

## **Clemson University Credit Hour and Credit Load Policies**

### **Credit Hour Policy Statement**

The semester hour is the basis of all academic credits at Clemson University. In alignment with the SC Commission on Higher Education, a semester hour is defined as the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency reasonably approximating not less than:

EITHER

- (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 hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a proportionate amount of time;

OR

- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in (1) for other activities, as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, research, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

A minimum of 750 minutes of instruction (pedagogic or andragogic activity) or equivalent is required for each semester hour of credit to be awarded.

All courses shall meet this requirement for awarding academic credit recorded on an official transcript issued by Clemson University, regardless of schedule type or mode of delivery (including but not limited to online, lecture, seminar, workshop, tutorial, studio, field course, clinical, internship, independent study, laboratory, and thesis and dissertation research, as defined herein), and level (including graduate, professional, and undergraduate).

Credit hours for learning that occurs through non-pedagogic/non-andragogic activities shall be determined using these contact time ratios:

Laboratory/clinical (with or without fee): student interaction takes place in a laboratory or clinical setting. Apply a 2:1 – 3:1 contact time ratio per credit, or 1500-2250 min/credit. Course experts have discretion in making this equivalency determination, depending on the nature of the activity.

Field Course: experiential learning courses that typically occur off-campus. Apply contact ratio similar to laboratories (1500-2250 min/credit), but can be higher depending on the nature of the activity.

Independent Study: students work one-on-one with a professor, who sets the expectations for awarding credit. The contact ratio can vary by discipline, but is to be in the range similar to laboratories (1500-2250 min/credit).

Internship: supervised experiential learning that typically occurs with an employer in the student's discipline. Since this is not traditional instruction, programs have latitude in how many work hours they require per credit hour. These courses can be variable credit or zero credit (as a co-requisite).

Lecture: traditional face-to-face lecture/recitation format, Video Capture Technology (VCT) or online delivery of content, including hybrid formats. Apply 1:1 contact time ratio

(750 min/credit).

Online delivery refers to coursework provided in a different environment from the traditional face-to-face format. In this case, the instructor presides synchronously or asynchronously with students, with all participants interacting by using a computer network. Online delivery is one form of distance education.

Thesis and Dissertation research: work expectations per hour of credit to be negotiated with advisor or guided by program policy. Adequate academic progress within and across terms is expected.

Seminar: class activities dominated by small group discussions. Apply 1:1 contact time ratio (750 min/credit).

Studio: courses for creative work and practice. Apply contact ratio similar to laboratory/clinical (1500-2250 min/credit).

Tutorial: applied instruction, such as in Music. Apply contact time ratio similar to laboratory/clinical (1500-2250 min/credit).

**Sunset Provision:** Some courses that have been on the books for a long time may have had the Studio, Laboratory/Clinical or Tutorial component treated the same as the lecture/recitation component, i.e., 750 min/credit. Such courses shall remain unchanged but shall progressively phase out as catalog revisions and course changes permit.

Zero-credit courses: Existing courses designed to serve the purpose of tracking (such as for Co-op and study abroad) that are zero-credit courses shall also remain unchanged but shall progressively phase out as catalog revisions and course changes permit. However, unless presented with strong and compelling justification for the need to create new zero-credit courses for tracking purposes only, the appropriate university governance bodies responsible for approving courses and programs shall deny new requests to create any such zero-credit courses.

The expectation of contact time inside the classroom and student effort outside the classroom is the same in all delivery formats of a course, whether it be fully online, a hybrid of face-to-face contact with some content delivered by electronic means, or one delivered face-to-face in lecture, studio or seminar format.

#### **Course Catalog Entry Conventions for Course Credits:**

One lecture/recitation hour (750 minutes) a week or two to three laboratory hours a week (1500-2250 minutes) for one semester (approximately 15 weeks) constitute a semester hour of credit.

Clemson University uses the following catalog entry convention to describe the activity mix and total number of credit hours assigned to a given course:

**Course Subject Code** (2 to 4 letters) + **Course Number** (4-digit number) + **Abridged Course Title** + **Total Credit Hours** + **Contact Hours** (enclosed in parentheses indicating number of lecture hours or number of laboratory hours) + **Course Description** + (optionally, **Prereq:** or **Coreq:** + course subject code and number)

Catalog Entry Examples (with a 4-credit-hour course example)

**1. Courses with Lecture and an Integrated Lab (lecture and lab are coreqs of one another)**

CCHP 1010 -- Clemson Credit Hour Policy 4(3) --- Coreq: CCHP 1011

CCHP 1011 – Clemson Credit Hour Policy Laboratory 0(3) --- Coreq: CCHP 1010

**2. Course with Lecture and Decoupled Lab (lecture and lab are also coreqs of one another)**

CCHP 1010 -- Clemson Credit Hour Policy 3(3) Coreq: CCHP 1020

CCHP 1020 -- Clemson Credit Hour Policy Laboratory 1(1) Coreq: CCHP 1010

**3. Course with only Lecture but no Lab**

CCHP 1010 -- Clemson Credit Hour Policy 4(4)

**4. Course with No Lecture, but only Lab/Field Work**

CCHP 1010 -- Clemson Credit Hour Policy 4(8)

**Examples of Current Entries in the *Courses of Instruction* section of the Undergraduate Catalog (see *Graduate Catalog* for equivalent examples):**

**HIST 1930 – Modern World History 3(3)**

This entry means that the student earns three semester hours of HIST 1930, Modern World History. The notation “3(3)” means that the course is worth three credits, composed entirely of three clock (contact) hours of pedagogic activity (i.e.  $3 \times 750 = 2250$  minutes) during class time per week. When a student completes the course, the transcript will record the grade earned, worth three (3) semester credit hours, which serves as the weight for the quality point average (QPA) of the grade earned by the student, when computing the student’s grade point average (GPA).

**CH 1010 - General Chemistry 4(3) Coreq: CH 1011**

**CH 1011- General Chemistry Laboratory 0(3) Coreq: CH 1010**

These entries mean that the student earns four semester hours in total. However, only three clock (contact) hours of class time per week are completed through CH 1010, which leaves the student “short of a full semester hour.” CH 1010 has a required lab course associated with it (CH 1011), which is listed along with CH 1010 as a Co-Requisite (Coreq). A student registered in CH 1010 is also required to register in CH 1011 in order to complete the full course requirements and earn the 4 semester hours. CH 1011 0(3) as the Co-Requisite course for CH 1010 would therefore read “0(3)”, and the three clock (contact) hours associated with CH 1011 account for the fourth credit CH 1010 carries.

Note: The issue of coreqs is more nuanced than can be captured fully in this policy.

**Credit Load Policy Statement**

Entering freshmen are restricted to the curriculum requirements of their majors. Credit loads for all other undergraduate students are determined in consultation with the student’s academic advisor, who will approve a credit load deemed in the best interest of the student based on such factors as course requirements, grade-point average, participation in other activities, and expected date of graduation.

For fall, spring and summer terms, nineteen (19) is the maximum number of hours in which an undergraduate student may enroll during early registration (16 hours is the maximum credit load for those on probation). Fifteen (15) is the maximum number of hours in which a graduate student may enroll during early registration. On the day before classes begin for a term, the maximum number of hours for all students, except those on probation, automatically goes up to 21 credits for undergraduate students. Permission of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies is required for all registration in more than 21 hours, or permission of the academic adviser in 16 hours or more for students on probation.

Students are prohibited from enrolling in courses with overlapping class times.

### **Full-Time Enrollment**

In fall and spring semesters, undergraduate-level enrollment in 12 or more credit hours, and graduate-level enrollment in 9 or more credit hours, is considered full time; and combined undergraduate-level enrollment in 12 or more hours, or 6 or more hours of graduate-level enrollment, in summer terms is considered full time for the summer. Enrollment in fewer than 12 credit hours for undergraduate students, or fewer than 9 hours for graduate students, is part-time in spring and fall semesters.

### **Definitions**

**Credit Hour:** An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

EITHER

(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 hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a proportionate amount of time;

OR

(2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practicum, research, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

**Delivery mode** is the primary method by which students participate in a program. Delivery modes include:

- **Traditional instruction** in which significant site attendance is required; or
- **Non-traditional education** in which coursework is delivered online; by blended instruction, a combination of traditional instruction and instruction delivered by a variety of technologies; or by other methods whereby the coursework is delivered by an instructor who provides instruction at a place or time other than the place or time the instruction is received.

Traditional instruction refers to instruction offered by faculty who are physically present at the same site and at the same time as students, by recitation (or lecture style).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of these policies is to: (1) define the semester credit hour and (2) offer faculty shared governance committees that oversee and approve the curriculum clear metrics for determining how much credit to approve for various forms of activity designed to foster learning. They also (3) explain catalog entry conventions for annotating course credits, and (4) state Clemson University's definition of full-time vs part-time enrollment status based on the credit load students carry per semester.

**Responsibility for the Credit Policies**

Academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours they award are for work that meets the requirements outlined in the Clemson University Credit Hour Policy. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Credit Load Policy.

Faculty and academic units shall follow the credit hour policy in developing new courses or new modes of delivering existing courses. The University Curriculum Committee is charged with following the credit hour policy in its review and approval of all courses and for certifying that the expected student learning outcomes for the course meet the credit hour standard. The determination of credit hours is made when a new course or a revision to an existing course, including a new mode of delivery, is proposed.

**Responsible Department/Division (Contact Person):**

Office of the Executive VP for Academic Affairs and Provost

Contact Person: Constancio K. Nakuma, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

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**Approval Dates:**

Academic Council: December 9, 2019

**Reviewed/Revised Dates:****Monitoring Procedures and Exemptions (*If applicable*):**

**Published Location(s):** <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/academic-policies.html>