

## Policy Title: Assignment of Course Credit Hours

Policy Number: **0-02-0214**

Applies to: Program Faculty, Deans

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### 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy ensures that the amount and level of credit awarded for each undergraduate, graduate and professional course is compatible with sound academic practice in each discipline, meets university expectations for rigor, meets or exceeds the minimum definition of a credit hour required under 34 CFR 600.2, and meets or exceeds the curriculum scope and sequence of similar programs offered by OHSU's peer institutions.

The assignment of credit will be based on the number of formal contact hours for each offering occurring over the length of the academic term as well as the number of hours of course preparation outside of the classroom setting performed over the length of the academic term. Where appropriate, the schools may adopt the policies and processes for assigning credit hours recommended by their discipline-specific professional organizations, as long as those policies and processes meet or exceed the minimum requirements contained in this policy.

Courses may be composed of any combination of elements described, such as a lecture course which also has required laboratory periods or a lecture course having an additional requirement for supervised independent study or tutorial activity. These definitions constitute a formalization of current and historic policy in order to ensure consistency throughout the University. The credit hour measure may be calculated proportionately to reflect modified academic calendars and formats of study, as long as an equivalent amount of work exists over that modified period of time.

Credit hours are granted for various types of instruction as follows:

1. **Lecture and Seminar Classes:** One unit is assigned for one hour of lecture or seminar per week per term. Each hour of lecture or seminar is generally expected to require two additional hours of work outside the classroom (e.g., reading, writing, case study or problem assignments).
2. **Laboratory Courses:** One unit is assigned for three or four hours of laboratory instruction or its equivalent per week per term.
3. **Clinical Experiences:** One unit is assigned for each of three or four hours of a clinical experience for undergraduate courses and four hours for graduate clinical experiences, with little or no outside preparation.
4. **Web-based or Technologically-Mediated Courses:** The units assigned to courses offered partially or totally through technology are subject to the same minimum requirements and should be consistent with the standards and learning outcomes of courses offered through face-to-face instruction. Courses offered through one or more forms of distance education are subject to the same minimum requirements for the assignment of credit hours as are required of face-to-face courses.

5. **Compressed or Self-paced Courses:** The units assigned to courses offered during an abbreviated time frame or alternative structured format must remain in compliance with these established policies and procedures for the awarding of credit regardless of format.
6. **Workshops and Contract Courses:** The units assigned to credit bearing courses offered for special populations by special arrangement will meet all regular credit hour standards established herein.
7. **Thesis/Dissertation and Independent Study:** One unit is earned for a minimum of three hours of student work per week throughout the academic term or equivalent work distributed over a different period of time.

At the discretion of the program, as well as specialized accreditation standards, limited credit may be awarded for demonstration of competency by examination. Award of credit by examination is a program-level decision and faculty are responsible for assessing student competency on examinations.

The provost will periodically review the application of the policy on credit hour across the institution to assure that credit hour assignments are accurate and reliable and any variations in assignment of credit hours conform to accepted practices.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

**2.1 Course preparation** or effort includes reading assignments, research papers, study for quizzes and examinations, developing projects, writing up case studies, journaling, discussion forums, and other group activities outside scheduled class time.

**2.2 Credit hour** is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. The credit hour is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction, and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week of an academic term, or approximately eleven to twelve weeks, for one hour of credit; or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Each school will establish a formal faculty review process for determining the appropriate number of credit hours for each course offering. If a school establishes a policy for the assignment of credit hours that exceeds the minimum requirements set forth herein, the school will publish that policy within the school's regular policy documents. This University policy addresses the federal definition of credit hours as required by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities [compliance requirements](#) as well as the requirements listed under 34 CFR 600.2.

The Office of the Provost is responsible for establishing a process to periodically review sample course offerings to ensure the consistent application of this policy in the assignment of credit hours to course offerings.

## 4.0 PROCEDURES

Schools must establish a formal faculty review process for determining the appropriate number of credit hours for each of its course offerings.

**5.0 RELATED POLICIES**

**6.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS**

Graduation requirements, credit hour, course credit
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**7.0 REVISION HISTORY**

11/14/2013	1.0	New Policy Statement
3/10/2014	2.0	Policy implemented

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**Responsible Officer:** Office of the Provost

**Policy Contact:** Associate Vice Provost, Enrollment Management

**Supersedes:** N/A