

Policy Number/Title: 2.1.09 Credit Hour
Effective Since: 04/15/2021
Last Revision Approved: 04/15/2021
Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

1. Scope:

This policy applies to students, faculty and staff.

2. Definitions:

This section was intentionally left blank.

3. Policy:

Winthrop employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies and procedures conform to Federal policy and best practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded.

Federal Definition of Credit Hour

For purposes of the implementation of this policy and in accordance 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:

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.

Implementation of Credit Hour Policy



Regardless of the format in which it is delivered, all courses taught at Winthrop University require equivalent student-instructor and student-student interaction. The online modality achieves equivalent interaction and learning through asynchronous discussions and group work, and a number of online courses also incorporate some face-to-face meetings. In addition, the expectation exists for online courses to include the same content and learning outcomes as traditionally taught courses. To ensure equivalency, faculty develop the online structure and content following the policy of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges that the technology is appropriate for the course and that the course results in collegiate-level learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree awarded.

Nationally Accepted Standards for Credit Hours and Semester Length

Every Winthrop course requires the equivalent of 50 minutes of instruction per week based on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS™) definition for credit hour, which states that a credit hour is a unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term. The University also follows the semester system as defined by IPEDS: a calendar system that consists of two sessions called semesters during the academic year with about 15 weeks for each semester of instruction. There may be an additional summer session. Thus, a three-credit course meets for 150 minutes or three hours each week for a total of 45 hours per semester. Courses offered in shortened summer sessions are adjusted to require equivalent instructional time.

Practices to Determine Amount and Level of Credit

The faculty is responsible for the curriculum. Credit values for courses are determined at the department level based on faculty expertise and course objectives. Upon departmental approval the course is entered into the online curriculum action system and undergoes additional evaluation as it moves through the course approval system.

All curriculum and review/approval committees and bodies of Winthrop University are charged with following the policy on credit hours in their review and approval of all courses and for certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the credit hour standard.

4. Procedures:

This section was intentionally left blank.

5. Resources:

This section was intentionally left blank.

6. History of Revisions:

04/15/2021 Minor Revisions
02/01/2017 Minor Revisions
08/01/2012 Policy first established

7. Approvals:

Responsible Officer Signature/Date:

Vice President/Senior Administrator Signature/Date:

President Signature/Date: