

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

Introduction

The University of San Francisco operates under a semester credit hour system of approximately 15 weeks each semester in the academic year, or its equivalent in the winter intersession, summer session, and online semester. This policy codifies the University's requirement of course contact hours and is in compliance with Federal, State, and accrediting agency guidelines. The policy applies to all courses.

Credit Hour at USF

The credit hour policy applies equally to courses of varying credits, duration, and modes of instruction.

One unit of credit in lecture, seminar, and discussion work should approximate one hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week through one 15-week semester.

Alternately, if the time is wholly occupied with either the seminar, studio, field, clinical or laboratory work, or internships, service learning, directed study or intensive semester (e.g. summer, online or courses offered in shorter form), a minimum of 45 hours of student work is expected for each unit of credit. Note that there may be other and/or future modes of instruction to which this alternate satisfaction of the credit hour requirement may apply.

Additionally, where classroom work is supplemented by systematic outside reading, experiment or research under the direction of the instructor, a reduction may be made in the actual studio, field, clinical, laboratory, internship or classroom time as seems appropriate to the instructor with the approval of the pertinent department and/or school or college's curriculum committee.

Periodic Compliance Review of Credit Hour Policy

New courses are reviewed and approved by the pertinent school or college's curriculum committee for compliance with the credit hour policy. WSCUC requires that a periodic compliance review of the credit hour policy is incorporated into each school's and college's established curriculum review schedule. The periodic compliance review must encompass no less than 25% of each department's courses each year.

In addition to the periodic compliance review, credit hour reviews are included by schools and colleges into comprehensive self-study requirements.

Guidance on Common Themes in Meeting WASC Credit Hour Requirement

1. Guiding principle: One unit equals one hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week for 15 weeks. Generally, one unit is granted for 45 hours of student work.
2. Include information on expected amount of work on course syllabus. A course's credit hours should reflect the amount of work required to earn those credits.
3. A course offered in fewer than 15 weeks shall contain the same total hours – contact hours, preparation time, content, and requirements – as the same course offered in the standard 15-week semester.
4. Regardless of mode of instruction, courses should be consistent in terms of purpose, scope, quality, assessment, and expected learning outcomes with other courses with the same department code, number, and course title.