Introduction

The purpose of the Credit Hour Policy is to support Northern Kentucky University’s compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges’ (SACSCOC or “Commission”) expectations regarding credits and federal regulations governing the award of financial aid. The policy also provides faculty of Northern Kentucky University guidance in setting credit hour expectations for NKU academic courses and programs consistent with federal regulations.

As part of the Commission’s review of the University seeking initial or continuing accreditation, the SACSCOC conducts reviews of the University’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 settings, 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 for the purpose of awarding financial aid.

For a copy of the approved Credit Hour Policy, click here.

Scope

This policy applies to all faculty, staff and students of Northern Kentucky University.

Definitions

Credit Hour

For purposes of the application of this policy and in accord with federal regulations, 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

a. 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 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
b. 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, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Semester Credit Hour

For the purposes of the NKU credit hour policy, an “hour” of instruction is interpreted as 50 minutes of contact time or its equivalent. Thus each semester hour of credit involves 16 (meetings) x 50 minutes = 800 minutes per credit hour of contact time, or its equivalent, including formally-scheduled final examination periods during the period allotted for final examinations but excluding the registration period. Specific units (e.g. programs, departments, colleges) can establish greater requirements that require more student work per credit hour.

Policy and Procedure Statements

Introduction

All courses offered for credit at Northern Kentucky University must meet both internal and external accreditation standards for class contact hours and for expected out-of-class learning. Internal policies are stated in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins and are consistent with the University’s accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) standards.

During the 2014 academic year, NKU’s University Curriculum Committee proposed a policy requiring at least two hours of preparation outside of class for every hour in class. The policy was adopted by the Faculty Senate at the April 21, 2014 meeting. The policy was approved by the Northern Kentucky University Board of Regents at the May 7, 2014 meeting.

Syllabus Guidelines

Credit Hour Policy Statement – Required (Boilerplate)

In accordance with federal policy, NKU defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in the achievement of student learning outcomes (verified by evidence of student achievement) that reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of classroom instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work. For every course credit hour, a typical student should expect to spend at least three hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work including, but not limited to, class meeting time, reading, reviewing, organizing notes, studying and completing assignments. At least an equivalent amount of time is expected for other academic activities such as online courses, laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work
and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Estimates of the time required for a typical student to complete course expectations are as follows:

[Insert a course specific outline of time expectations]

For a copy of the required statement, click here.

**NOTE:**

As indicated in the policy, there is a minimum expectation for two hours of out-of-class student work for every one hour (50 minutes) of class time. This equates to the following total minimum course time expectation for all academic activities:

- 1 credit hour = 45 hours minimum
- 2 credit hours = 90 hours minimum
- 3 credit hours = 135 hours minimum
- 4 credit hours = 180 hours minimum
- 5 credit hours = 225 hours minimum
- 6 credit hours = 270 hours minimum

**Example 1: Face-to-face.** The following provides an example of a fictional face-to-face 3-credit hour course. Faculty shall develop appropriate assignment categories and time allocations to reach the minimum course time expectations.

In accordance with federal policy, NKU defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in the achievement of student learning outcomes (verified by evidence of student achievement) that reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of classroom instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work. For every course credit hour, a typical student should expect to spend at least three hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work including, but not limited to, class meeting time, reading, reviewing, organizing notes, studying and completing assignments. At least an equivalent amount of time is expected for other academic activities such as online courses, laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Estimates of the time required for a typical student to complete course expectations are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class: 3 days x 50 minutes x 15 weeks</td>
<td>37.5 Hours (2250 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings: 15 chapters x 3 hours each</td>
<td>45.0 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments: 8 assignments x 2 hour each</td>
<td>16.0 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Projects: 3 x 4 hours each</td>
<td>12.0 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project and oral presentation</td>
<td>25.0 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>135.5 Hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 2: On-line. The following provides an example of a fictional on-line 3-credit hour course. Faculty shall develop appropriate assignment categories and time allocations to reach the minimum course time expectations.

In accordance with federal policy, NKU defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in the achievement of student learning outcomes (verified by evidence of student achievement) that reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of classroom instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work. For every course credit hour, a typical student should expect to spend at least three hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work including, but not limited to, class meeting time, reading, reviewing, organizing notes, studying and completing assignments. At least an equivalent amount of time is expected for other academic activities such as online courses, laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Estimates of the time required for a typical student to complete course expectations are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time (Hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Communication with instructor</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Text Readings</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online PowerPoints/Podcasts</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Responses</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and submission of final project</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>135.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a copy of the NKU required language for syllabi, click here. This document contains the Boilerplate language and the examples.

Types of Credit Awarded by Northern Kentucky University

Regular Credit: Credit earned for regularly offered collegiate courses of instruction that meet the requirements of a degree program.

Transfer Credit: Northern Kentucky University students will be granted credit for hours earned at other regionally accredited institutions. The Kentucky Transfer Module Agreement dictates that students who have earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree from any Kentucky Community and Technical College have met the general education requirements for Northern Kentucky University. In addition, completion of the Kentucky Common Core at one of the Kentucky Community and
Technical Colleges satisfies general education requirements. Individual courses taken at other institutions are articulated to Northern Kentucky University by the appropriate department. Courses that have been previously reviewed and approved for University credit are kept in a database maintained by the Office of Transfer and are automatically articulated to University credit. Courses not previously approved may be submitted to the appropriate department for review.

The university has other articulation agreements between institutions that address specific equivalencies for transfer credit.

**Nontraditional Credit:** The university awards various types of nontraditional credit including credit by examination, advanced placement (AP), advanced standing examination, college level examination program (CLEP), DSST Examinations, international baccalaureate, prior learning assessment via portfolio development, military and department of defense, vocational articulation, American Council on Education non-collegiate sponsored instruction, and correspondence courses. Please see the NKU Undergraduate Catalog for more information on the awarding of credit. The university has procedures in place to ensure that the transfer credits awarded for nontraditional credit meets SACSCOC guidelines.