



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
School of Professional Studies

Title: Credit Hour Policy

Responsible Unit: Academic Directors, faculty

Approval by: Academic Excellence Committee, Dean's Council

Effective Date: September 15, 2018

Introduction

The School of Professional Studies uses credit hours to measure the amount of work required in order to complete its courses. Credits are assigned to courses based on a minimum of student/faculty contact hours in combination with a minimum of additional hours of independent work for course assignments. For this policy, independent work is defined as time spent on course activities that do not include student/faculty interaction, including reading, time on assignments, or group work with other students. The relevant NYSED regulation states,

Semester hour means a credit, point, or other unit granted for the satisfactory completion of a course which requires at least 15 hours (of 50 minutes each) of instruction and at least 30 hours of supplementary assignments, except as otherwise provided pursuant to section 52.2(c)(4) of this Subchapter. This basic measure shall be adjusted proportionately to translate the value of other academic calendars and formats of study in relation to the credit granted for study during the two semesters that comprise an academic year.

Thus, each point of academic credit requires a minimum of three hours work each week in a 14-week semester, typically divided into one hour of classroom instruction (with an hour of classroom instruction defined as at least 50 minutes) and two hours of independent work (which may include readings, problem sets, papers, individual or group projects, and so forth).

Per this policy, a three-credit class should have a minimum of 45 50-minute hours of instruction (or 37.5 hours). However, the academic calendar used by the School of Professional Studies has classes meeting for less time (110 minutes versus the requisite 160 minutes per week). The policy below addresses a standard credit hour equivalency so that the Office of Academic Affairs is able to ensure that all courses in the School of Professional Studies comply with the regulatory requirements of the federal and New York State governments and with the accreditation requirements of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Exceptions

Courses designed to be part of a cohort model (such as those in the IKNS or TMGT program) will meet the minimum work requirements as outlined above but may have alternate schedules designed to address the specific learning needs of those populations. It is the responsibility of the Office of Academic Affairs to ensure that credit hour minimums are still being addressed. Special exceptions may also be granted for courses that require significant independent effort, such as internships, independent studies, or capstone projects.

Policy

In accordance with University policy, a three-credit class should have a minimum of 45 50-minute hours of instruction (or 37.5 hours). However, the semester calendar at the School of Professional Studies does not allow for all hours of instruction to be met through face-to-face, synchronous learning. Instead, during the fall and spring semester, face-to-face classes meet weekly for 110 minutes of class time. Unless otherwise identified as an asynchronous course, online classes meet weekly for 90 minutes of class time. The balance of instructional hours should be made up in asynchronous instructional activity.

During the summer semester, classes meet for two 6-week terms or one 12-week term (as opposed to a traditional 14-week semester). Keeping consistent with the proportion in the policy above, students in face-to-face courses should meet for a minimum of 260 minutes per week, taking the form of two weekly 2 hour, 10 minute-sessions or one weekly 4 hour, 20 minute session.

It is recommended that these sessions for summer online courses meet for either 90 or 120 minutes twice per week. This would necessitate a high degree of additional instructor-directed activity, either 205 or 145 minutes per week respectively. As with the face-to-face courses, it is expected that students will complete an additional 770 minutes of additional independent work.

For a three-credit course that are designated as entirely asynchronous, there is still an expectation that students will have 37.5 hours of instruction and an additional 75 hours of supplemental work.

In summary, here is the credit hours policy for the School of Professional Studies.

12, 13 or 14-week courses	f2f	online
Synchronous Hours of Instruction	Minimum time-110 minutes	90 minutes
6-week courses		
Synchronous Hours of Instruction	Minimum time- 260 minutes 2 hours, 10 minutes (x2) 4 hours, 20 minutes	180-240 minutes 90 minutes (x2) 2 hours (x2)

Note: The online courses are designed with a higher proportion of asynchronous work; therefore, the live sessions do not match face-to-face meeting times in order to balance student work load between the two modalities.