



PROCEDURE

Definition of a Credit Hour

Procedure Administrator: University Registrar

Authority: N.J.S.A. 18A:64-8; N.J.A.C. 9A:1-1.2. *Definitions*; N.J.A.C. 9A:1-2. *General Program Standards*; Federal Register Vol. 75, No. 209. October 29, 2010. Rules and Regulations. Department of Education. *Definition of a Credit Hour* (§§ 600.2, 602.24, 603.24, and 668.8); Office of Postsecondary Education GEN-11-06 "Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010"; New Jersey Administrative Code - Title 9 A Higher Education NJ 9A:1-1.2; 34 CFR §600.2 *Definitions*.

Effective Date: October 7, 2025

Index Cross-References:

Procedure File Number: 2034

Approved By: Dr. Joe Bertolino, President

I. PURPOSE:

To define a credit hour and the method used to calculate and monitor its use and corresponding measure of student achievement for all undergraduate and graduate credit-based academic programs.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Credit Hour: A measure representing the amount of work required to achieve student learning outcomes for a specific course.

B. Carnegie Unit: For a traditional format course, one (1) Carnegie Unit typically is equal to fifty (50) minutes inside the classroom per week over a 15-week semester or equivalent.

C. Semester Credit Hour:

Federal definition of "credit hour": 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:

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 the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or at least an equivalent amount of work 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. (34 CFR §600.2 Definitions.)

State definition of “semester credit hour”: 150 minutes of academic work each week for 15 weeks in one semester, which typically is accomplished by 50 minutes of face-to-face, online, or hybrid (depending on course modality or modalities) class activity each week complemented by at least 100 minutes each week of laboratory or outside assignments (or the equivalent thereof for semesters of different length). This may also be accomplished through an equivalent amount of academic work as established by an institution, which may include additional class time, laboratory work, internships, practical studio work, and other forms of academic work. (NJ 9A:1-1.2)

Semester credit hours shall be assigned to academic work and awarded to students for completion of academic work following Federal and State definitions of the credit hour and in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education. Definitions are applicable to all undergraduate and graduate credit-bearing programs.

III. ASSIGNMENT OF CREDITS HOURS

As appropriate and feasible, term and course scheduling of class time should align to the units of time referenced in Federal and State definitions as the approximate equivalent of the credit hour to facilitate compliance.

Instruction for online courses will occur through University-approved online platforms that engage students in lectures, discussion activities, virtual office hours, and other tools commensurate with this approximate equivalent.

Semester credit hour assignments occur through the curriculum process overseen by the respective academic school. New courses and associated semester credit hour assignments as well as changes to existing credit hour assignments are reviewed and approved by the appropriate academic program, program chair, and school dean.

The University assumes that students will earn one or more credits for any course listed in its academic catalog. Credit assignment reflects the principle that students should be recognized for their academic efforts, and credit assignment also acknowledges the use of faculty expertise and institutional resources to deliver courses. Zero-credit courses may be appropriate in academic settings when tied to co-curricular experiences. Likewise, variable credit courses (ranging from zero to one credit) may be suitable for certain co-curricular campus activities.

IV. CALCULATION OF CREDIT HOURS

For the purposes of calculation, tracking, and monitoring, credit hours are measured in minutes. Traditional lecture discussion courses must be scheduled to meet with the following guidelines:

1 Credit Hour (50 minutes) x 15 Weeks = 750 minutes in Classroom

2 Credit Hours (100 minutes) x 15 Weeks = 1,500 minutes in Classroom

3 Credit Hours (150 minutes) x 15 Weeks = 2,250 minutes in Classroom

4 Credit Hours (200 minutes) x 15 Weeks = 3,000 minutes in Classroom

The University Registrar will enter the semester credit hours assigned to courses in the student information system.

Schedules for full semester classes are provided by the academic schools using the University-established Course Modules. The Course Modules chart conforms to the provisions of the Academic Calendar and to State definitions of the credit hour with respect to instructional time. School Deans are responsible for ensuring that courses scheduled by their programs comply with Carnegie Units.

Schedules for online, winter or summer sessions, and subterm classes are constructed to assure delivery of the same instructional hours per semester credit hour as a full semester class. For accelerated face-to-face courses, the equivalent amount of instructional time per credit is scheduled within the course duration.

In certain cases, such as independent study, studio work, laboratory and clinical practice, experiential learning, study abroad, and thesis/dissertation projects, assigned semester credit hours may not align to scheduled class time. These and other such variances shall be approved by the appropriate Dean and Program Chair based on a verifiable rationale and/or methodology. Examples of a verifiable rationale or methodology may include an evaluation of course equivalency that is compliant with the review and endorsement by a programmatic accreditor; use of a commonly accepted approximation; or, definition of a measure of student learning in terms of outcomes, products, performance or other means of verifying achievement of academic objectives represented by the semester credit hour.

V. VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

The Registrar will generate a report each term to verify that all courses meet the credit hour and Carnegie Unit requirements. School Deans (or their designee) and the Academic Leadership Team will review the report, identify any courses that do not meet the credit hour requirement, and communicate needed changes to program faculty. Changes may include updates to course schedule, syllabi, and/or course plans, all in alignment with the resources provided by the University Center for Teaching and Learning Design.

Review History:

	Date
Procedure Administrator	05/08/2025
Faculty Senate	05/23/2025
AA Council	06/13/2025
AA Leadership	07/31/2025
Divisional Executive	08/22/2025
Faculty/Staff/Union Leaders	09/25/2025
General Counsel	09/18/2025
Senior Leadership	10/06/2025
President	10/07/2025