

## Georgia College & State University Credit Hour Definitions

### **Policy Statement**

Georgia College uses the Carnegie standard to determine the appropriate amount of credit awarded for undergraduate and graduate course work. Academic credit is awarded in semester credit hours.

Semester credit hours will be granted as follows:

#### ***Lecture, seminar, and recitation courses:***

A minimum of 750 minutes of instruction (excluding final examinations), with a minimum of 1500 minutes of out of class work, for each semester credit hour earned.

#### ***Laboratory and studio courses:***

A minimum of 1500 minutes of instruction (excluding final examinations), with a minimum of 750 minutes of out of class work, for each semester credit hour earned, OR  
A minimum of 2250 minutes of instruction (excluding final examinations), for each semester credit hour earned.

#### ***Supervised independent study, research, individual studio, private lessons:***

The amount of effort required for one unit of undergraduate academic credit is determined by the supervising faculty and the department chair of the discipline in which credit is awarded. Instructors should make adjustments so that the total hours of work required by students is equivalent to that of a traditional class.

#### ***Practicums, internships, student teaching:***

A minimum of forty hours of supervised, discipline-appropriate academic activity for each semester credit hour earned.

Courses conducted through alternative delivery methods, including, but not limited to, online, hybrid, and distance education, should be structured so that the total number of minutes of instruction and out of class work is equivalent to that of a traditional face-to-face class. Fully and partially distance classes must be approved through a formal institutional faculty review process and must demonstrate that the learning outcomes and level of student achievement are equivalent to a traditionally delivered course. Hybrid courses need to undergo the standard course review process.

Courses offered in an abbreviated format are expected to contain the same number of minutes of instruction and out of class work as classes scheduled for a full term.

At its discretion, Georgia College will award semester credit hours for proficiency demonstrated through credit-by-examination, including Advanced Placement, College Level Proficiency Examinations, International Baccalaureate, and course challenges. Credit provided will be equivalent to the hours of credit currently assigned to the course in which the student demonstrates proficiency. Decisions regarding credit-by-examination will be made by the academic department responsible for the subject matter addressed in the examination.

Departments may present educational justification for departures from this policy to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

This policy is consistent with Federal Guidelines established in 34 CFR 600.2, as well as University System of Georgia Policy 3.4.1.

### **Policy Purpose**

Georgia College's accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS), requires each accredited institution to have a policy defining how credit hours are awarded. In the past, Georgia College has deferred to the University System of Georgia's (USG) credit hour policy. The USG policy alone is no longer sufficient documentation for SACS. As a result, we must update and implement a policy prior to our reaccreditation review in 2014.

This policy does not make any changes to current practice regarding classroom instruction. It does, as required by SACS, clarify how credit hours will be determined when instruction is not provided in a face-to-face classroom format.

### **Current Policies**

#### **University System of Georgia, Board of Regents Policy Manual, 3.4.1**

All USG institutions shall be on the semester system (BoR Minutes, December, 1995). The academic year shall consist of two (2) regular semesters, each not to be less than fifteen (15) calendar weeks in length, excluding registration. A minimum of 750 minutes of instruction or equivalent is required for each semester credit hour.

#### **Georgia College, Undergraduate Catalog, 2012-2013**

Academic credit assigned to a course is expressed in semester credit hours. A passing grade on a subject that requires three one-hour meetings a week (or the equivalent) for one semester earns three semester hours credit. A laboratory period of two to three hours is equivalent to one class hour. When a student exempts a course requirement at Georgia College, the exemption includes only the subject matter, not the credit hours. The credit hours have to be made up by passing other non-exempt courses.

**34 CFR 600.2 Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education, Institutional Eligibility under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as Amended.**

A credit hour for Federal programs, including the Federal student financial assistance programs, [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:

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

**Applicability of the Policy**

**1) To which departments, schools, or areas of the institution does the policy apply?**

This policy applies to all academic, credit-bearing departments and colleges.

**2) What issues or topics are related to the content of the policy?**

**Reason for the Policy**

**1) Why is the policy needed?** Georgia College does not currently have a credit-hour definition policy, and the USG credit-hour policy is known to be insufficient for accreditation purposes.

**2) Which institutional objectives will the policy uphold?** Strategic Directions 1, 2, and 6.

**3) Are there any internal or external requirements that mandate, inform or support the policy?** As noted above, SACS regional accreditation and U.S. DoE require such a policy.

**Proposed Outcome**

1) This policy will define clearly the means by which academic credit is awarded for the wide variety of course types that currently are offered by the university.

**Related Policies**

**University System of Georgia, Board of Regents Policy Manual, 3.4.1**

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

**Procedure for approving distance courses:**

1. Department chair approves initial request from faculty to offer a course online.
2. The department chair will notify the Director of IDEAS who will assist the faculty in preparing the course for online delivery.
3. IDEAS will assist the department chair by verifying that the course meets the stated online guidelines (revised "Quality Matters" rubric)
4. The department chair will determine if the online course is taught.

**Forms**

None

**Contacts**

**1. Who is on the committee that created the policy or who individually created the policy?**

Bryan Marshall, [bryan.marshall@gcsu.edu](mailto:bryan.marshall@gcsu.edu)

APC Committee

**2. Who will administer the policy? What is the contact information for each person (position title, e-mail, phone)?** Provost

**Approval Date**

**Date Last Updated:**