

FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
CREDIT HOUR & PROGRAM LENGTH POLICY

PURPOSE

This Policy provides guidelines and procedures for:

- accurately determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 Code of Federal Regulations s. 600.2, that Fresno Pacific University awards for courses and programs;
- applying these policies and procedures to programs and coursework;
- making a reasonable determination of whether the assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education; and
- determining appropriate program length.

DEFINITION

“Credit hour” is defined by the Department of Education in CFR 600.2 as follows:

“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 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.”

CREDIT HOURS

Each program will meet the Department of Education Code of Federal Regulations 600.2 requirements and the WSCUC Credit Hour Policy in ways distinct to its programmatic structure, but in compliance with these stipulations. WSCUC 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. Institutions have the flexibility to award a greater number of credits for courses that they can show require more student work. The syllabus for each course will include a record of estimated times for the work of the class as a guide to students and to demonstrate compliance. A credit hour approximates not less than:

Undergraduate: 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 of credit. (Totals: fifteen hours classroom or direct faculty instruction plus thirty hours of homework per unit of credit).

Graduate: One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of three hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester of credit. (Totals: fifteen hours classroom or direct faculty instruction plus forty-five hours of homework per unit of credit).

Other Academic Activities: Laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and independent programs (e.g. Individualized Master of Arts Program) will include at least an equivalent amount of work

FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
CREDIT HOUR & PROGRAM LENGTH POLICY

corresponding to the required classroom or direct instruction hours and out of class student work indicated above.

MODALITIES

Hybrid/Blended Courses: The equivalent amount of work as indicated above for Undergraduate or Graduate credits. Classroom or direct faculty instruction time will be met by a combination of face-to-face and mediated/online instruction.

Distance Education: The equivalent amount of work as indicated above for Undergraduate or Graduate credits. Classroom or direct faculty instruction time will be met by mediated/online instruction.

CREDIT HOUR LENGTH

The above credit hour calculations are based on a period of instruction of approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. The total hours per unit of credit listed above for undergraduate and graduate courses must be met regardless of the period of instruction.

PROGRAM LENGTH

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. As per WSCUC guidance:

Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor's degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master's degree.

For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, programs should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that measures are in place to ensure that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESSES

The processes that FPU employs to review periodically the application of this policy across the institution to ensure that credit hour assignments are accurate, reliable and consistently applied are as follows:

- All reviews and updates of catalog
- Ongoing syllabus audits by deans or their designates every semester
- All academic committees when new programs or courses are being approved, which includes hours for assignments

ACCESSIBILITY

This policy is to be included in the Academic Catalog and posted on the Registrar's Webpage.

FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
CREDIT HOUR & PROGRAM LENGTH POLICY

REFERENCES

WSCUC Credit Hour Policy <https://www.wscuc.org/content/credit-hour-policy>

WSCUC Federal Compliance Form <https://www.wscuc.org/credit-hour-and-program-length-review-form>

Credit Hours and Program Length Definition - Code of Federal Regulations,
<https://ecfr.federalregister.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600>;
<https://ecfr.federalregister.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-602/subpart-B/subject-group-ECFR7fd0379c1583022/section-602.16>

EFFECTIVE DATE

Affirmed by Academic Cabinet: January 26, 2021.