

Credit Hours Awarded for Courses and Programs

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure for determining the credit hours to be offered for all credit bearing courses and programs which conforms to commonly accepted higher education practices and includes the federal definition of a credit hour as outlined in the SACSCOC Policy Statement on Credit Hours.

II. Scope

This policy applies to students, faculty, and academic administration.

III. Policy

- A. **A credit hour is based on the Carnegie Unit and is meant to link a credit hour to some measure of student expectations and minimum amount of student work.** It 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 out- of- class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester, or,
 2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
- B. **Dyersburg State Community College's Definition of a Credit Hour**
1. One course credit hour is equivalent to one hour of instruction based on a 15-week semester. A course offered in fewer than 15 weeks shall contain the same total hours (contact hours, preparation time, content, and requirements) as the same course offered in the standard 15-week semester.
 2. Delivery
All courses must be equivalent to the standard credit hour calculation (depending on the course type), and must be consistently delivered.
 3. Course Development
All courses will be developed to be equivalent to a regular, 15-week semester even if the course is taught in an alternative or accelerated format. This procedure applies to all lecture, laboratory, and/or external learning experience courses.
 4. Reasonable Equivalencies for Course Types and Methods of Delivery
Course credit hours are granted for various types of instruction as follows:
 1. Lecture courses - The number of course credit hours awarded a lecture course will be determined by the actual number of contact hours per week

the course is scheduled using a ratio of 1 course credit hour for 1 lecture contact hour per week.

2. **Lab courses** - The number of course credit hours awarded a lab course will be determined by the actual number of contact hours per week the lab course is scheduled using a ratio of 1 course credit hour for a range of 1 up to 4 lab contact hours per week.
5. **External Learning Experience courses** - External learning experience courses include cooperative education, practicum, field experience, internship, and clinical experience. The number of course credit hours awarded an external learning experience course will be determined by the actual number of contact hours per term the external learning experience course is scheduled using a calculation ratio option deemed appropriate for a particular program.
6. **Distance Delivery Credit Hour Calculation**
All courses offered through distance learning must be developed and delivered in compliance with Dyersburg State's definition of a credit hour.

C. Courses taught in traditional classroom format during regular academic term:

1. In determining the length of a regular academic term, DSCC adheres to TBR policy 02.04.00.00 Academic and Registration Calendar.
2. DSCC requires 750 minutes of instruction per semester hour of credit for courses taught in a traditional classroom format during a regular academic term.
3. The credit hour is determined by the amount of class time and/or the amount of work both in and outside the classroom for successful acquisition of the stated course learning outcomes.
 1. To accommodate the required minutes of instruction, DSCC requires 55 minutes of instruction per class meeting for courses that meet three times per week; 85 minutes of instruction per class meeting for courses that meet twice a week and 170 minutes of instruction per class meeting for courses that meet once a week.
4. For fall and spring semesters, DSCC adheres to TBR policy 02.04.00.00 Academic and Registration Calendar, which requires a minimum of 15 weeks of instruction during the fall and spring semesters.

D. Courses taught in traditional classroom format during alternate length terms:

- All courses will comply with the 750 minutes of instruction per credit hour for courses taught in the traditional classroom setting during abbreviated terms.

E. Courses taught in a distance learning format

- Course sections taught using an asynchronous online format use, a combination of course elements provided in eLearn and may come from the following possible equivalencies:
 1. Lecture/discussion/chat sessions delivered asynchronously directly by the instructor via D2L;
 2. Required and faculty-involved asynchronous interaction via discussion boards, blogs, drop box or other appropriate media;
 3. Proctored and/or time tests/exams or student evaluation tasks delivered through D2L;

4. Assignments (reading, writing, video) that meet or exceed assignments required in a face-to-face course.

F. Courses taught in a hybrid format

- For these courses, a combination of synchronous and asynchronous course elements is provided and may come from the following possible equivalencies:
 1. Lecture delivered synchronously directly by the instructor in a face-to-face format;
 2. Required and faculty-involved asynchronous interaction via discussion boards, blogs, or other appropriate media;
 3. Tests/exams or student evaluation tasks delivered in a face-to-face format or through our course management system;
 4. Assignments (reading, writing, and video, etc.) that can exceed assignments required in a face-to-face course.

G. Courses taught laboratory or clinical setting:

- Courses for which instruction is provided in a laboratory or clinical setting which is included in assigning the number of credit hours for the course must include a minimum of two hours of laboratory or clinical instruction for the credit hour associated with the laboratory or clinical instruction. For example, a 4-credit hour science course must contain a minimum of three hours of lecture and two hours in the laboratory (3 x 55 minutes of classroom instruction + 2 x 55 minutes of laboratory instruction = 275 minutes of instruction per week).

H. Cooperative Education Work Experience:

- Courses offered as a part of the Cooperative Education Work Experience (or Internship) must adhere to the standard of a minimum of 750 scheduled minutes of instructional time or the equivalent per credit hour.

I. Studio Work:

- General guideline specifies 2 or 3 contact hours per week per credit hour

J. Applied Lessons (Music)

- General guideline specifies 7.5 hours of one-on-one instruction per term per credit hour

K. The number of credit hours required in degree programs will be in accordance with TBR Policy 2:01:00:00 - General Education Core and Degree Requirements

L. The number of credit hours required in certificate programs will be determined by the academic school offering the certificate. Course-by-course credit hour requirements are provided in the DSCC College Catalog.

IV. Compliance

All DSCC full-time and adjunct faculty will adhere to this policy.

V. Definitions

A. The Federal definition of Credit Hour (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Part 600.2):

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 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. The Carnegie Unit-Definition and Calculation

1. *Credit Hour* is the unit of measuring educational credit, usually based on the number of classroom hours per week throughout a term.
2. *Lecture Classes* - For a lecture class, one unit is considered to be one hour of lecture class time and two hours per week of homework. For the typical three-unit class, a student spends three hours per week in class and should do six hours per week of homework. The total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 15.
3. *Laboratory Classes* - For a laboratory class, the hours per week are considered to be all in class with no outside assignments. Thus, one unit is three hours per week of laboratory time.

C. **Online Course** - An online course is a course that is delivered in an asynchronous format to students through the approved electronic learning (eLearn) management system. These courses may require proctoring for assessments; however, synchronous activities may not be required.

D. **Hybrid Course** - Hybrid courses are a blend between meeting in a face-to-face setting and working online. Unlike online courses, hybrid courses include synchronous components; the scheduled face-to-face meeting requirements for these courses are listed in the semester schedule

VI. Revision History

Policy written May, 2005. Policy revised October 2012; Policy revised September 2016 and approved by Administrative Council on September 28, 2016; approved by Administrative Council on April 27, 2023; reviewed and approved by Administrative Council on February 26, 2026.