

Policy on Credit Hours and Course Expectations

Colleges, universities and accrediting bodies use the credit hour as the standard measure of academic rigor. In order to fulfill our mission, to meet our regulatory obligations and to help students understand the typical demands of our courses, these policies define a credit hour for all credit-bearing courses offered at SUNY College at Old Westbury.

Specifically, this policy:

- provides a summary table of students' course-related work expectations for a 4-credit course in various course configurations
- provides information about the way credit hours and related academic expectations are formulated in state, federal, and accreditation regulations.

Course Expectations for a 4-credit Course (in minutes, where 1 credit hour = 50 minutes)

Student workload expectation for 4-credit courses (ratios shall be pro-rated for alternative course credit loads)	In-class <i>per week</i>	Outside-of-class <i>per week</i>	Total <i>per week</i>	Total <i>per course</i>
Fall/Spring semester <i>traditional</i> courses meeting 3 hours per week for lecture/discussion (15 weeks)	180	420	600	9000
Fall/Spring semester <i>hybrid</i> courses (15 weeks)	90	510	600	9000
Fall/Spring semester <i>blended</i> courses (15 weeks)	1-179	599-421	600	9000
Fall/Spring semester <i>online</i> courses (15 weeks)	0	600	600	9000
Summer session (5 weeks) <i>traditional</i> courses	560	1240	1800	9000
Summer session (5 weeks) <i>online</i> courses	0	1800	1800	9000
Winter session (3 weeks) <i>traditional</i> courses	900	2100	3000	9000
Winter session (3 weeks) <i>online</i> courses	0	3000	3000	9000

Relevant Definitions and Policy Statement Summaries

a) United States Department of Education – Credit Hour Definition

(<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div8&node=34:3.1.3.1.1.1.23.2>)

The U.S. Department of Education defines a credit hour as:

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 not less than:

1. one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out- of-class student work 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 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.

b) Middle States Commission on Higher Education Policy

(<http://www.msche.org/documents/CreditHourPolicyRev112012.pdf>)

The Commission recognizes that institutions may use one or both of the options identified in the [US DoE] definition of credit hours when assigning credit hours.

Institutions must provide the following information to the Commission's evaluators at appropriate points of accreditation review so they can verify compliance with the credit hour regulations:

1. Written policies and procedures used to assign credit hours;
2. Evidence and analyses demonstrating that these policies and procedures are consistently applied across programs and courses, regardless of delivery mode or teaching/learning format;
3. An explanation of how the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted standards of higher education.

c) New York State Education Department:

(<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/50.1.htm>)

§ 50.1 Definitions

(o) Semester hour means a credit, point, or other unit granted for the satisfactory completion of a course which requires at least 15 hours (of 50 minutes each) of instruction and at least 30 hours of supplementary assignments, except as otherwise provided pursuant to section 52.2(c)(4) of this Subchapter. This basic measure shall be adjusted proportionately to translate the value of other academic calendars and formats of study in relation to the credit granted for study during the two semesters that comprise an academic year.

(Revised Fall 2015)