



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Policy on Credit Hour (AE 5)

POLICY STATEMENT

Credit hour is the unit by which an institution measures its course work. The number of credit hours assigned to a course quantitatively reflects the outcomes expected, the mode of instruction, the amount of time spent in class, and the amount of outside preparatory work expected for the class.

Nevada State College (NSC) measures student learning in accordance with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Policy on Credit Hour, which relies on federal regulations on the definition and assignment of credit hours.

Federal regulations mandate that all candidate and accredited institutions comply with the definition of the credit hour as set forth in section 600.2, which defines the credit hour 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 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.*

In general, unit value for course offerings is governed by the NSC Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and Common Course Numbering Committee. Schools and departments are responsible for submitting course approval requests that include a detailed description of how unit value is justified. In addition, periodic compliance review of the credit hour policy will be incorporated into each school's established curriculum review schedule to ensure a course's credit hours reflect the amount of work required to earn those credits.

Instructional time per course credit is defined to provide a consistent minimum expectation for students and faculty. Students and faculty should know in general what time commitment is involved for a specified number of course credit

DEFINITIONS

Credit: Described in semester hours, a credit is defined as three hours of work per week for one semester. Usually this work is made up of one period in class plus two hours of preparation for lecture-seminar classes, or three hours of laboratory classes.

Semester: 75 instructional days; 15 week semester.

PROCEDURES

Using the 15-week semester, the semester credit hour, and the 50-minute class hour, NSC course offerings are measured under the following guidelines.

I. Lecture and Seminar Courses

In courses with a lecture mode of instruction, sections are typically scheduled to meet weekly over the entire semester for the same number of hours as credits being earned by students; sections scheduled for shorter terms have the number of “hours” adjusted in proportion to the length of the term. Students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours outside of the classroom each week for each unit of credit engaged in learning.

II. Laboratory Courses or their Equivalent

In courses with an activity or laboratory mode of instruction, the activity or laboratory portion of the section is typically scheduled to meet for two or three hours each week of the semester (depending on the particular instructional mode, and prorated for terms of other length). Students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours outside of the classroom engaged in learning.

III. Hybrid or Online Courses

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

- Face-to-face course meetings
- Virtual course meetings or student-instructor and student-student interactions
- Time to read/view assigned texts or other assigned materials
- Experiential learning activities consistent with the learning objectives of the course
- Synthesis/processing/reflection time and activities (may be used for writing or production of creative work which may take many forms including but not limited to journals, formal papers, projects, blogs, art, music, etc.)

OR

Online

The syllabus must describe the activities that the student will be required to complete as part of the course and indicate the expected minimum time that students will need to devote to each of these. The total expected time should be a minimum of 45 hours per semester for each unit of credit.

Hybrid

The syllabus should communicate an expectation to students that they should plan on devoting a minimum of 45 hours per semester for each unit of credit through attending class, working online, and other out-of-class work.

IV. Experiential, Research, or Independent Study

Credit hours associated with this type of instruction will be assigned credit depending upon the amount of activity associated with the course, faculty supervision, and students outside work activity.

V. Clinical Hours, Supervised Field Experience, or Student Teaching

Clinical experiences allow for observation, participation, studies of individual pupils or clients, individual field work, and practicums both on and off campus. Credit for clinical experiences is determined in accordance with recommendations of specific accrediting bodies or applicable state regulation. If credit hours are provided for a clinical experience course the amount of time must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of 3 hours per week, per credit hour for a 15-week semester or 37.5 hours per credit hour.

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

CONTACTS

SUBJECT	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL
Primary Contact	Adelfa Sullivan	702-992-2115	Adelfa.Sullivan@nsc.edu

RELATED INFORMATION

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Policy on Credit Hour (PDF)
34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l)

HISTORY

APPROVAL SIGNATURES PAGE

Erika Beck, Provost, May 14, 2013
Bart Patterson, President, May 14, 2013