



## Credit Hour Policy

Area:	Division of Academic Affairs	Number:	206
Applies to:	All Academic Units	Issued:	November 4, 2013
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Policy Owner:	Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Reviewed:	
		Page(s):	2

### I. Purpose

Georgia Southern University's Credit Hour Policy follows the federal definition and the policies in effect at our accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) as well as at the University System of Georgia (USG).

### II. Policy Statement

#### *The Federal Definition*

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

- (1) 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 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 and outlined in item (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.

SACSCOC Credit Hour Policy (<http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/CreditHours.pdf>)

As part of its review of an institution seeking continuing accreditation, SACSCOC conducts reviews of an institution's assignment of credit hours. Academic credit has provided the basis for measuring the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled not only in traditional classroom setting but also laboratories, studios, internships and other experiential learning, and distance and correspondence education. Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the common currency of academic credit to support a wide range of activities, including the transfer of students from one institution to another. For several decades, the federal government has relied on credits as a measure of student academic engagement as a basis of awarding financial aid.

*The University System of Georgia's* definition of credit hours states that institutions will have two semesters, each with fifteen instructional weeks. A course offered in fewer than fifteen instructional weeks shall contain the same total hours (contact hours, preparation time, content, and requirements) as the same course offered in the standard fifteen-week semester. (*Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 3.4.2*) Furthermore, a minimum of 750 minutes of instruction or the equivalent is required for each semester credit hour. (*Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 3.4.4*)

#### *Georgia Southern University Credit Hour Policy*

The Georgia Southern University credit hour policy applies to all courses at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) that award academic credit on an official transcript regardless of the course format or mode of delivery including, but not limited to, fully online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, laboratory, studio, directed study, or study abroad. The academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

#### Lecture Courses:

Traditional lecture-based courses that meet only in a face-to-face format must meet for 750 minutes for each semester credit hour, whether offered in a full-semester, minimester, or a five-week or ten-week format. When courses are offered in hybrid or fully online format, 750 engaged minutes are still required and expected for each hour of credit and course content and learning outcomes should be equivalent to those established in face-to-face sections of the same course.

#### Laboratory/Studio/Clinical Courses:

Georgia Southern University requires 1500 engaged minutes for each semester credit hour. In the case of laboratory, studio, or clinical courses, most of these engaged minutes will be spent in the actual execution of the laboratory, studio, or clinical exercises. When the laboratory, studio, or clinical is offered in an online format, 1500 engaged minutes are still required for each hour of credit and course content and learning outcomes should be equivalent to those established in face-to-face sections of the same course.

Additionally, there is an expectation that students spend a minimum of two hours on course work outside of class for every hour spent in class. Out-of-course work might include, but not be limited to, such assignments as course related readings, research activity, project development, written theme or research papers, preparation for examinations, participation in discussion boards or focused chat rooms.