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.