CREDIT HOUR AND CLOCK HOUR POLICY

Standards: Document 2 – <u>Standards for Accreditation</u>, Sections III-B, IV-A, IV-C, and VIII-A

Rationale: This credit hour policy is designed to balance the interests of students, prospective students, the general public, and institutions. It is also intended to facilitate articulation and the transfer of credits between institutions of higher education. This policy applies to ACCET accredited institutions as well as those seeking accreditation.

To facilitate the transfer of credits between institutions of higher education, institutions may define their programs in terms of credit hours and thereby adopt a common classification system which is understood and recognized by institutions of higher education. This facilitates the evaluation of courses by other educational institutions and therefore encourages articulation.

ACCET will review and evaluate an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hours that the institution awards for courses and programs, and applications of the institution's policies and procedures to its courses and programs. In its review and evaluation, ACCET will: (1) make a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education; (2) make use of sampling or other methods of evaluation, as warranted; (3) take such actions that it deems appropriate to address any deficiencies; and (4) promptly notify the U.S. Secretary of Education, if systemic noncompliance with ACCET policies or significant noncompliance is found regarding one or more programs at the institution. ACCET will consider all relevant factors, including those stated below, to determine whether an institution's assignment of credit hours is appropriate with commonly accepted practices:

When institutions consider which system of measurement (clock hour or credit hour) is most appropriate for their academic offerings, it is important that the differences between the two systems be clearly understood as well as some external issues which may affect the implementation of one system over the other.

All standards for measuring satisfactory academic progress must include qualitative and quantitative standards by which student progress is evaluated. Action must be taken by the institution if students fail to meet the institution's minimum standards of progress. Clock-hour systems typically require a greater amount of emphasis on quantitative standards (i.e. attendance); and credit-hour systems typically focus more on qualitative standards (i.e. achievement).

For institutions utilizing a credit-hour measurement, ACCET requires work outside of class such as homework to be documented in the curricular materials and syllabi, including an approximation of the time required for the student to complete the assignments. Further, the evaluation of homework or work outside of class must be identified as a grading criterion and weighted appropriately in the determination of a final grade for a course or module.

Clock Hour

For institutions that represent their training in clock/contact hours, a clock hour is defined as a 60-minute span of time, with no less than 50 minutes of actual class instruction. Students must be given breaks which represent sound educational practices. No more than 1.0 clock hour can be assigned to any discrete 60-minute period.

Total Clock Hours

All hours of instruction representing the length of the full program which include lecture, laboratory, and externship/internship.

Clock Hour/Credit Hour[1]

Conversions from clock hours to credit hours are only permitted for programs of study that meet at least ten weeks for quarter credit-hour programs and at least fifteen weeks for semester credit-hour programs.

For Academic Purposes:

ACCET institutions must use the following Carnegie clock-to- credit hour conversions for lecture, laboratory, and externship/internship:

Lecture Hours: Instructional hours consisting of theory or new principles.

Lecture Credit Hours:	Semester Credits – Must teach a minimum of 15 lecture hours to award 1 semester credit hour (divide lecture hours by 15).
	Quarter Credits – Must teach a minimum of 10 lecture hours to award 1 quarter credit (divide lecture hours by 10).

Laboratory Hours: Instructional hours consisting of supervised student practice of a previously introduced theory/principle during which practical skills and knowledge are developed and reinforced.

Laboratory Credit Hours:	Semester Credits – Must teach a minimum of 30 laboratory hours to award 1 semester credit (divide laboratory hours by 30).

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[1] NOTE: For purposes of Title IV Federal Financial Aid, ACCET institutions must comply with Federal requirements for clock-to-credit hour conversions which may be different from those required by ACCET for academic purposes.

Quarter Credits – Must teach a minimum of 20 laboratory hours to award 1 quarter credit (divide laboratory hours by 20).

Externship/Internship Hours: Instructional hours consisting of supervised work experience activities related to skills/ knowledge acquired during the training program.

Externship/Internship Credit Hours: Semester Credits – Must teach a minimum of 45 externship hours to award 1 semester credit (divide externship/ internship hours by 45).

Quarter Credits – Must teach a minimum of 30 externship hours to award 1 quarter credit (divide externship/internship hours by 30).

For Purposes of Title IV Federal Financial Aid:

ACCET institutions must comply with Federal requirements for clock-to-credit hour conversions which may be different from those required by ACCET for academic purposes.

The US Department of Education (USDE) has added a definition of credit hour that measures credit hour in terms of the amount of time in which a student is engaged in academic activity, as follows:

Credit hour:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a <u>minimum of two hours</u> of out of class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or trimester of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter credit.

2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in the # 1 above for other academic activities including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; or

3. Institutionally established reasonable equivalencies for the amount of work required in # 1 above for the credit hours awarded, including as represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement and in accordance with accreditation standards.

Clock Hour to Credit Hour Conversion:

For financial aid purposes, except in certain cases specified by USDE, the method of converting clocks to credit hours for lecture, laboratory, and/or externship/internship is as follows:

1. One semester credit hour is based on 37.5 clock hours of direct faculty instruction and at minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week.

2. One quarter credit hour is based on 25 clock hours of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week.

Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) Courses and Programs:

To ensure that IDL training is appropriate in content and length, ACCET will review IDL programs and/or courses, including those offered in an online, asynchronous delivery mode, to verify that clock hour requirements are met and that the length of the programs and/or courses (clock hours and/or credit hours) is appropriate and educationally sound. In conducting its review, ACCET will consider various methods utilized by institutions to demonstrate that their IDL training meets clock hour requirements and assigned clock hours and/or credit hours are appropriate, including providing: (1) a comparison of IDL training with comparable training offered in a traditional face-to-face delivery mode and/or (2) a time-on-task analysis such as those completed by publishers for their online curriculum and made available to their end-users. Methods utilized by institutions to track and monitor student progress and attendance for online, asynchronous training frequently involve the verifiable tracking of student log-in time in conjunction with active student participation. For example, institutions record and track student participation in online activities (e.g. participation in chat rooms and bulletin boards) and direct assessments (e.g. testing, assignments, projects).