



## Guidelines for Credit Hour Assignment

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Antioch University adopted the Program Length and Credit Hour Policy 5.203 in June 2011 to assure compliance with federal regulations and expectations of regional accreditation. The following set of guidelines and standards is provided to assist faculty in complying with the university's definition of a credit hour, which is provided below:

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:

- a) 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
- b) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the awarding of credit hours.

### **II. STANDARDS**

Antioch University implements the above policy through the adoption of a set of guidelines that frame how faculty take instructional contact hours and student outside academic work into account when assigning credit hours to courses. These guidelines provide the educational philosophy and reflect the instructional approach of courses designed to meet the needs of adult learners and to engage them a variety to of learning experiences that will assist them in acquiring the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to effectively demonstrate personal and collective agency, global citizenship, and socially conscious leadership. In addition, these guidelines assist the faculty in assuring equivalency in the assignment of academic credit for work completed.

#### **A. Credit Hours, Instructional Contact, and Student Work**

The tradition in higher education is to schedule 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. This model, which is still viable and active in higher education, reflects a notion of higher learning that puts the faculty at the center of the educational experience and assumes that students have school as the primary demand on their time.

Antioch University organizes its courses in a manner that best promotes opportunities for intellectual creativity and freedom for the adult student. In addition, faculty design their courses using a variety of instructional and learning strategies to assure that the learning experiences are relevant and support the learning styles, professional development, and adult development needs of the learners. The result is that our courses include structured learning experiences that are not necessarily designed with the strict 1:2 ratio of faculty contract hours to student outside academic work hours.

To meet the varying needs of our students, Antioch University offers courses in a variety of modalities: those that are primarily classroom-based, those that combine a blend of classroom learning with online learning, those that are primarily online, and those that incorporate a substantial amount of field-based or experiential learning. In addition, courses are offered on quarter, semester, and annual academic calendars.

This innovation in course design and delivery requires that the university adopt credit assignment guidelines that allow for adjustment of the traditional credit—instructional contact— student work relationship. However, all courses, regardless of the modality, must comply with the university's Program Length and Credit Hour Policy #5.203.

#### **B. Equivalency among Course Delivery Models**

1. Credit hour definition: The definition of credit hour is consistently applied to all courses, regardless of delivery model.
2. Student Learning Outcomes: For all delivery models, programs must equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that can be reasonably achieved by students within the time allocated and through the learning activities assigned.
3. Accelerated Delivery of Courses: Courses that are delivered over periods of time that are shorter than the traditional 10-week quarter, 15-semester or 30- annual term must include the equivalent amount of total instructional contact and student outside academic work as course delivered on a traditional schedule, with normally at no more than one credit being offered per week of full-time study.

#### **C. Academic Level**

The assignment of academic credit should also take into consider the academic level of the course. Faculty should follow the guidelines in Curriculum Standards Policy 5.201 to assure that student learning outcomes and academic credit awarded are appropriate for the academic level of the course.

#### **D. Assurance of Appropriate Credit Hour Assignment**

The responsibility for assuring that the academic credit awarded for organized student learning (course, seminar, module, tutorial, field experience, capstone learning, etc.) is academic and rests with the faculty. For the purpose of this document and policy implementation, unless otherwise specified, the term "course" refers to all organized student learning for which credit is assigned.

The basis for assigning credit hours (see examples below under Standards) must be documented for all courses. The faculty are responsible for establishing a mechanism for reviewing the basis for assigning credits to new or modified courses offered by the campus or university-wide program.

The responsibility for maintaining the documentation of compliance with the Program Length and Credit Hour Policy 5.203 and these guidelines rests with the campus and university-wide program chief academic officer.

### **III. GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNING CREDIT**

Listed below are examples of the various course designs that may be part of a program's curriculum. Guidelines for the assignment of credit hours based upon the combination of instructional contact hours and student academic work (homework) hours are provided to assist the faculty in assuring equivalency of course credits across the university.

The descriptions below assume that every course has a primary delivery model: classroom-based, technology-assisted, supervised independent scholarly, field-based, and experiential learning. In addition, credit by examination and course delivery in short sessions are discussed.

#### **A. Credit Hour Assignment for Classroom-based Learning**

Classroom-based learning is defined as those courses in which the majority of the scheduled instructional time occurs in a classroom setting. The instructional time may include lectures, demonstrations, discussions, presentation of audio-visual material, as well as individual and small group work. Classroom-based courses may also include field trips, studio sessions, and off-campus activities, as well as supplementary online learning activities. The predominant place for the scheduled instructional activities, however, is the classroom.

One semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for a total of 45 hours of combined instructional contact and student outside academic work. Traditionally, these hours are divided into 15 hours of classroom instruction with an expectation of 30 hours of student outside academic work.

One quarter credit: 30 total hours: 10 classroom instruction and 20 student outside academic work

One annual credit: 90 total hours: 30 classroom instruction and 60 student outside academic work

The proportion of classroom instruction and student outside academic work may be adjusted to accommodate the instructional needs as long as the total minimum hours are still met.

## **B. Technology-assisted Learning**

Technology-assisted learning includes two major categories of courses: hybrid courses, which combine a blend of classroom learning with technology-assisted distance learning, and online courses, which incorporate distance delivery into 75% or more of the course content.

Instructional contact—both synchronous and asynchronous—is present in both hybrid and online courses. Face-to-face instruction is counted as instructional contact time. Online instructional time will include asynchronous or synchronous learning where students are gaining new information and/or interacting with the instructor.

Instructional time may include but is not limited to the following activities:

- Posted modules or lessons written or procured by the instructor
- Chat room discussions with the instructor and/or other students
- Bulletin board discussions with the instructor and/or other students
- Email discussions with instructor and/or other students
- Other activities that include instructor interaction and involvement

In addition, student academic work outside of instructional time is included in the assignment of credit hours. The number of hours spent outside of instructional time can be difficult to determine based on learning styles, abilities, rates of retention, subject matter of the course, and so forth. A general guideline is that students should expect to spend double the amount of instructional time in activities and assignments. Examples of activities include the following

- Writing papers
- Reading articles or text
- Small group work
- Accessing and utilizing resources from websites
- Presentations
- Completing assignments from the textbook
- Other activities that do not include direct instructor interaction and involvement

### **1. Credit Hour Assignment for Hybrid Courses**

One semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for a total of 45 hours of combined classroom hours, instructional contact, and student outside academic work, including the activities listed above.

One quarter credit: a minimum of 30 total hours of a combination of classroom hours, instructional contact, and student academic work, including the activities listed above.

One annual credit: a minimum of 90 total hours of a combination of classroom hours, instructional contact and student academic work, including the activities listed above.

## **2. Credit Hour Assignment for Online Courses**

One semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for a total of 45 hours of combined instructional contact and student outside academic work, including the activities listed above.

One quarter credit: a minimum of 30 total hours of a combination of instructional contact and student academic work, including the activities listed above.

One annual credit: a minimum of 90 total hours of a combination of instructional contact and student academic work, including the activities listed above.

## **C. Credit Hour Assignment for Supervised Independent Scholarly Learning (Independent Studies; Tutorials; Thesis, Manuscript, and Dissertation)**

Supervised independent scholarly activity involves, at a minimum, a total of 45 hours of combined instructional contact and student outside academic work. Since the student plays a more self-directed and independent role in the learning experience, it is expected that the number of student outside academic work will be significantly greater than the standard and there will be a commensurate decrease in the number of instructional contact hours. The actual number of instruction contact hours will depend upon the design of the supervised independent scholarly activity. For example, a tutorial might contain weekly contact between instructor and student, whereas an independent study may have less frequent interaction between student and instructor.

In addition, the scheduled interaction between instructor and student may depend upon the student's stage of scholarly activity and the specific learning outcomes to be achieved. For example, a student might have more frequent contact with an instructor during the development of the thesis or dissertation research question than during the data collection stage. Likewise students working on manuscripts will need periods of instructional contact with their faculty and periods of independent study.

One semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for a total of 45 hours of combined instructional contact and student outside academic work.

One quarter credit: 30 total hours, derived from both classroom instruction and independent academic work

One annual credit: 90 total hours, derived from both classroom instruction and independent academic work

## **D. Credit Hour Assignment for Field-based Learning**

Field-based learning provides students with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skill through the application of previously acquired knowledge to specific contexts or professional situations.

There are two types of field-based learning: (1) Practica and (2) Internships, Clinical, and Student Teaching. A practicum is a hands-on supervised work experience done by a student either as a stand-alone course or as part of or in conjunction with an academic class as an educational strategy to attain the class objective. A faculty member establishes the objectives and evaluation metrics, supervises the work, evaluates the student's demonstration of the learning outcomes and writes a final evaluation and awards credit.

An internship, clinical, or student teaching is a supervised work experience that is a capstone experience tied to a student's major or career goal. The field-based learning involves a student working in an agency or other professional setting under the supervision of a designated practicing professional. Frequently, internships, clinicals, and student teaching are full-time work assignments.

All field-based learning will require a greater number of student outside academic work per credit than does non-field-based learning, and in most cases, the instructional contact hours are either reduced or shared by the faculty of record and professionals who supervise the students in their work. In addition, state requirements, disciplinary standards or professional accreditation or licensure requirements may prescribe that a specific number of hours of supervised field-based learning be used when assigning credits. Faculty are expected to incorporate the applicable standards into the specific field-based learning course expectations.

One semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for minimum of 60 hours of combined instructional contact and student outside academic work.

One quarter credit: 45 total hours, derived from both classroom instruction and student outside academic work.

One annual credit: 120 total hours, derived from both classroom instruction and student outside academic work.

#### **E. Credit Hour Assignment for Experiential Learning**

Antioch University has a strong commitment to recognizing the value of learning acquired in settings outside the traditional classroom. Students who can satisfactorily document and demonstrate learning, knowledge, and skills appropriate to their academic program plan and degree level and that have been derived from life experiences have the opportunity to apply for academic credit for learning derived from those life experiences.

Experiential learning work may have occurred prior to enrollment at Antioch or may take place as current learning through a course for which the student has registered. Experiential learning courses necessitate instructional hours where students and faculty engage in reflection, discussion, and processing the experience.

### Forms of Experiential Learning

- Study abroad, either through term-length programs or through a shorter study tour;
- Domestic studies, bringing the student to a geographic location other than their region;
- Service learning;
- Cooperative learning, involving alternating periods of work and study;

For both prior and current experiential learning, credit should be awarded for the attainment of learning outcomes through experiential activity and not for experiential activity alone.

The minimum number of experiential hours will vary from one form of experiential learning to another. However, given the nature of experiential learning, Experiential learning requires a greater number of student outside academic work per credit that does non-experiential learning, and in most cases, faculty-organized and faculty-facilitated instructional hours may be proportionately reduced from the standard instructional time, based upon the amount of time students commit to "experiential hours."

In addition, disciplinary standards or professional accreditation or licensure requirements may prescribe that a specific number of hours of supervised experiential learning be used when assigning credits. Faculty are expected to incorporate the applicable standards into the specific experiential learning course expectations.

One semester credit hour is an academic unit earned for minimum of 60 hours of combined instructional contact and student outside academic work.

One quarter credit: 45 total hours, derived from both classroom instruction and student outside academic work.

One annual credit: 120 total hours, derived from both classroom instruction and student outside academic work.