

Resolution 2012-1. On Adopting the Federal Definition of the Credit Hour.

The Faculty Council enacts:

Section 1. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill hereby adopts the Federal Definition of a Credit Hour (described in *34 CFR 600.2*, effective July 1, 2011) as follows:

Federal Definition of the Credit Hour. For purposes of the application of this policy 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:

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 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.

Section 2. This credit hour policy applies to all courses at all levels (graduate, professional, and undergraduate) that award academic credit (i.e. any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University) regardless of the mode of delivery including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. Academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

Section 3.

1. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill adheres to the Carnegie unit for contact time (750 minutes for each credit awarded) in its official Academic Calendar
2. Additional guidelines and procedures for implementing and monitoring compliance with Federal requirements and accreditation standards related to credit hours should be recorded in a University Policy Memorandum (UPM) maintained by the University Registrar.

Submitted by the Educational Policy Committee.

Comment: As outlined in the SACS/COC Policy concerning credit hours “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.” In addition, “...the federal government has relied on credits as a measure of student academic engagement as a basis of awarding financial aid.”

It is noted that Federal regulations provide institutions with some flexibility to take into consideration alternative delivery methods, types of coursework, measurements of student

work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels when determining credits to be awarded for student work. The Federal definition does not dictate particular amounts of classroom time versus out-of-class student work. Credits may be awarded on the basis of documentation of the amount of work a typical student is expected to complete within a specified amount of academically engaged time. The basic requirement is that a credit hour “reasonably approximate” the minimum amount of work specified in Section 1, above.