

Policy Number	115.001
Policy Title	ACADEMIC CREDIT HOUR POLICY
Responsible Officers	University Registrar
Responsible Offices	Office of the University Registrar
Summary	This policy provides general definitions and specific requirements for the awarding of academic credit hours. It includes requirements articulated by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This policy does not address non-credit instruction or continuing education units (CEUs).
Definitions	Credit hour: the unit of measure used by the institution to quantify student work
Approving Body	Academic Council; Administrative Council
Approval Date	115.000 – Aca C June 5, 2017; Admin C June 12, 2017 <i>Renewed</i> 115.001 – Aca C (03.07.2022); Admin C (02.25.2022)
Last Revision	5/1/2017
Re-evaluation Date	Fall 2025
Departmental Impact	All academic areas

Failure to follow the following policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Policy Statement

CIU complies with the federally recognized definition of a credit hour:

Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), 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. (<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div8&node=34:3.1.3.1.1.1.23.2>)

CIU also adheres to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College’s policy statement on credit hours approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees June 2011 and edited January 2012 for cumulative contact time per semester.

An academic unit of credit at CIU is based on the following criteria:

- a defined academic plan for the student or course that is outlined in a written syllabus including learning resources and activities, learning outcomes or competencies, and the means to assess these outcomes,
- instruction and learning activities in which a credit unit (semester hour) includes at least 45 class hours of such instruction and activities (a class hour is the equivalent of 50 minutes of study either inside or outside the classroom),
- provision and supervision of the course by a qualified and CIU-approved instructor,
- submission of a grade to the Office of the University Registrar by the faculty member to verify learning outcomes and the completion of studies, and
- regular review of every course, regardless of delivery mode, by the faculty in periodic program reviews.

Rationale

As an institution of higher education, Columbia International University holds the responsibility for determining and upholding standards related to the awarding of credit hours for student work consistent with national standards. At CIU, a credit hour

represents a minimum level of student achievement of specific learning outcomes as verified by an assessment of student work. CIU's definition of the credit hour establishes a basis to quantify academic activity for purposes of awarding academic credentials and determining federal funding, including institutional eligibility, program eligibility, and student enrollment status and eligibility.

Policy Procedures

CIU's definition of the credit hour applies to all courses at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral studies) that award academic credit (i.e. any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University) regardless of the mode of delivery, including, but not limited to residential, online, intensive, hybrid, or off campus programs. Academic departments are responsible for ensuring that credit hours as listed for each course in the published academic catalog are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

The initial credit hour recommendation is made by the faculty in the discipline in order to ensure consistency with CIU's credit hour policy and the norms of the discipline. Each course must be approved by the institutional division/college that will be delivering the course and the approval recorded in appropriate faculty body minutes. Academic dean's offices review course syllabi each term to confirm that each course offered complies with the credit hour definition, no matter modality or location of delivery.

Courses that have less structured classroom schedules, such as laboratories, faculty directed study, internships, practica, or any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours state clearly the learning objectives and expected outcomes and workload expectations that meet the standards set forth above.

The fall and spring semester are 16 weeks in length and standard meeting times follow the following patterns for three-credit hour residential courses:

- a 3-hour block once per week,
- a 60-minute Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule,
- a 90-minute Tuesday-Thursday schedule, and
- a weekend intensive.

Courses may also be offered during the summer. These classes follow the same standard of 750 minutes of instruction per credit hour but may occur in a one-week intensive format (full day, from 8:00 – 5:00), a two week half-day format, or an alternative schedule that may be weekly, biweekly, or another variation.

Online courses at CIU are delivered asynchronously and the academic dean is responsible for determining the amount of student work expected in each online course in order to achieve the course objectives and to ensure that the online course as delivered meets the credit hour assignment approved by the college at course approval and based on at least an equivalent amount of work as represented in the definition of credit hour.

Hyperlinks

www.ciu.edu/policy