Credit Hour Policy

Credit hours shall be equivalent to the commonly accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement in accredited institutions. Academic degree or academic credit-bearing distance learning courses are measured by the learning outcomes normally achieved through 45 hours of student work for one credit. This formula is typically referred to as a Carnegie unit and is used by the American Council on Education in its Credit Recommendation Evaluative Criteria.

One credit hour is 15 hours of academic engagement and 30 hours of preparation.

Student work includes direct or indirect faculty instruction. Academic engagement may include, but not limited to, submitting an academic assignment, listening to class lectures or webinars (synchronous or asynchronous), taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that is assigned by the institution; contributing to an academic online discussion; initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course and laboratory work, externship or internship. Preparation is typically homework, such as reading and study time, and completing assignments and projects. Therefore, a 3-credit hour course would require 135 hours (45 hours of academic engagement and 90 hours of preparation).

Graduate students are expected to spend, on average, from three to four hours per week online performing lesson reading and assignments, virtual learning community activities, and taking quizzes. A minimum of four sessions online per week is required. A student should not miss more than two consecutive days of being online. Offline study, projects, research, fieldwork, and other course related activities are expected to take from six to nine hours of additional time per week. Our courses are designed to meet credit/clock hour standards of 135 hours per 16-week course. This equates to about 8.5 hours per week in meeting course responsibilities. In an 8-week session, 135 hours equates to about 17 hours of course study online and offline per week.

Our electronic system records time and frequency online and surveys report on time spent by students on projects, assignments, reading, and both online and offline study. These reports are used by faculty to assist students who are showing signs of struggle to offer suggestions in time management and express the importance of the time required to be a successful graduate student. Faculty monitor the time spent by the length and difficulty of assignments, outside research needed, field experience or case studies required, and evaluating student reflections and comments about the time needed to be successful in the program.