

## University of Saint Francis Credit Hour Policy

The University of Saint Francis defines a credit hour as an amount of work represented by faculty instruction and student work outside of class. Each credit hour granted by the university is based on intended learning outcomes and is verified by evidence of student achievement. For all definitions, one hour of instruction equals 50 minutes of actual instruction time. This policy on time required for granting academic credit is intended to be a minimum standard across all degrees and disciplines.

### **Standard Courses – 15 week semester**

The majority of lecture based classes are offered for three credit hours within a 15 week semester. Some classes may require less than three credit hours for the following reasons:

- The course involves remedial work or additional preparation for college level work. Courses may be offered in one credit hour segments with students taking from one to three credits, depending upon placement testing.
- The course is activity based. For example, student musicians can enroll in a music performance course for one credit hour. This course involves participating in choir, pep band, or jazz ensemble rehearsals and performances.
- The course is designed to allow students more independent function in conjunction with individual faculty. For example, Honors students may enroll for 1 credit independent study courses, which provide enrichment experiences for Honors students and extend the Honors Program into the student's major discipline.
- The course is designed as a seminar with an emphasis on student participation or presentation (primarily baccalaureate level upper division and graduate level courses).
- Faculty may design a theory course of one to two credit hours to maintain an appropriate balance of semester credit hour requirements and/or total program credits.

For lecture courses, the University of Saint Francis follows the federal definition:

- One semester hour of credit equals one hour of class instruction and a minimum of two hours of student work outside of class per week for a 15 week semester.

For hybrid courses in which 25% or more of the course, but less than 100%, is offered through distance format:

- One semester hour of credit equals three hours of student engagement time per week through a combination of instruction and student preparation outside of class. Instruction is provided through traditional teaching methods, as well as web-based interaction. Class meeting times may vary from once or twice a semester to weekly sessions.

For 100% distance formatted courses:

- One semester hour of credit equals three hours of student engagement time per week through a combination of instruction and student preparation outside of class. Instruction is provided through a combination of synchronous or asynchronous web-based interaction, discussion threads, email, and other instructional methods.

For thesis and independent study courses:

- Thesis and independent study courses are designed to provide the student with individualized instruction to pursue learning outcomes, which are determined in consultation with a faculty

member. Direct interaction with the faculty varies according to student need and may involve a combination of individualized instruction and synchronous or asynchronous interaction through web-based or comparable technology. Students are expected to complete at least two hours of independent student work per week for every semester hour of credit.

### **Compressed Course Schedule**

The university uses compressed course schedules in which the course is offered for a shorter period of time than the standard 15 week schedule. For compressed courses, one semester hour of credit equals one hour of synchronous or asynchronous class instruction and at least three hours of student work outside of class. Depending upon the length of the course, students may be expected to complete as much as 25 hours per week in course preparation.

### **Experiential and Alternative Course Formats**

Experiential and alternative course formats vary in credit hour requirements and may require more credit hours than basic lecture courses. Students work directly with supervisors, preceptors, teachers, or mentors in a variety of settings.

Alternative course formats include the following:

- On-site laboratory time, especially in the physical and health science disciplines
- Studio work, often associated with art disciplines
- Experiential formats, such as internships, clinical practice, practicums and student teaching, service learning
- Travel courses

Credit hour policies for these alternative course formats are discipline specific and defined in School level policies for each of the academic schools and the College of Adult Learning.

The university's credit hour policy was developed collaboratively by the members of the Dean's Council, the Graduate Council, and the implementation team for the Collage of Adult Learning. Faculty input was obtained and incorporated into the university policy statement by each of these leadership groups.