

Academic Operating Procedure 4



Definition of a Semester Credit Hour

November 16, 2021

Statement

This procedure defines a semester credit hour at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (Texas A&M-Kingsville) in accordance with federal Program Integrity Regulations¹ and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules². It provides the necessary guidelines by which to measure the number of contact hours required for each semester credit hour offered by the University.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. RATIONALE

- 1.1. The U.S. Department of Education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) have established general guidelines for defining a semester credit hour. This rule provides additional guidance to encompass the varied instructional methods used at Texas A&M-Kingsville.

2. GENERAL

- 2.1. This procedure defines a credit hour at Texas A&M-Kingsville in accordance with federal Program Integrity Regulations and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules.
- 2.2. In 34 CFR 600.2, the U.S. Department of Education defines a credit hour for federal programs as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that it is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:
 - 2.2.1. 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

¹ Definition of a Credit Hour (§ 600.2, 602.24, 603.24, and 668.8)

² TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter A, Rule 4.6

- 2.2.2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph 2.2.1 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.
- 2.3. In determining the amount of work required to complete the prescribed learning outcomes, as under current practice, the University may take into consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

3. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

- 3.1. Faculty course developers, using their content expertise in the discipline and/or in consultation with peer institutions, must ensure that the quantity of student learning required per credit is the equivalent of 15 to 16 hours of formalized instruction for the semester through activities that address and demonstrate student competency in the defined learning outcomes and draw upon recommended instructional practices identified below.
 - 3.1.1. Formalized instruction typically includes a combination of direct classroom instruction through lecture, discussion, or instructor-guided activity which may be delivered in person or online.
 - 3.1.1.1. Methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, rounds and recitations, colloquia, instructional videos, tutorials, small group activities, virtual labs, required participation in discussions, or other instructor-driven self-guided activity. In addition, instructional activities may include laboratory work, research, internships, instructor-supervised independent study, practica, clinical work, studio or music lab work, and field work. Faculty may also consider course content-related cultural events, group projects, research and information literacy, experiential activities, individual or group conferences, oral presentations, or other methodology.
 - 3.1.2. Activities that are counted for credit must be required, structured, and stated in the course syllabus.
 - 3.1.3. Student learning outcome equivalencies reflect differences in delivery methods, type and quality of instruction and interaction, degree of supervision, measurements of student work, academic disciplines, academic calendars, and degree levels. These equivalencies take into consideration the time for students to complete assigned learning

activities, taking into account expectations based on degree level, discipline, and weight in students' final course grades.

4. DETERMINATION OF CREDIT HOURS

- 4.1. Each Academic College, through appropriate review and recommendation by faculty in the discipline, is responsible for demonstrating to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) that the federal and state requirements are met for all courses. In determining credit hours, faculty should note the following:
 - 4.1.1. A list of common lecture/lab credit to contact hour combinations for undergraduate and graduate academic courses has been provided in the appendix and is intended to serve as a guide.
 - 4.1.2. The number of meeting hours for clinic activity may vary by program depending upon the nature of the activity, extent of student engagement, and expected learning/training outcomes.
 - 4.1.3. Standards established by external discipline-specific accreditation agencies will be applied as required.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

Code of Federal Regulations Part 600, Subpart A, §600.2

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules, 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 4.6 Minimum Length of Courses and Limitations on the Amount of Credit that a Student May Earn in a Given Time Period

[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&rl=6](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&rl=6)

U.S. Department of Education Guidance

[\(GEN-11-06\) Subject: Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010 | Knowledge Center](#)

Definitions

“Traditionally delivered course” is used to describe a three credit hour face-to-face course in which students and instructor meet at a regular time over a fifteen-week semester for a total of between 45-48 contact hours.

“Semester Credit Hour”³ is defined as not less than:

- 1) One hour of formalized instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- 2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in item 1) of this definition for other academic activities leading to the award of semester credit hours.

One “hour” is defined as a minimum of 50 minutes per week.

“Formalized instruction” includes instructor facilitated learning through lecture, discussion, or instructor-guided activity.

Appendix

The following table is taken from the THECB Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (<http://board.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/WorkforceEd/acgm/acgm.htm>) and should be used as a guideline for determining lecture-lab credit to contact hour combinations for undergraduate and graduate academic courses.

Semester Credit Hours	Contact Hour Range per Semester	Lectures per week for combination	Labs/Recitations/Studios per week for combination	Total contact hours per semester for combination
1 SCH	16-64	0	2	32
1 SCH	16-64	0	3	48
1 SCH	16-64	0	4	64
1 SCH	16-64	1	0	16
1 SCH	16-64	1	1	32
2 SCH	32-128	0	5	80
2 SCH	32-128	0	6	96
2 SCH	32-128	0	7	112
2 SCH	32-128	0	8	128
2 SCH	32-128	1	2	48
2 SCH	32-128	1	3	64
2 SCH	32-128	1	4	80
2 SCH	32-128	2	0	32
2 SCH	32-128	2	1	48
3 SCH	48-144	1	5	96
3 SCH	48-144	1	6	112
3 SCH	48-144	1	7	128
3 SCH	48-144	1	8	144

³ Code of Federal Regulations Part 600, Subpart A, §600.2
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600>

3 SCH	48-144	2	2	64
3 SCH	48-144	2	3	80
3 SCH	48-144	2	4	96
3 SCH	48-144	3	0	48
3 SCH	48-144	3	1	64
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4 SCH	64-160	1	9	160
4 SCH	64-160	2	5	112
4 SCH	64-160	2	6	128
4 SCH	64-160	2	7	144
4 SCH	64-160	2	8	160
4 SCH	64-160	3	2	80
4 SCH	64-160	3	3	96
4 SCH	64-160	3	4	112
4 SCH	64-160	4	0	64
4 SCH	64-160	4	1	80
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5 SCH	80-176	2	9	176
5 SCH	80-176	3	5	128
5 SCH	80-176	3	6	144
5 SCH	80-176	3	7	160
5 SCH	80-176	3	8	176
5 SCH	80-176	4	2	96
5 SCH	80-176	4	3	112
5 SCH	80-176	4	4	128
5 SCH	80-176	5	0	80
5 SCH	80-176	5	1	96