

Webber International University

Florida and North Carolina Campuses

Definition of Credit Hours	Approved: 2011 (other iterations prior to the merger)
	Approved By: Joint Institutional Planning Committee Florida Faculty: April 28, 2014 North Carolina Faculty: May 9, 2014
FR 4.9 CR 2.7.1 CS 3.4.6	Revised and Reaffirmed: July 31, 2017

Background

FR 4.9 “The institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to Commission policy.” (Definition of credit hours)

Reference: CR 2.7.1 (Program Length)

Reference: CS 3.4.6 (Practices for awarding credit). “The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery.”

Reference: AACRAO Guidance (as suggested in the March 2012 SACS Resource Manual for the *Principles of Accreditation*, p.59)

Federal definition of a “credit hour”:

“*Credit Hour:* As defined in 34 CFR 600.2, 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) One hour of classroom or direct faculty 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 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 in paragraph (1) of this definition 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.”

U. S. Dept. of Education Guidance: (Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010, Office of Postsecondary education).

- a) Asynchronous online courses: “There is no ‘seat time’ requirement implicit in the definition of a credit hour.”
- b) A week of instructional time: “In general, a week of instructional time is any seven-day period in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examination occurs.”

Webber International University Credit Hour Policy – All Locations

In-seat Courses: One semester credit hour is awarded for 1 hour of classroom work, with the expectation of a minimum of 2 additional hours of out-of-class student work, each week for 15 weeks.

- Therefore, a 3 credit course typically meets for 3 hours (about 150 minutes) per week, with the expectation of an additional 6 hours per week of out-of-class work, for a 15 week semester.

On-Line and Blended Courses: In on-line and blended courses, for each 1 semester credit hour awarded, it is expected that a typical student will spend 1 hour directly engaged with the course material in a combination of ways such as: synchronous and/or asynchronous interaction with the instructor, completing online modules, reading articles or texts, viewing recorded lectures or other video content, participating in student/faculty chat rooms, and other course-related activities, for a 15 week semester. As is the case for in-seat courses, there is an expectation that a typical student will also engage in a minimum of 2 additional hours of “out-of-class” work for each 1 credit hour that is to be awarded.

Semester: A regular semester will be at least 15 weeks long, as determined using federal guidance.

Condensed Timeframes: In a course (in-seat or on-line) meeting for less than a 15-week semester, the expectations for the number of hours of student engagement with course material per week, per credit hour, are increased proportionately.

- The expectations for the achievement of intended student learning outcomes remain the same in both regular and condensed timeframes.

Application: In accord with paragraph (2) of the federal definition, this policy applies to all types/modes of instruction, including but not limited to:

1. International courses
2. Laboratories
3. Studios
4. Internships
5. Experiential learning activities
6. Practica

Implementation responsibility: Academic Affairs

Policy review cycle: At least every three years

Compliance: Mandatory

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