

Policy Title: Definition of Credit

Policy Type: Academic **New/revised:** New

Old Policy #: Non-numbered ETSU policy

Approval level: ☒ Board of Trustees
☐ President
☐ Vice President
☐ Other (specify here)

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to define credit, the criteria for determining credit, process for determining credit, and external confirmation for courses and programs. The U.S. Department of Education Regulatory Language is included. ETSU places emphasis on learning outcomes not time.

The Department of Education in Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 600.2 (July 1, 2011) mandates accredited institutions comply with the established definition of the credit hour.

Policy:

- I. US Department of Education
 - A. The Office of Post-secondary Education, Department of Education in Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 600.2 defines credit hour as follows.
 1. 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 not less than:
 - a. 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
 - b. 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, clinical placements, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
- II. Definition of Credit
 - A. A semester credit is a unit of educational accomplishment represented by learning outcomes.
 - B. Criteria for Determining Credit for Courses
 1. 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:
 2. discipline-specific best practices;

3. purpose and goals of the course;
4. intellectual/learning outcomes;
5. content and topics;
6. major assignments;
7. assessment methods;
8. class level: lower or upper division undergraduate, undergraduate/graduate combined, graduate (master and/or doctoral).
9. course type: lecture, lab, clinical, studio, study abroad, internship, field placement, independent study, thesis, or dissertation;
10. course delivery method: synchronous, asynchronous, or combined
11. articulation and transferability of credit to other institutions; and
12. other factors as appropriate.
13. 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.

III. 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 ETSU Board of Trustees, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

IV. 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.

V. 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 SACSCOC standards and federal requirements.

Notes: [optional information here]
[could be source information, historical notes, references to other policies]