**Academic Policy Series 1200.40**

**Credit Hour Definition**

The University of Arkansas uses the Federal definition (34 CFR 600.2) of a credit hour, which provides that a credit hour is “an amount of student work defined by an institution . . . consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that—

(1) Reasonably approximates not less than—

(i) One hour1 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 period of time; or

(ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) 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; and

(2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

1For the purposes of this policy, the University of Arkansas defines a class hour as a minimum of 50 minutes per week*.*

The University of Arkansas has adopted Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board Policy 5.11 in defining traditional instruction which states:

The amount of credit awarded for a course is based on the amount of time in class, the amount of outside preparation required, and the intensity of the educational experience.

* A formal lecture course with extensive assigned reading or other out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 750 minutes or 12.5 hours of classroom instruction;
* A laboratory class with moderate out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of1500 minutes or 25 hours of laboratory instruction; and
* Clinical, practicum, internship, shop instruction or other self-paced learning activities involving work-related experience with little or no out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 2250 minutes or 37.5 hours of work-related instruction.

The federal definition also assumes the average student will be expected to prepare for each hour of classroom instruction by engaging in a minimum of two hours of out-of-class work per week for fifteen weeks for each credit hour earned.

Consistent with the federal definition of a credit hour, faculty instructional time must be fulfilled through academic engagement which usually equates to 1(i) and 1(ii) of the above federal definition. Within limits to ensure course rigor and accountability, it can be acceptable under (2) of the above federal definition to replace [a portion of] sessions of equivalent instruction and/or examinations with alternative forms of coursework (e.g., laboratory work, practica, out-of-class assignments and projects, assigned readings, problem sets, discussion questions, service learning experiences, a capstone project, etc.).

The University of Arkansas also allows credit to be awarded for distance education (sometimes referred to as online) courses where instruction is regular and substantive and the student has the opportunity to demonstrate evidence of achievement of intended learning outcomes that is equivalent to the amount of instruction and student work in campus/face-to-face courses. See Academic Policy 1200.50 for distance education standards for courses taken for academic credit.

Courses offered by the University of Arkansas shall all have the same learning outcomes and quality of instruction regardless of delivery method or semester/term taught.

The faculty are primary responsible for ensuring compliance with the UA Credit Hour Policy, providing required instruction and monitoring the academic engagement and performance of students. Academic department chairs/heads, and designated assistant/associate deans within each college or school under the supervision of the respective dean share responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy.