

Memo To: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders

UH-Downtown/PS 03.A.30

Issue No. 4

From: Loren J. Blanchard, President

Effective date: 09/01/2023

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Subject: Semester Credit Hours Policy

1. PURPOSE

This Policy Statement establishes the University of Houston-Downtown's definition of a "semester credit hour" for its courses and other academic activities, including laboratory work, internships, practicums, studio work, and any other academic work leading to the awarding of semester credit hours via face-to-face, experiential, distance, and correspondence learning. This definition is derived from definitions of "Carnegie unit" and "semester credit hour" used extensively throughout higher education institutions and the federal government, and it is guided by the [Credit Hour policy](#) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges as well as [Texas Administrative Code Title 19 Rule 4.6](#).

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Semester credit hour: An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates one hour of classroom or direct instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks, or the equivalent amount of work during terms of differing length ([34 CFR 600.2](#)).

2.1.1 Credit hours for seminars and lectures are based on a reasonable approximation of instruction and out-of-class student work, such that a 3-credit hour course would require 3 hours of instruction and 6 hours of out-of-class student work each week for 15 weeks.

2.1.2 Other types of courses (e.g. studios, labs, independent study) should follow a similar model for determining credit hours based on instruction and out-of-class work.

2.1.3 Hour: One instructional hour is 60 minutes, of which 50 minutes must be direct instruction (22 Tex. Admin. Code §511.11).

2.2 Credit Level: Refers to the distinction between lower (1000 & 2000) and upper (3000 & 4000) level courses. As courses raise in level, learning outcomes, assignment complexity, prerequisites, and/or other indicators must change to capture increasingly more in terms of breadth and/or depth of skills, knowledge, and competencies.

2.3 Classroom instruction: includes the traditional classroom, a supervised lab, private instruction, or any similar instructional engagement in which an instructor has synchronous contact with one or more students.

2.4 Direct instruction: actively facilitated by an instructor or field supervisor to serve educational purposes, including, for example, classroom instruction, online lectures/instruction, video conferencing, video presentations, chat rooms, discussion boards, group or team-based

activities, online tests/quizzes, virtual labs, directly supervised field experiences, and online content modules.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 All courses offering academic credit must meet university-determined academic standards of rigor, quality, and application of learning outcomes, regardless of length or contact hours.
- 3.2 Undergraduate students should not carry more courses in any term that would allow them to earn more than one semester credit hour per week over the course of a term, per [19 Tex. Admin. Code §4.6 \(2003\)](#). For instance, no undergraduate student may enroll in more than 18 credit hours during a 15-week semester, 6 credit hours during a summer session, or 3 credit hours during a mini-session without approval of an advisor or chair of the department of a student's major.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Students seeking to receive academic credit for recognized course work from other accredited institutions of higher education must follow processes in PS 03.A.10 Acceptance of Transfer Credit.
- 4.2 Students seeking to receive academic credit awarded for any experience or achievement outside of recognized course work from accredited institutions such as standardized equivalency exams or any other university-approved assessment processes must follow procedures identified in PS 03.A.11, Credit By Examination.
- 4.3 The Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost must approve any exception to the provisions of this policy.
 - 4.3.1 Any UHD credit-bearing activities that may require alternate measures for semester credit hours or that are offered outside of published semester structures must be approved by the Office of the Provost prior to commencement of the activities unless governed by specific processes in other UHD policies.
- 4.4 The University Curriculum Committee receives, reviews, and makes recommendations pertaining to every course and program offered for academic credit by the University (See PS 03.A.12).
- 4.5 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that scheduled courses fulfill the requirements of this policy.

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

Review: Every three years on or before September 1st

Signed original on file with Employment Services and Operations.

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 12/15/2004

Issue #2: 02/29/2012

Issue #3: 05/28/2013

8. REFERENCES

[19 Tex. Admin. Code §4.6 \(2003\)](#)

[34 CFR 600.2](#)

[SACSOC Credit Hour Policy](#)