

Policy title: Credit Hour	Category: Registrar
Owner:	Approved by:

Policy statement

Definition of the Credit Hour (from the NWU Catalog)

Nebraska Wesleyan University follows the Federal Credit Hour Definition [see below]. Because courses are offered using a variety of delivery models at Nebraska Wesleyan (e.g., face-to-face, accelerated, hybrid, or online), a "credit hour" at NWU is defined as 1) verifiable instructional time and/or activity leading to the achievement of expected learning outcomes for a given course, and 2) learning activities judged by the faculty to be the equivalent of the 45-hour time commitment for a one-credit course.

Therefore, credit hours at NWU may be awarded for a combination of classroom instruction, student work outside of class, or other approved educational activities including, but not limited to: creation of and reflection on a learning portfolio; engaging in clinical education or field experience; participating in and building upon knowledge gained through a practicum; completing a work of performance art, such as original musical scores or artwork; development of a formal presentation or other project related to the discipline.

If a department is offering a course that does not meet the typical "seat time" for the credit hours being awarded (for example—a 4-credit course in which the 4th hour each week is devoted to experiential learning outside the classroom, or an accelerated course that does not have instructional time equivalent to the regularly-scheduled version of that course, or a 1-credit "arranged" independent study), the department needs to document how the instructional time, student work, and achievement of learning outcomes "reasonably approximates" the federal standard.

HLC Credit Hour Policy (informs NWU definition)

Assignment of Credit Hours. The institution's assignment and award of credit hours shall conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education. Those institutions seeking, or participating in, Title IV federal financial aid, shall demonstrate that they have policies determining the credit hours awarded to courses and programs in keeping with commonly-accepted practices in higher education and with the federal definition of the credit hour as may appear in federal regulations and that institutions also have procedures that result in an appropriate awarding of institutional credit in conformity with the policies established by the institution.

Federal Credit Hour Definition: *A credit hour is 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:***

(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 (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, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.

Seat Time/Out-of-Class Work Time Expectations

A credit hour represents a combination of direct faculty instruction (instructional time/learning activity) plus out-of-class student work. The federal definition requires a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per each hour of direct faculty instruction. *This expectation applies to independent studies, special projects, directed readings, etc. as well as to regular courses.*

credit hour(s)	16-week session	8-week session
1 credit hour	1 contact hour/week (50 minutes) plus a minimum of 2 hours' work outside of class	2 contact hours/week (100 minutes) plus a minimum of 4 hours' work outside of class
2 credit hours	2 contact hours/week (100 minutes) plus a minimum of 4 hours' work outside of class	4 contact hours/week (200 minutes) plus a minimum of 8 hours' work outside of class
3 credit hours	3 contact hours/week (150 minutes) plus a minimum of 6 hours' work outside of class	6 contact hours/week (300 minutes) plus a minimum of 12 hours' work outside of class
4 credit hours	4 contact hours/week (200 minutes) plus a minimum of 8 hours' work outside of class	8 contact hours/week (400 minutes) plus a minimum of 16 hours' work outside of class
5 credit hours	5 contact hours/week (250 minutes) plus a minimum of 10 hours' work outside of class	10 contact hours/week (500 minutes) plus a minimum of 20 hours' work outside of class

[no daytime grid block is assigned to highlighted sessions]

NWU Course Delivery Methods

- **Standard Direct (face-to-face) Instruction:** Minimum instructional time is verified for each course section, regardless of term length. Courses may use a combination of in-class and directed out-of-class learning activities that amount to no less than 45 hours per credit hour.
- **Accelerated Direct (face-to-face) Instruction:** Course sections normally meet once per week for 4 hours, with sufficient work outside of class such that each credit hour represents not less than 45 hours of student work.
- **Online or Hybrid:** Courses offered fully online (75-100% online) or in a hybrid format (25-75% online) must meet the course description, learning objectives, and credit hour standards.

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