

Policy on Credit Hours and Course Structure

Source: Mark Hewitt, University Registrar – February 1, 2013

Definitions that we must comply with and be able to document:

Federal Definition and Commission Review of the Credit Hour

As an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Commission is obliged to follow federal law and regulations pertinent to that recognition.

Federal regulation defines a credit hour as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence 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

NEASC/CIHE Policy on Credits and Degrees 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.

By federal regulation, at the time of the Comprehensive Evaluation, the Commission will review the institution's policies and procedures for determining the credit hours that the institution awards for courses and programs and how those policies and procedures are applied to the institution's programs and coursework. As part of its review, using sampling or other methods, the Commission must make a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education. If, following this institutional review process, the Commission finds systematic non-compliance with this policy or significant noncompliance regarding one or more programs at the institution, the Commission is obliged to promptly notify the Secretary of Education.

[Translation: a 4 credit semester course must comprise 180 hours of either direct instructional time or outside the classroom work. For our regular (physical) semester courses we have required 3 hours class-time, and assumed that there were 9 hours of outside time required each week.]