

Shawnee State University

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Shawnee State University's (SSU) credit hour definitions constitute a formalization of policy in order to 1) ensure compliance with federal and accreditation expectations; 2) ensure compliance with the Ohio Department of Higher Education's credit hour definition; and 3) provide consistency throughout the University. Courses may be comprised of any combination of elements described, such as a lecture course which also has required laboratory periods or a lecture course having an additional requirement for supervised practice time.

Shawnee State requires this policy to be practiced by all full-time and part-time faculty. All definitions and standards apply equally to courses offered both on and off campus.

2.0 CREDIT HOUR DEFINITIONS AND EQUIVALENCE

The requirements that follow represent minima for average students; however, deviation in excess of these requirements may occur, particularly at the graduate level. In the interest of accurate academic measurement, cross-campus comparability, and clarifying the relationship among contact hours, work outside of class, and credit hours, the following policies and practices apply:

2.1 Formalized Instruction Requirement

Consistent with the Ohio Department of Higher Education's definition, a semester credit hour is earned for a minimum of 750 total instructional minutes of classroom instruction, with a normal expectation of at least 1500 minutes of outside study (homework, reading assignments, preparation for class) for each credit hour. Credit hours may be calculated differently for other types of instruction (e.g., laboratory experience, directed practice experience, practicum experience, fieldwork experience, and studio experience) as long as the credit hour calculations align with commonly accepted practices in higher education and with the regulations of institutional accreditors and the federal financial aid program.

2.2 Shortened Sessions and/or Flexibly Scheduled Courses

Credit hours may be earned in shortened session. Courses offered over a period of time other than a standard Shawnee State University full semester will require the same amount of classroom and out-of-class work per credit hour as is required of SSU semester-long courses. The same amount of work will be distributed over a shorter period of time and may be allocated in various ways. Shortened session and flexibly scheduled classroom courses will adjust the per-class meeting instructional minutes as appropriate, given the number of class meetings, so as to meet the total instructional minutes requirement.

2.3 Distance Education, Online and Hybrid (Blended) Courses

SSU's credit hour policy and credit award practice for distance education, e.g., online and hybrid courses, will be consistent and equivalent with the standards for courses offered through face-to-face instruction, although some or all of course content and faculty-student interaction may occur through one or more forms of distance education.

2.3.1 Fully Online

For courses in which 100% of the instruction is delivered in an online mode, each credit hour consists of 750 minutes of instructor-led, computer-assisted modules, multimedia interaction, discussions, and/or assessment activities as documented in the course syllabus, and 1,500 minutes of supporting "homework" consisting of independent preparatory work, such as readings, viewing of instructional materials, or writing. Online courses which have traditional lecture course equivalents are expected to achieve equivalent student learning outcomes for the equivalent number of credit hours.

2.3.2 Hybrid (Blended) Courses

This modality uses the same requirements as Fully Online courses with the exception that each credit hour or portions thereof may include on-campus scheduled direct/in-person, faculty-directed instruction or assessment.

2.4 Courses Involving Travel

Transportation time does not count towards student work effort unless time is simultaneously used for a designated learning activity.

2.5 Other Courses

Student teaching, clinical experience, cooperative education, study abroad, internship, field placement, experiential learning activity, independent study, thesis, dissertation, and other academic work that fit no other classification may receive

credit if the work is performed under the supervision of and with the approval of a member of the faculty and with a formal written agreement noting the nature of the academic work that is approved by the appropriate academic program leader/coordinator, chair, or similar overseeing authority at a program-wide level. In such a modality, each credit hour consists of no less than 2,250 minutes spent on approved work during the term of instruction. Specific curricula/programs may require more minutes in order to award one credit hour. Credit for these experiences may be determined in accordance with the recommendations of a program's specific accreditor or other applicable regulations.

Ref: Ohio Department of Higher Education: "Guidelines & Procedures for Academic Program Review"; August 2025; Page 44.
https://highered.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/8caf213a-ff90-4b5f-b2d8-ae8c75b0672f/Academic-Program-Review-Guidelines_070516.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_K9I401S01H7F40QBNJU3SO1F56-8caf213a-ff90-4b5f-b2d8-ae8c75b0672f-ok7XiQU

History

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