

## **ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Credit Hour Policy**

#### **Preamble**

The purpose of this policy is to support Elizabeth City State University's compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' (SACSCOC or "Commission") expectations regarding credits and The United States Department of Education requirement that each institution develop a written credit hour policy that conforms to the definition of a credit hour outlined in the Federal Register (75FR66832 p. 66946) which governs the award of financial aid.

#### **1. Definition**

In this document the credit hour has been defined as: "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:

- a) Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours 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 outlined in item 1 above or 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."\*

Elizabeth City State University reports the credit earned in a class based on a sixteen week semester calendar. Across the UNC system, a class must meet for a minimum of 750 minutes for every semester hour of credit. The standard of two or more hours outside of class for every hour of in-class instruction is a common standard that is clearly reflected in the SACSCOC credit hour rule. However, in courses and academic activities where direct instruction is not the primary mode of learning, such as online and hybrid courses, laboratory work, internships, study away, study abroad, studio work, etc., an equivalent amount of work (minimum of three hours per week for a semester) must be represented for a credit hour.

#### **2. Credit Guidelines**

##### **a) For Lecture or Seminars**

A semester credit hour consists of the equivalent of at least one (1) hour

\* Direct quote from the SACSCOC Policy

[50- minute period] per week of "seat time" in-class and two (2) hours per week of out-of-class student work for fifteen [15] weeks. Hence, a standard three (3) semester credit hour lecture class meets for at least forty-five [45] contact hours per semester, plus a minimum average of six [6] hours of activities outside of the classroom per week for fifteen [15] weeks.

**b) For Laboratory Instruction**

Normally, one credit hour is associated with a class meeting for 50-150 minutes per week for an entire semester (or the equivalent of 750-2,250 semester- minutes for fifteen [15] weeks).

**c) For Lecture/Laboratory Class Instruction**

Normally, 2-4 credit hours are assigned to the courses that contain both a lecture and lab component. Typically that breaks down to 50-150 minutes of lecture per week and 50-200 minutes of laboratory or studio instruction.

**d) For Performance/Recital/Ensemble**

Zero to one semester credit hour is associated with each of the performance based courses. Normally courses meet once a week for 100- 250 minutes.

**e) For Physical Education/Outdoor Activities**

One semester credit hour is associated with a class meeting 50 minutes per week for an entire semester.

**f) For Individual Instruction Classes**

One semester credit hour is associated with a class meeting 100-150 minutes per week for an entire semester.

**g) For Student Teaching**

At least one full-time five day week of student teaching experience will be required for one credit hour. Depending on the specific curriculum, programs may require more than one week in order to award one credit hour.

**h) For courses meeting fewer than 15 weeks**

The credit hours awarded for a given course or academic experience must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of three (3) hours combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week semester. For example, a three (3) credit course should require the equivalent of nine (9) hours of combined direct instruction and student work per week for the equivalent of a fifteen (15) week semester. Given that the "class hour" is fifty (50) minutes, this would be a baseline 112.5 total hours for the course. These hours may consist of course activities including, but not limited to,

those listed below.

- i. Face-to-face course meetings
- ii. Virtual course meetings or student-instructor and student-student interactions
- iii. Time to read/view assigned texts or other assigned materials
- iv. Experiential learning activities consistent with the learning objectives of the course
- v. Synthesis/processing/reflection time and other activities

i) **For Distance Education, Internet and Hybrid (Blended) Courses**

Credit hour policy is consistent with the standards of courses offered through face-to-face instruction, although some or all of content and faculty-student interaction occurs through one or more forms of distance education.

j) **For Independent Study**

Independent Study will represent a minimum of three hours of student work per week throughout the course of the semester or the equivalent work distributed over a different period of time.