



Definition of Credit	
Responsible Official: Provost	Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Policy Purpose

This policy defines credit, the criteria for determining credit, process for determining credit, and external confirmation for courses and programs.

Policy Statement

In accordance with federal regulation and SACSCOC requirements, East Tennessee State University defines a credit hour as a unit of educational accomplishment represented by learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement regardless of format or mode of delivery.

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.

Authority: The Focus Act: TCA § 49-8-203 et. seq; Office of Post-secondary Education, Department of Education in Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 600.2

Defined Terms

A defined term has a special meaning within the context of this policy.

CREDIT HOUR

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:

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

2. 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, practical, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Policy History

Effective Date: March 24, 2017

Revised/ Re-formatted: 4/17/23

Procedure (s)

I. Criteria for Determining Credit for Courses.

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 credit hour 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. ETSU places emphasis on learning outcomes not time.

II. 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 with policies of the ETSU Board of Trustees, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

III. 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.

IV. 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.

Procedure History

Effective Date: March 24, 2017

Revision Date: April 17, 2023

Related Form(s)

N/A

Scope and Applicability

Primary: Academics
Secondary: Students