

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours

NUMBER: 2:32

1. Purpose

Credit hours are used by the South Dakota public institutions to calculate, record, and interpret the number of earned credits that students accumulate as they fulfill requirements for degrees, certificates, and other similar academic qualifications. While this unit was developed and continues to be used to measure student work, it must be recognized that this time-on-task based definition is underpinned by the more important concept of student academic learning. Credit hours are assigned for subject mastery demonstrated by a typical student engaged in study for a designated amount of time. Stating this most broadly, credit hours are awarded when a student demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and proficiencies at a level and in a form that meets or exceeds that expected of a typical student after studying for this specified amount of time.

2. Definition of a Credit Hour

- A. The credit hour is a unit by which an institution measures its course work. The credit hour value for a course is determined primarily by the amount of time, the intensity of the educational experience, and the amount of outside preparation required by the student. For example, a lecture course with readings or other out-of-class preparation would result in one credit for each class hour scheduled per week for a semester while a laboratory experience with little out-of-class preparation may equal one credit for three hours scheduled per week of a semester.
- B. The following are generally accepted standards:
 - 1. At least fifteen (15) contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, seminar, or similar experience, as well as a minimum of thirty (30) hours of student homework is required for each credit hour;
 - 2. Laboratory courses with few outside requirements require a minimum of forty-five (45) contact hours for each credit hour;
 - 3. Laboratory courses with moderate out-of-class preparation require a minimum of thirty (30) contact hours for each credit hour;
 - 4. Studio courses must involve at least thirty (30) contact hours and at least fifteen

(15) hours of homework for each credit hour;

5. Internships/practica/field experiences must require a minimum of forty-five (45) clock hours of work for each credit hour;
6. Music instruction and specialized types of music performance offerings must conform to the requirement for accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Music;
7. Workshops must involve a minimum of forty-five (45) hours for each credit hour, including a minimum of fifteen (15) contact hours, with the balance of the requirement completed as students fulfill related assignments; and
8. Credit hours for courses delivered using online (distance), hybrid, and other nontraditional modes are assigned based on competencies or learning outcomes that are acquired through coursework and are equivalent to those of students in a traditional classroom setting. As a general rule, an equivalent of forty-five (45) hours of work by a typical student is required for each credit hour.

3. Assignment

Each institution must demonstrate that credit hours assigned to the course and awarded to each successful completer are appropriate for the course and for the program. Most commonly, this is demonstrated by documenting that students completing the course have acquired equivalent levels of knowledge, skills, or competencies to those acquired by students in comparable programs of study.

SOURCE: BOR, June 2011.