

WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

President's Procedure

TITLE:	Definition of an Academic Credit Hour
DIVISION:	Educational Services
CATEGORY:	Academic and Educational Programming
REFERENCE:	Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503 Policy of the Higher Learning Commission: <i>"Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition"</i> Higher Education Act of 1965; 34 CFR Part 600 – Institutional Eligibility under the Higher Education Act of 1965 as Amended U.S. Department of Education, GEN-11-06: <i>"Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010"</i>
NUMBER:	PP-613
APPROVAL:	Dr. Carmen Simone, President
DATE:	March 10, 2020

Purpose

To establish a definition for and application of the academic credit hour at Western Nebraska Community College.

Scope

All Western Nebraska Community College credit-bearing courses.

The Federal credit hour definition states that "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 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
- At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward the awarding of credit hours."

Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503 describes a contact hour as “...an educational activity consisting of sixty [60] minutes minus break time and required time to change classes.” With these parameters, Western Nebraska Community College defines a contact hour as equal to fifty (50) minutes.

Western Nebraska Community College Equivalencies of the Credit Hour

The institutionally established equivalencies to the Federal definition of the credit hour at Western Nebraska Community College are below and summarized in the table following.

1. Lecture/Classroom Hour: “Classroom hour means a minimum of fifty [50] minutes of formalized instruction on campus or off campus in which a qualified instructor applying any combination of instructional methods such as lecture, directed discussion, demonstration, or the presentation of audiovisual materials is responsible for providing an educational experience to students.”

(Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503)

For each semester hour of credit, classes must include one 50-minute period with the instructor (synchronously or asynchronously) and two (2) hours of outside of class work per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 50 minutes contact + 100 minutes outside work per week over 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

2. Academic Transfer, General Education & Academic Support Laboratory Hour: “Laboratory hour means a minimum of fifty [50] minutes of educational activity on campus or off campus in which students conduct experiments, perfect skills, or practice procedures under the direction of a qualified instructor.” *(Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503)*

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for laboratory sections that meet a minimum of 100 minutes per week with 50 minutes of outside of class work per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 100 minutes contact + 50 minutes of outside work per week over 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

3. Vocational Laboratory Hour: “Laboratory hour means a minimum of fifty [50] minutes of educational activity on campus or off campus in which students conduct experiments, perfect skills, or practice procedures under the direction of a qualified instructor.” *(Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503)*

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for vocational laboratory sections that meet a minimum of 150 minutes per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 150 minutes of contact time per week for 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

4. Clinical hour: “Clinical hour means a minimum of fifty [50] minutes of educational activity on campus or off campus during which the student is assigned practical experience under constant supervision at a health-related agency, receives individual instruction in the performance of a particular function, and is observed and critiqued in the repeat performance of such function.

Adjunct professional personnel, who may or may not be paid by the College, may be used for the directed supervision of students and for the delivery of part of the didactic phase of the experience” *(Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503)*.

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for clinical sections that meet a minimum of 150 minutes per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 150 minutes of contact time per week for 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

5. Practicum hour: “Practicum hour means a minimum of fifty [50] minutes of educational activity on campus or off campus during which the student is assigned practical experiences, receives individual instruction in the performance of a particular function, and is observed and critique by an instructor in the repeat performance of such function. Adjunct professional personnel, who may or may not be paid by the college, may be used for the directed supervision of the students.” (*Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503*)

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for practicum courses in which a minimum of 150 minutes per week of educational activity (practicum experience and lecture). One (1) credit hour = 150 minutes of contact time/practicum experience per week for 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

6. Cooperative Work Experience/Internships: “Cooperative work experience means an internship or on-the-job training, designed to provide specialized skills and educational experiences, which is coordinated, supervised, observed, and evaluated by qualified college staff or faculty and may be completed on campus or off campus, depending on the nature of the arrangement.” (*Nebraska Revised Statute §85-1503*)

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for internship courses in which a minimum of 200 minutes per week in a work experience. One (1) credit hour = 200 minutes of internship experience per week for 15 weeks for a total of 3,000 minutes of student effort. Any course, offered for less than 15 weeks, must be equivalent in both contact and outside work totals as a semester-length course.

7. Physical Activity: A course requiring students to participate in physical training, physical conditioning, or other physical exercise activities, sports, or games. The physical activity develops fundamental psychomotor skills and health-related fitness components.

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for physical activity sections that meet a minimum of 100 minutes per week with 50 minutes of outside of class work for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 100 minutes contact + 50 minutes of outside work per week over 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

8. Ensemble: A course requiring recital-, performance-, or ensemble-focused experiential work, where students, through practice or rehearsal, engage in the creative and artistic act of performing works of music for a jury or audience.

One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for music ensemble sections that meet a minimum of 50 minutes per week with 100 minutes of outside of class work per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 50 minutes contact + 100 minutes of outside work per week over 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

9. Studio: Studio describes a class in which all students are engaged in creative or artistic activities which are new and unique and not formulated in a lecture setting. Every student in the room is performing a creative activity to obtain a specific outcome. It is a course requiring visual- or aesthetic-focused experiential work where students test, observe, experiment, or practice a field or discipline in a hands-on environment. Because it is not instruction-based, this requires more minute-to-minute responsibility for the faculty member to engage individual students towards their goal.

- A) *Art Studio*: One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for art studio sections that meet a minimum of 75 minutes per week with 75 minutes of outside of class work per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 75 minutes contact + 75 minutes of outside work per week over 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.
- B) *Music Studio*: For each semester hour of credit, classes must include one (1) 25-minute period with the instructor and two and a half hours of outside of class work per week for 15 weeks. One credit hour = 25 minutes contact + 125 minutes outside work per week over 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.
- C) *Dance Studio*: One (1) hour of credit may be awarded for dance studio sections that meet a minimum of 150 minutes per week for 15 weeks. One (1) credit hour = 150 minutes of contact time per week for 15 weeks for a total of 2,250 minutes of student effort.

10. Independent (Directed) Study - Credits will be assigned according to the practices of assigning credits to similar courses.

Semester	
1:15	Lecture/Classroom Hour
1:30	Academic Transfer, General Education, & Academic Support Laboratory Hour
1:45	Vocational Laboratory & Clinical Hour
1:45	Practicum Hour
1:60	Cooperative Work Experience
1:30	Physical Education
1:15	Ensemble
1:25	Art Studio
1:7.5	Music Studio
1:45	Dance Studio
	Independent (directed) Study - Credits will be assigned according to the practices of assigning credits to similar courses.

All courses, regardless of modality (online, blended [hybrid], or directed individual study), must adhere to the credit hour standard as established. Any course offered for less than 15 weeks must be equivalent in both direct faculty contact hours and out-of-class effort expected of students (approximately two hours for every hour in class) as a full semester-length course. The rationale for an exception for any particular course must be documented and approved first by Curriculum Council and then College Council.

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Divisions/Department Responsible for Review and Update: Educational Services
Sponsoring Division/Department: Educational Services
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Correlating Policy: BP-613 (Differentiation of Educational Programs)
Related Policies/References: