in delivery methods, quality of instruction and interaction, degree of supervision, measurements of student work, academic disciplines, academic calendars, and degree levels.

## 2. Course Modalities

The following minimum guidelines shall be followed. These are thresholds and courses may utilize higher hourly requirements per credit hour. Where direct instruction and faculty to student interaction occurs, an “hour” consists of the normal fifty (50) minute periods set by the Colleges.

- 2.1. **Traditional lecture courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of fifteen (15) hours of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of thirty (30) hours of out-of-class student work for a combined total of forty-five (45) hours during the instructional period.
- 2.2. **Laboratory courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours of combined direct instruction, laboratory work, and out of class study during the instructional period.
- 2.3. **Studio courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours of combined direct instruction, studio work, and out of class study during the instructional period.
- 2.4. **Individual self-paced/directed study/independent study courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours of individual work which may include direct instruction or student study during the instructional period.
- 2.5. **Courses offered in a shortened format** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours of combined direct instruction and student learning activities which covers the same learning outcomes as those in the fifteen (15) week, semester long course from which it is derived.
- 2.6. **Seminars, institutes, workshops and topics courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours of direct faculty instruction and student learning activities during the instructional period.
- 2.7. **Online courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours of combined direct faculty interaction via instructor-led asynchronous or synchronous online learning activities and additional student to student, student to instructor, and individual learning activities during the instructional period. For existing traditional courses that are also taught online, the student learning outcomes and credit hours should be the same regardless of modality.

- 2.8. **Hybrid courses** – for courses which utilize a combination of two (2) instructional modalities, namely face-to-face faculty instruction and online, instructor-led asynchronous or synchronous learning activities, a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least fifteen (15) hours of direct faculty instruction via face-to-face and instructor-led asynchronous or synchronous online learning activities and a minimum of thirty (30) hours of out of class student work for a combined total of forty-five (45) hours during the instructional period.
- 2.9. **Internship and cooperative/work-based learning courses** - a semester credit hour consists of at least forty-five (45) hours of supervised internship or work based learning activities during the instructional period.
- 2.10. **Field experiences and study away/study abroad courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of forty-five (45) hours of combined direct instruction and student learning activities which may include among other activities shadowing, touring, visitations, written papers, formal presentations, and individual or group work, during the instructional period. If a program has specialized accreditation the field experience should follow the guidelines of the accrediting organization unless that amount is less than the stated hours above.
- 2.11. **Private music lessons and recital courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least one half (1/2) hour per week of direct faculty instruction or supervision and a minimum of seven (7) hours per week of unsupervised out of class student practice during a fifteen (15) week period.
- 2.12. **Drama production courses** - a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least fifteen (15) hours of instruction plus an additional thirty (30) hours of cast or crew work.
- 2.13. **Performance courses** – a semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least forty-five (45) hours in varying combinations of rehearsal time, performances, and individual practice. Generally large ensembles include at least three (3) hours of rehearsal time per week; chamber groups, and small ensembles include at least two (2) hours of rehearsal time per week.
- 2.14. **Teaching field experience courses** - a semester credit hour consists of at least the equivalent of five (5) full days, or one (1) week, of teaching experience.
- 2.15. **Combination modalities** – any courses that include multiple modalities of instruction that are not explicitly outlined above, shall follow the federal guidelines and include at a minimum forty-five (45) hours of instruction and student work per credit hour.

**FORMS/APPENDICES:**

None

---

**SOURCE:**

**Policy Adopted:** March 2013

**Policy Revised:** November 2019, March 2022