

The University of Texas at El Paso
Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
Academic Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines

I. Purpose

Academic credit has provided the basis for measuring the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled not only in the traditional classroom settings but also in laboratories, internships, studios, clinical, field work and other experimental learning and in distance and correspondence education. Credit hours are the common currency for academic credit used by colleges and universities to calculate, record, and interpret the number of credits students earn to fulfill degree, certificate, and other similar academic requirements. The credit hour unit is used to measure student course work, and is founded on the important concept of student achievement and learning outcomes. The value of a credit hour can be determined by contact time, the educational experience, and out-of-class preparation by the student.

II. Definition and Assignment

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement, for the various modes of instruction offered at UTEP, in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. For traditionally-delivered courses, not less than one (1) hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction each week for approximately fifteen (15) weeks per semester, and a minimum of two (2) hours out-of-class student work for each credit hour; plus additional contact hours for those courses that include a final examination.
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities, including laboratory courses, internships, clinical practica, field work, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit.
3. Each course is assumed to involve a significant amount of non-contact hour time for out-of-class student learning and reflection. To ensure the quality of student learning, students should not carry courses in any term (regular or shortened semester) which would allow them to earn more than one semester credit hour per week over the term. For example, in a five and a half week summer term, students should not generally be allowed to enroll for more than six semester credit hours. An exception may be granted pursuant to a written policy.
4. Online, hybrid, shortened, intensive format courses (e.g., Maymester), and other nontraditional modes of delivery, may not meet the credit/contact

hours assigned above. In such instances, the course will be reviewed and approved through a faculty review process that evaluates the course and its learning outcomes and make a determination that the course has equivalent learning outcomes to those in a traditionally delivered course.

5. In determining the amount of coursework to achieve learning competencies and outcomes, the university will take into account and consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

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1. For currently existing undergraduate courses to be offered during the 4 ½ week and 8 week summer parts of term, we recommend the following abbreviated process to meet the requirements of the Academic Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines:

Chairs and directors, having examined them and ascertained that they meet Academic Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines requirements, will submit lists of summer, fall and spring part of term courses lasting at least 4 ½ weeks to their college curriculum committee for approval.

College curriculum committees, after working with chairs and directors to ensure the lists are complete, will consider these lists for approval. These committees reserve the right to examine individual course syllabi to ensure the integrity of the process. If approved, the committees will forward the lists of courses to the college dean for consideration.

College deans will review the proposed lists and, if approved, will inform department chairs/program directors, and submit the lists of approved courses to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, to the Faculty Senate, and to the Provost's Office for their review. Each of these may also reserve the right to examine individual course syllabi to ensure the integrity of the process. The Provost's Office will then forward the approved lists to the Registrar's Office.

Once courses to be taught during parts of term are approved by the appropriate College dean, colleges may move forward with the regular scheduling process for these courses.

All courses will be subject to review by the relevant department or program every five years using the same process.

2. For currently existing undergraduate courses to be offered during midterms or intensive formats such as Maymester, Wintermester or for other academic parts of term shorter than 4 ½ weeks in duration, we recommend the following abbreviated process to meet the requirements of the Academic Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines:

Chairs and directors will submit lists of these part of term courses, along with applications including written rationale and syllabi, to their college curriculum committees for approval. Chairs and directors should be aware that there is flexibility in determining the viability of part of term courses in the requirements of the Academic Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines that will be particularly relevant for these courses. Proposed courses in this category must meet the UTEP and SACS-COC guidelines below:

- The definition does not absolutely dictate particular amounts of classroom time versus out-of-class student work.
- In determining the amount of work the institution's learning outcomes will entail, the institution may take into consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

- To the extent an institution believes that complying with the Federal definition of a credit hour would not be appropriate for academic and other institutional needs, it may adopt a separate measure for those purposes.
- Credits may be awarded on the basis of documentation of the amount of work a typical student is expected to complete within a specified amount of academically engaged time, or on the basis of documented student learning calibrated to that amount of academically engaged time for a typical student.

College curriculum committees, after working with chairs and directors to ensure the lists are complete, will consider these applications for approval. If approved, the committees will forward the lists of courses to the College dean for consideration.

College deans will review the proposed lists and, if approved, will inform department chairs/program directors and submit the lists of approved courses to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, to the Faculty Senate, and the Provost's Office for their review. Each of these may also reserve the right to examine individual course applications and syllabi to ensure the integrity of the process. The Provost's Office will then forward the approved lists to the Registrar's Office.

Once courses to be taught during parts of term are approved by the appropriate College dean, colleges may move forward with the regular scheduling process for these courses.

All courses will be subject to review initiated by the relevant department or program every five years. If the courses subject to review have not been revised in substantial ways, and still clearly meet the requirements of the Academic Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines, new applications need not be submitted. The process for reviewing summer part of term courses can be utilized.