

Policy and Procedures for Awarding Credit

Purpose

East Tennessee State University determines credit awards for its courses and programs based on the professional judgment of its faculty in applying accepted practices in higher education and in alignment with its mission. Faculty, Department Chairs, Deans, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Graduate Council, and the Academic Council are responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs oversees the implementation and determines the effectiveness of the policy and procedures as part of the university's planning and institutional effectiveness (PIE) process. If needed, revisions of the policy or procedures would be developed by an Academic Council ad hoc committee and approved or amended by the Council.

The purpose of this document is to define *credit*, the criteria for determining credit, process for determining credit, and external confirmation. The U.S. Department of Education Regulatory Language is included. Note that ETSU prefers not to use "hour" in its policy as it places emphasis on learning outcomes not time.

This policy and procedures are approved by the East Tennessee State University Academic Council and published in the *Faculty Handbook*, *Chairs Handbook*, and *Curriculum Process System*. Compliance with the policy is assured. All course and program credit awards are documented electronically on the *Curriculum Process System* by the various proposal approvers.

Definition

A semester credit is a unit of educational accomplishment represented by learning outcomes. In accordance with federal regulation (34 CFR 600.2 and subsequent guidance), one semester credit reasonably approximates the learning outcomes expected from one hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student academic engagement each week for 15 weeks. Courses offered in alternative calendars and course types require an equivalent amount of faculty and student engagement and learning outcomes.

Criteria for Determining Credit for Courses

Faculty and review committees determine the quantity of credits for a course in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education. Institutionally established criteria reflect professional standards and include some or all of the following:

- discipline-specific best practices;
- purpose and goals of the course;
- intellectual/learning outcomes;
- content and topics;
- major assignments;
- assessment methods;
- class level: lower or upper division undergraduate, undergraduate/graduate combined, graduate (master and/or doctoral).
- course type: lecture, lab, clinical, studio, study abroad, internship, field placement, independent study, thesis, or dissertation;
- course delivery method: synchronous, asynchronous, or combined
- articulation and transferability of credit to other institutions; and

- other factors as appropriate.

Criteria for Determining Credit for Programs

Faculty and review committees determine the quantity of credits for a program in accordance with commonly accepted discipline-specific best practices for undergraduate, graduate, or professional degrees and policies of the Tennessee Board of Regents and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Process for Determining Credit

- Faculty develop courses and programs and provide justification for proposed credit amounts.
- College and university faculty committees conduct rigorous reviews of course and program proposals, including justifications for credit to be awarded, and are responsible for final approval of proposals. Final acceptance of a proposal by each appropriate review committee denotes the review and acceptance of the proposed number of credits.

External Confirmation

- Accreditation and program reviewers assess ETSU programs of study in accordance with discipline-specific best practices, including credits awarded for courses.
- ETSU provides its policy and procedure for awarding of credit for compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.4.6 and Federal Requirement 4.8 of the *Principles of Accreditation*, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges and others.

U.S.D.O.E. Regulatory Language

In 34 CFR 600.2 of the final regulations (March 2011), we defined a credit hour for Federal programs, including the Federal student financial assistance programs, as—

An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonable 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 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. USDOE, Office of Postsecondary education, <http://www.cappsonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/GEN1106.pdf>

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