

Credit Hours

Scope of Policy & Rationale

This policy (Policy # 02.10.19) applies to all credit-bearing academic programs and courses within the university.

Definitions

The semester credit hour is the basic unit of academic credit granted by Temple University. One semester credit is equivalent to one hour (50 minutes) of faculty instruction time per week for 15 weeks, which includes one week for exams; and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week per credit hour. An equivalent amount of work is required for other academic activities such as laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, or other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Note: Temple University follows a semester system with the fall and spring semesters consisting of approximately 16 weeks, which includes one week for exams and one week per semester for a fall and spring break. Summer semesters vary in length and adhere to this policy.

Policy Statement

Temple University's credit hour policy is consistent with guidelines set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of instructional method or mode of delivery. These guidelines are in compliance with policies set forth by both the US Department of Education and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

1. Determination of amount and level of credit

The faculty is responsible for the curriculum. Credit values are determined at the department level based on course goals, learning outcomes, instructional needs and faculty expertise. Once a course is approved it is included in the University course catalog. It is then the responsibility of the school/college to verify that it is scheduled for the minimum number of minutes.

2. Credit hours by instructional method

Lecture and seminar: Courses with multiple students that meet to engage students in various forms of group instruction. A typical 3 hour course will meet 2100 minutes over 14 weeks (excluding the exam period and scheduled breaks).

Lecture Hours Per Required Credit:

Credits awarded	Minimum contact time per week for 14 weeks	Minimum instructional time
1	50 contact minutes	700 contact minutes
2	100 contact minutes	1400 contact minutes
3	150 contact minutes	2100 contact minutes
4	200 contact minutes	2800 contact minutes

Laboratory and studio: Courses with a focus on experimental learning where in the student performs substantive work in a laboratory or studio setting. The minimum contact time per credit is twice that of a lecture (2:1 ratio).

Laboratory/Studio Hours Per Required Credit:

Credits awarded	Lab studio minimum instruction time per week for 14 weeks	Minimum instructional time
1	100 contact minutes	1400 contact minutes
2	200 contact minutes	2800 contact minutes
3	300 contact minutes	4200 contact minutes
4	400 contact minutes	5600 contact minutes

Independent study: Courses offered as directed studies with approval and supervision of faculty member. Student(s) meet periodically as agreed upon during the duration of the course. Semester hour credit awarded must be comparable in scope, content, academic rigor and student study time as courses offered in lecture format.

Internships, Practicum/clinical/field experience, Externships: Courses developed for independent learning or experience involving self-directed and often off-site learning. These courses are taught on a minimum 2:1 ratio (see laboratory / studio chart above).

Accelerated Courses: Courses offered in terms of length less than a traditional 15 week semester. These courses offer the same semester credit hours as traditional semester-length classes. Within the shortened time frame, accelerated courses must meet the minimum contact hour requirements of the lecture format.

Online: Courses offered entirely online without regard to face-to-face meetings. Students are expected to be academically engaged with comparable learning outcomes of a standard lecture course with alternate delivery methods. Contact time is satisfied through several means which can include but is not limited to the following: a) regular instruction or interaction with a faculty member once a week for each week the course runs; b) academic engagement through interactive tutorials, group discussions moderated by faculty, virtual study/group projects, engaging with class peers and computer tutorials graded and reviewed by faculty. Departments must document through scheduling of classes or syllabi that they are meeting the minimum credit hour requirement for the credit awarded.

Hybrid: Courses offered in a blended format with one or more required face-to-face class sessions and with one or more required online sessions. Departments must document through scheduling of classes or syllabi that they are meeting the minimum credit hour requirement for the credit awarded.

3. Courses evaluated for transfer from colleges and universities with different credit systems

Courses evaluated for transfer from colleges and universities with different credit systems (quarter hours, units) are converted to semester hours (i.e., 2 quarter hour credits are equivalent to 1.5 semester hour credits; 3 quarter hour credits are equivalent to 2.0 semester hour credits; 4 quarter hour credits are equivalent to 2.5 semester hour credits).

4. Review

The Banner Student Competency Center, in consultation with the appropriate administrative offices including the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Digital Education, regularly audits scheduled course offerings to ensure compliance with credit hour requirements through its processes for scheduling each semester, including compliance with the university's scheduling matrix. This review is conducted across all schools, disciplines, course levels and modes of instruction.

Notes

1. **Dates of official enactment and amendments**

Adopted by the President on February 16, 2015.

2. **History**

Supersedes previous guidelines and protocols in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* for students.

3. **Cross References**

Procedures related to this policy can be found in the Academic Policies section of the Undergraduate Bulletin.