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Policy: Section 6: Curriculum

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Course 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.

Criteria for Determining Credit for Courses

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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.

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 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.

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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), ETSU 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

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://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html>

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Curriculum Proposals

East Tennessee State University's curriculum proposal, review, and internal approval process is in accord with the Principles of Accreditation of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The process is also consistent with policy and guidelines regarding program review and approval of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), the governing board for the universities and colleges within the System.

Finally, the ETSU process complies with Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) requirements regarding the authorization of new programs. Specifically, ETSU's curriculum review and approval process complies with TBR Policy 2:01:01:00 (Program Review and Approval), TBR Guideline A-010 (Academic Program Proposals), and THEC Policy A:1 (New Program Review Criteria).

Other sites of interest regarding curricular matters at ETSU include the following:

ETSU Graduate Catalog <https://www.etsu.edu/reg/catalog/>

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ETSU Undergraduate Catalog <https://www.etsu.edu/reg/catalog/>

ETSU Proficiency-Intensive Course Listing Update in process

TBR Academic Policies:

<https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/academic-policies>

TBR Form A-010:

<https://policies.tbr.edu/guidelines/program-modifications-and-new-academic-programs>

THEC New Program Review Criteria:

<https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/academic-affairs-and-student-success/academic-programs/program-approval---academic-policies/redirect-program-approval---academic-policies/academic-policies--checklists-and-forms.html>

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Electronic Courses

Definition of Terms

1. Distance education courses – any course in which a minimum of 50% of the content is delivered electronically and the student and instructor are not in the same physical location. Courses may be synchronous or asynchronous and delivered via online technologies, videoconferencing technologies, or virtual classroom technologies. The term distance education, for the purpose of this handbook section, is intended to include all types of courses delivered electronically.
2. Instructional Television (ITV) – any course delivered through videoconferencing technologies utilizing the ETSU multipoint control unit bridge. Courses may be delivered to another videoconference enabled room at a remote location and/or delivered to individual desktop computers.
3. Web-based courses – any course delivered using an asynchronous pedagogy utilizing online course technologies. ETSU defines any Web-based course in which more than 50% of the content is delivered via online technologies as an asynchronous online course.
4. Web-enhanced courses – any course in which less than 50% of the course content is delivered via online technologies in an asynchronous or synchronous format.
5. Telecourse – a commercially prepared course purchased by the Office of eLearning for delivery for credit as an ETSU course.

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6. Virtual classroom – any course in which a virtual classroom tool is used to deliver the course in a synchronous format. This may include a portion or all of the course content.

TBR Guidelines

ETSU follows TBR Guideline A-070 in the administration of distance education courses.

Program Planning And Implementation

The mission statement for the Office of eLearning is to provide academic support services to ETSU students, faculty, and staff, to provide support for the synchronous and asynchronous delivery of course content, and to provide a robust reliable Web presence for the university.

The goals of the Office of eLearning are to:

1. provide high-quality academic support services for faculty who teach Web-based and Web-enhanced courses;
2. increase student access to learning resources by providing faculty with the necessary tools and resources to create pedagogically sound Web-based and Web-enhanced courses;
3. support faculty use of software applications and multimedia classroom equipment available at ETSU;
4. provide quality multimedia assistance for faculty and staff through workshops, individual assistance, and phone and email support while always searching for new and creative uses for technology in the academic environment;
5. support the integration of technology into education; and
6. provide a reliable, robust Web presence for ETSU.

The Office of eLearning complies with the TBR definition for distance education. The Office of eLearning complies with TBR policies, when applicable, related to Program Review, Admissions, Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards, Classification of Students, Faculty Promotion, Payment of Student Fees and Enrollment of Students. The Office of eLearning also complies with TBR's Guideline A-020 Inter-institutional Relationships and Off-Campus Affairs.

Academic Standards

Each distance education course is consistent with ETSU's mission, level, and nature. Academic standards for distance education courses are determined by the academic unit offering the course. All distance education courses (synchronous and asynchronous) carry the same code, title, and credit as other sections of that course. Academic departments determine faculty load and compensation for all distance education courses. The Office of eLearning makes administrative and academic information available online at <https://www.etsu.edu/online/> to distance education students, faculty, and administrators.

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All students in distance education courses have access to academic support, library services, and other instructional support that other students have. Links for these services are provided online at <http://online.etsu.edu> for all distance education students and faculty.

Identification Of Distance Education Courses

Responsibility

The Office of eLearning is responsible for courses identified as distance education courses in compliance with TBR, SACS, and institutional policy. Courses are identified as distance education courses through appropriate section numbers and methods of instruction.

Telecourses

The Office of eLearning is responsible for providing academic chairpersons materials to review in the consideration of telecourses for broadcast, video checkout, and video streaming for college credit. Potential courses may be identified by faculty or academic chairs and recommended for offering as a telecourse.

Internet (Web-based) Courses

In consultation with the Director of Academic Technology Support, academic departments identify synchronous and asynchronous Web-based courses. Academic Technology Support provides training and support for Internet courses.

Instructional Television (ITV) Courses

Academic departments/colleges, in consultation with the Director of Instructional Television Services (ITV), identify instructional television courses. All new distance education faculty receive training. The Director of ITV Services is responsible for interactive television and telecourse training. A copy of the ITV Handbook is updated annually and available online at: https://www.etsu.edu/academicaffairs/elearning/itv/documents/teacher_handbook_5.2010..pdf

Distance Education Faculty Responsibilities

Responsibilities

Faculty teaching synchronous and asynchronous courses, depending upon the course delivery medium, are responsible for the best practice guidelines set forth in the Office of eLearning Memorandum of Understanding related to electronic delivery of courses. https://www.etsu.edu/onlinehelp/course_development/onlinemou.php

Intellectual Property

Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline A-075 on Intellectual Property Rights (<https://policies.tbr.edu/guidelines/distance-education-and-intellectual-property>) addresses faculty

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development of instructional materials for Web-based courses. ETSU complies with the TBR policy regarding intellectual property rights.

ETSU Memorandum of Understanding

A web-based course is defined as a course in which more than 50% of the course content or traditional contact hours are delivered via some form of Internet activity. All Web-based courses at ETSU must be coordinated through the Office of eLearning, and faculty are advised to contact this office for information and assistance early in the process of developing an Internet-based course.

Faculty who plan to develop an Internet-based course to be offered at ETSU should complete a memorandum to formally clarify the nature of the course and establish a record of understandings regarding rights to the Internet-based course and course materials. The form to be used for the memorandum of understanding is available online at

If a faculty member is being employed or assigned specifically to create the Internet-based course or materials for the university/department, faculty and administrators should also consult TBR Guideline A-075, Distance Education and Intellectual Property (<https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/intellectual-property>) and, when appropriate, complete a Work Made for Hire Agreement.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Duties of ITV Administrators and Staff

All Instructional Television (ITV) administrators and staff have written job descriptions that are updated periodically. Current job descriptions are on file in the Office of eLearning and Office of Human Resources.

An overview of professional staff responsibilities is covered in the ITV Faculty Handbook. Job descriptions for part-time support staff (e.g., production assistants, faculty assistants, classroom assistants) are included in the appendix.

Distance Education Evaluation and Assessment

The sponsoring school/college is responsible for evaluating course instructors as it does in all other instructional situations (see TBR Guidelines A-070, 1[4] <https://policies.tbr.edu/guidelines/distance-education>).

The Office of eLearning administers distance education student surveys for faculty in selected distance education courses every fall and spring semester. The student surveys also evaluate the effective use of the medium of instruction.

The Office of eLearning administers faculty questionnaires for all distance education courses every semester.

Results of distance education faculty questionnaires and student surveys provide data on assessing and/or improving distance education services.

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Distance Education Funding

No distinction shall be made between student credit hours generated through distance education and credit hours generated through on-campus instruction.

The Office of eLearning shares revenue, after expenses, for all distance education courses funded from the regular academic year and summer budgets. The Office of eLearning maintains a budget to acquire and maintain distance education hardware and courseware.

The Office of eLearning maintains records of revenue and operating costs.

Distance Education Enrollment Data

The Office of eLearning is responsible for generating and providing student enrollment data on distance education and for reporting to the University and TBR.

Data is maintained in files in the Office of eLearning.

Scheduling Distance Education Courses

Academic units schedule distance education courses in the same manner that other courses are submitted. Distance education course scheduling follows the same semester timetable and procedures determined by the Registrar's Office.

Faculty and chairs will be involved in the determination of maximum enrollments for distance education courses in consultation with eLearning staff.

Specific section numbers and instructional delivery methods must be identified for all distance education courses. Academic units can contact the Office of eLearning for scheduling information.

Course scheduling information for ITV is available at: <https://www.etsu.edu/its/services/class-lab-print.php#itv>

Telecourse Management

Telecourses are available via streaming services

Final approval for offering a video check-out telecourse is dependent upon:

1. the past record of the telecourse (if any exists),
2. marketability of the course,
3. availability of course materials, and
4. cost of course.

Telecourse Program Sources

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1. Course software is obtained by satellite broadcast or by purchasing master copies of the telecourse series.
2. The Office of eLearning will supply catalogs and review materials for those who wish to review sources for telecourses.
3. Faculty will be provided sample videos of telecourse programs for preview and planning purposes only.

Instructional Support

1. The Office of eLearning will pay reasonable costs for mailing student course materials, duplication, advertising, telecourse license fees, student royalty fees, and faculty assistants.
2. The Office of eLearning makes arrangements for students to take exams at off- locations (in cooperation with the faculty member.)

Web-Based Course and Web-Enhanced Course Management

Per ETSU policy, a Web-based course is defined to be a course in which more than 50% of the course material is delivered via the Internet.

The Office of eLearning provides a course management system site for all ETSU course sections. In compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), access to all courses defined as distance education courses must be via the ETSU course management system. Faculty must comply with ETSU's Web-based course standards and policies, as described in the Memorandum of Understanding for Web-based course development available at: <https://www.etsu.edu/online/>.

Instructional Television Course Management

The Director of ITV Services works with academic units and off-campus center staff to schedule courses. The Director of ITV Services hires, trains, and supervises production assistants and classroom facilitators for courses at off-campus sites. The Operations Coordinator maintains the on- and off-campus courier service. The Office of eLearning maintains equipment at off-campus sites. The Office of eLearning staff works with off-campus center staff to deal with problems and improve services for distance education courses.

Distance Education Faculty Assistance and Instructional Support

The Office of eLearning offers faculty assistance and instructional support, depending upon course medium, for:

1. logistics between faculty on-campus and off-campus sites via courier services
2. faculty assistants
3. faculty handbook and policies available at <https://www.etsu.edu/online/>.
4. copyright compliance

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5. training, including teaching guidelines, instructional design, course management
6. course scheduling information
7. library services at on-campus and off-campus sites
8. off-campus testing services
9. classroom facilitators and production assistants for on-campus overflow classrooms and off-campus sites
- 10 student assessment of instruction
- 11 procedures for inclement weather or missing class.

Marketing, Publicity, and Promotion of Distance Education

The Office of eLearning is responsible for marketing, publicity, and promotion of distance education courses. Faculty may be asked to participate in marketing.

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Experimental Courses

Experimental courses may be offered twice with approval by the dean of the respective college or school and the Vice President for Academic Affairs or the designee. The proposal for an experimental course should include clear purpose for offering it, an outline of course content, and criteria for evaluating the course. Only under unusual circumstances will an experimental course be approved to be offered more than two times. If a course is to be offered after the second time, it should be made permanent on the course title file with the curriculum review process being initiated by the department chair.

In addition, courses for ETSU ETSU Education Abroad submitted for initial approval as “experimental” courses must include logistical descriptions and a complete budget. Forms are provided on the ETSU Curriculum Process System and also are available from the Office of International Programs & Services. Logistics and budget must be reviewed and approved by the International Advisory Council (or its designated committee) prior to final approval of an experimental ETSU Education Abroad course.

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SACS COC Substantive Changes

East Tennessee State University maintains compliance with substantive change policy and procedures of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as delineated in Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission of Colleges. East Tennessee State University notifies the Commission on Colleges (COC) of significant

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modification or expansion of the nature and scope of the university and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. If unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, East Tennessee State University contacts Commission staff for consultation.

East Tennessee State University recognizes the responsibility of the COC to review substantive changes that occur between decennial reviews and to determine if the University continues to meet defined standards and federal regulations.

East Tennessee State University faculty and administrative officials that approve substantive changes at appropriate levels of the institution are identified in the Substantive Change Procedures for Academic Programs, Distance Education, Off-campus Sites, and those unlikely to be proposed by ETSU. The campus community accesses the policy and procedures from the ETSU Faculty Handbook, ETSU SACS Web site, ETSU Curriculum Process System, and ETSU Chairs Handbook [these resources should eventually be linked].

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ETSU Education Abroad Courses

See ETSU Policy on Development and Operation of ETSU Education Abroad Programs: https://www.etsu.edu/trustees/documents/academic/academic_development-operation-of-study-abroad-programs.pdf

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Summer and Winter Sessions

Summer and Winter Sessions are considered non-standard and accelerated terms. Winter Session offers four-week online courses and is considered part of the spring term. Summer session are broken into three segments which may be combined in several ways and, thus, affect the amount of time available for instruction. These segments include Pre-summer, Summer I and Summer II. Segments are combined in sequence to determine course length.

For example, a course may be offered Pre-summer and Summer I, Summer I and Summer II or Pre-Summer, Summer I and Summer II. The most common configuration is Summer I and Summer II. Teaching during summer sessions is also funded separately and funding may affect course availability and teaching loads.

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Textbooks, Cost of

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See ETSU policy on cost of textbooks: Cost of Textbookshttps://www.etsu.edu/trustees/documents/academic/academic_cost-of-textbooks.pdf

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