

DCTC Policy 3.36.2 Credit Hour Policy

Part 1. Policy Statement.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Dakota County Technical College's assignment of credit hours is consistent with the federal definition of the credit hour and with the Higher Learning Commission Policy 3.10, CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH AND TUITION, and conforms to the commonly accepted practices in higher education.

Part 2. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy.

Subpart A. Federal Credit Hour Definition. A credit hour 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 activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; or
3. Institutionally established reasonable equivalencies for the amount of work required in paragraph (1) of this definition for the credit hour awards, including as represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement.

Subpart B. Clock Hours. Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definition per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. For these institutions Federal regulations require that a semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction, and a quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction.

Subpart C. Alternative Modes of Delivery. *Alternative modes of delivery* refers to any course that is provided through modes other than the traditional face-to-face (FTF) model of one hour per week per each credit hour. This includes but is not limited to:

1. **Accelerated.** Courses with the same seat time as the traditional face-to-face model but in a more compressed time than a traditional semester length. May be termed *late start* or *early end*.
2. **Hybrid.** For courses with reduced seat time and the remainder of the instructional time provided through distance or correspondence education. These courses have the same outcomes as traditional FTF courses.
3. **Distance.** For course where instructors interact with students completely through distance delivery.

Federal Definition of Distance/Correspondence Education:

Distance education/course means education that uses one or more of the [following] technologies (i) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor: and (ii) to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies used may include: (i) the internet; (ii) one-way and two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; (iii) audio conferencing; or (iv) videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the videocassettes, DVDs or CD-ROMs are used in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in clauses (i) through (iii).

Correspondence education/course means: (1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. (2) Interaction between the instructor and student is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. (3) Correspondence courses are typically self-paced. (4) Correspondence education is not distance education.

4. **Independent/Directed Study.** Courses with similar hours as a traditional course per credit with specified learning outcomes.
5. **Internships/Practica.** Courses with similar hours as a traditional course per credit with specific identified learning outcomes.
6. **Clinical Rotations.** Educational experiences that meet the same minimum hours as a traditional course per credit with specified learning outcomes. Time frames may be dictated by an accrediting agency.
7. **Studio.** Educational experiences defined as 2 hours of contact time per credit with additional time spent outside of class to complete projects and/or assignments. Defined outcomes are equivalent to a traditional FTF class.
8. **Credit for Prior Learning.** Credits assigned after demonstration that course outcomes have been completed and documented. Refer to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 3.35.

Part 3. Course Credit Assignments

9. **Subpart A. Establishment of new courses.** Each new credit course shall be brought through the curriculum approval process of the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) as though it were a traditional FTF course. Each course proposal shall include the number of credits requested as well as the number of lecture hours per week and lab hours per week. Each course proposed shall also include a Common Course Outline with specified content to be covered and learning outcomes. Credits requested shall conform to the federal credit hour definition as specified in Part 2. Subpart A.
10. **Subpart B. Dissemination of information to faculty.** It is the responsibility of the Dean or designee (e.g., faculty chair) to direct faculty members to the Common Course Outline (CCO). All faculty are expected to follow the CCO as a minimum for their courses.

11. **Subpart C. Dissemination of information to students.** Common course outlines shall be available to students through the College website.
12. **Subpart D. Delivery of courses.** All faculty teaching the same course are expected to address, at minimum, the learning outcomes outlined in the common course outline, regardless of mode of delivery.

Related Documents:

- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Procedure 3.36.1

Responsible Administrator: Vice President of Academic Affairs

Policy History:

Date of Adoption: 5/17/2017

Last Revision date: 4/17/2017

Date most recent policy revisions go into effect: 6/5/2017

Date and subject of revisions:

New policy written in 2016-2017. Policy Committee Review Fall 2016 through Spring 2017. Faculty Department Chairs review 11/30/2016. Academic Affairs and Standards Council review 12/6/2016. Faculty Shared Governance Council notification 1/18/2017. Comment period 3/22/2017 through 5/13/2017. Strategic Leadership Council approval 5/17/2017. Changed to new policy template.