



**OFFICIAL POLICY**

**Subject/Title:** Credit Hour Policy- Academic Policies

**Policy Number:** FPU-5.0003AP

New  Revised  Technical Revisions Only  Emergency Policy

**Date First Adopted:** September 23, 2014

**Date Revised:** July 17, 2021

**Responsible Division or Department:** Academic Affairs

**Initiating Authority:** Vice President of Academic Affairs

**A. APPLICABILITY and PURPOSE:**

These guidelines on academic credit hours are applicable to all members of the University community.

**B. POLICY STATEMENT:**

Academic credit provides the basis for measuring the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled not only in traditional classroom settings but also laboratories, studios, internships and other experiential learning, and distance and correspondence education. Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the concurrency of academic credit to support a wide range of activities, including the transfer of students from one institution to another.<sup>1</sup>

1. Credit Hours awarded to Florida Polytechnic University students must meet the Federal Definition of a credit hour;
2. The University Curriculum Committees evaluate courses to determine that sufficient work is required and awards appropriate credit hours for undergraduate and graduate courses;
3. For courses taught in a traditional classroom setting, the maximum number of credits to be assigned is limited to the weekly number of 50-minute contact periods (or their equivalent) with the instructor. Each 50-minute contact period requires a minimum additional two hours of student work outside of the class involving reading, exercises, etc. In other traditional classroom settings, such as laboratories, the maximum number of credits may be significantly less than the weekly number of 50-minute contact periods as determined by the Curriculum Committee.
4. The maximum number of credits for courses taught in an electronic and/or asynchronous format is equal to the credits assigned to the same course taught in a traditional classroom setting. If no such course exists, the instructor is required to write a syllabus describing the structure of the course in a traditional format. The maximum number of credits is then computed as in (3).

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<sup>1</sup> Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. (2012, January). *SACSCOC Credit Hours Policy Statement*



**C. DEFINITIONS:**

**1. Credit** - Credit is a unit of measure assigned to courses or course equivalent learning. Credit is awarded if the learning activity it represents is part of, or preparatory for, an organized and specified program leading to a postsecondary certificate or degree. Credit is a device which indicates to the learner, to educational institutions, to employers, and to others how much of the program the learner has completed. The credit awarded may be independent of where the learning occurs. If a learning activity does not meet these requirements, credit shall not be awarded.

**2. College Credit** - College credit is the type of credit assigned by Florida College System institutions to courses or course equivalent learning that is part of an organized and specified program leading to a baccalaureate, associate degree, certificate, or Applied Technology Diploma pursuant to the stipulations in subsections 6A-14.030(5)-(8), F.A.C.

**3. Federal Definition of the Credit Hour (34 CFR 600.2 Definitions)** - 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:

- a. 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 hour of credit or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter term hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- b. At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities including laboratory work, internships, practice, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
- c. **SACSCOC interpretation of Federal Standards (1) and (2) above. The following is a quote from the SACSCOC Credit Hour Policy Statement:**

An institution is responsible for determining the credit hours awarded for coursework in its programs in accordance with the definition of a credit hour for Federal program purposes. The definition does provide some flexibility for institutions in determining the appropriate amount of credit hours for student coursework.

- 1)** The institution determines the amount of credit for student work.
- 2)** A credit hour is expected to be a reasonable approximation of a minimum amount of student work in a Carnegie unit in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education.
- 3)** The credit hour definition is a minimum standard that does not restrict an institution from setting a higher standard that requires more student work per credit hour.
- 4)** The definition does not dictate particular amounts of classroom time versus out-of-class student work.

- 5) In determining the amount of work the institution's learning outcomes will entail, the institution may take into consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.
- 6) To the extent an institution believes that complying with the Federal definition of a credit hour would not be appropriate for academic and other institutional needs, it may adopt a separate measure for those purposes.
- 7) 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, or on the basis of documented student learning calibrated to that amount of academically engaged time for a typical student.

The intent of the above flexibility as provided by Federal guidance is to recognize the differences across institutions, fields of study, types of coursework, and delivery methods, while providing a consistent measure of student work for purposes of Federal programs.

#### 4. Modes of Delivery –

- a. **Direct Faculty Instruction:** A face-to-face course, also called "traditional" course, is a course that meets regularly on the main campus or at an off-campus educational site and may be supplemented with educational technology, including Internet-based technology, to enhance student learning.
- b. **Online:** Courses are offered online without any on-campus meeting requirements. In this mode, there is no physical classroom assigned, although a professor may opt for students to meet for a proctored examination or course orientation. Faculty will take into consideration students that are remote and unable to come to the Florida Poly campus and make accommodations for such students. Components of the course may include synchronous or asynchronous online delivery, video or web conferencing, or some other technological media for out of class time. These courses have the same learning outcomes and substantive components of a standard lecture/seminar course with direct faculty instruction.
- c. **Flex/Hybrid:** A flex/hybrid course is one in which a combination of direct faculty instruction and online strategies are used. A classroom will be assigned for the course, but there will be reduced time spent in the classroom. Flex/Hybrid modalities vary in required on-campus/ in-class meetings and require access to the Internet for web-based class meetings and instructional assignments. Variations are in increments of 80-99% distance; 50-79% distance; and 49% or less distance delivery. These courses have the same learning outcomes and substantive components of a standard lecture/seminar course with full direct faculty instruction.
- d. **Accelerated Courses:** This is a course offered outside of a standard 15-week semester in which the credit hours offered are the same as standard semester courses and the content and substantive learning outcomes are the same as those in the standard semester. These courses must meet the total amount of instructional and student work time even if delivered within an accelerated time frame. See the table provided in section 5. Calculating Credit Hours.
- e. **Independent Study:** A course of study in which a faculty member regularly interacts and

directs student outcomes with periodic contact. Minimum credit hours will be determined based on faculty instructional contact minutes and student outside work time. In all such instances, such courses must match the total amount of work using the examples previously provided, and the faculty member is required to keep records of the meeting times and student work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated.

**D. Procedures for Calculating Credit Hours –**

**For Lecture Classes,** one semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least one (1) hour[fifty (50) minute period] per week of in-class “seat time” and two (2) hours per week of out-of-class student work for fifteen (15) weeks.

**For Laboratory Classes,** one (1) semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of 2 hours of laboratory work, and one hour of out of class work, per week for fifteen weeks. For laboratory sections or courses that are combined (“C”) lecture-lab, the laboratory component may carry an expectation of outside-of-class work.

**For Internship Classes,** one (1) semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of 3 hours of internship work per week for fifteen weeks

Course Type	Credit Value	Lecture/Lab Hours per week (50 minutes class)	Lecture/Lab Hours per semester (50 minute class)	Out-of-class work Hours per week	Out-of-class work Hours per semester
<b>LECTURE ONLY COURSES: HOMEWORK REQUIRED</b>					
Lecture	1 Credit	1	15	2	30
Lecture	2 Credits	2	30	4	60
Lecture	3 Credits	3	45	6	90
<b>LABORATORY OR COURSES w/ COMBINED LAB: HOMEWORK MAY BE EXPECTED</b>					
Laboratory	1 Credit	2	30	1	15
Laboratory	2 Credits	4	60	2	30
Laboratory	3 Credits	6	90	3	45
<b>INTERNSHIP/EXPERIENTIAL COURSES: NO HOMEWORK OR OTHER OUTSIDE</b>					
Internship	1 Credit	0	0	3	45
Internship	2 Credits	0	0	6	90
Internship	3 Credits	0	0	9	135

<b>POLICY APPROVAL</b>	
Policy No.: FPU-5.0003AP	Date _____
_____	Date _____
Initiating Authority	Date _____
_____	Date _____
Policies Committee Chair	Date _____
_____	
President	
Approved by Florida Polytechnic University BOT, if required Date _____	
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