

Student

Board of Trustees Policy

SUBJECT: Credit Hour Policy	NUMBER: 3.18
	DATE: September 16, 2024 Resolution #24-140
	SUPERSEDES: June 18, 2018 Resolution#18-82

Purpose

SUNY Schenectady is accredited by the Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE), an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The College is a New York State Education Department (NYSED) approved degree granting institution which operates as part of the State University of New York (SUNY) System. In keeping with the requirements of accreditation as well as federal and state regulations, SUNY Schenectady adheres to regulations pertaining to degree requirements and the assignment of credit hours. This policy is consistent with the credit hour definitions established by the U.S. Department of Education and NYSED in accord with MSCHE requirements. Appendix A of the College’s Academic Code contains references to the regulations on which this policy is based.

Policy

A credit hour is a unit of measurement for the combination of class time and outside preparation/study time that students are expected to spend on coursework each week during a semester. One credit hour is equivalent to one hour (50 minutes) of classroom instruction and two hours of outside preparation/study for each class session throughout the semester, totaling 45 hours of coursework per semester credit hour. For a laboratory course, the ratio is reversed with two hours (100 minutes) of classroom/lab instruction and one hour of outside preparation/study required for each class session throughout the semester. While the length of a semester may vary, a minimum of 45 hours of coursework are required per semester credit hour. Table 1 and Table 2, below, summarize time requirements for one to four credit hour courses in non-laboratory and laboratory course formats, respectively. The term non-laboratory is used to represent all course formats (e.g., lecture, online, hybrid) that are not laboratory courses. Regardless of format, all courses must adhere to the same time per credit hour requirements.

SUNY Schenectady’s academic year is separated into fall and spring semesters along with summer terms. For the purposes of this policy, and to ensure that common language is used

in credit hour calculation, this policy employs the term semester whether in reference to fall, spring, or summer. All courses, regardless of semester length must comply with the parameters outlined in this policy. For example, a three-credit course meeting for eight weeks would be required to meet six hours weekly with an expectation of a minimum of 12 hours of work outside of the classroom setting.

Assignment of credit hours for courses is determined based on faculty expertise and course student learning outcomes. That determination is then cross-checked by the Registrar and Vice President of Academic Affairs as part of the approval process. Upon review and approval, the Curriculum Committee forwards the course to the Academic Senate for review and approval.

Table 1.

Non-Laboratory Course, All Formats: Minimum Instructional Contact and Supplemental Work Required per Week Over 15-Week Semester

Credits	Min. Instructional Contact per Week	Min. Supplemental Work per Week	Min. Time Requirement for 15-Week Semester
1	1 hour (50 minutes)	2 hours	45 hours
2	2 hours (100 minutes)	4 hours	90 hours
3	3 hours (150 minutes)	6 hours	135 hours
4	4 hours (200 minutes)	8 hours	180 hours

While Table 2, below, outlines the laboratory instructional contact and supplemental work guidelines for the College’s credit hour policy, based on the highly specific degree and certificate programs offered by the college it is critical to contextualize the information presented in the table. Lab course sections –supervised group activities such as labs, field trips, practicums, etc.- award credit for 15 periods of instruction and generally fall into one of two categories: (1) class meeting times lasting 150 minutes or more with little or no outside preparation expected or (2) meeting times lasting 100 minutes where students are expected to engage in outside preparation or a lecture class meeting precedes the lab session. For example, specialized programs which use integrated lecture lab class meetings would meet for 100 minutes while a more typical laboratory session linked to a lecture would meet for 150 minutes.

Table 2.

Laboratory Course: Minimum Instructional Contact and Supplemental Work Required per Week Over 15-Week Semester

Credits	Min. Instructional Contact per Week	Min. Supplemental Work per Week	Min. Time Requirement for 15-Week Semester
1	2 hours (100 minutes)	1 hour	45 hours
2	4 hours (200 minutes)	2 hours	90 hours
3	6 hours (300 minutes)	3 hours	135 hours
4	8 hours (400 minutes)	4 hours	180 hours

The information in the table above is consistent with the Credit Hour Definitions as they appear in Appendix A (3) of the College's Academic Code. The information below is taken directly from the Code.

Credit Hour Definitions

State University of New York definitions indicate that a semester credit hour of credit is awarded for the equivalent of (1) fifteen class periods with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study for each class period, or (2) forty-five practicum periods with little or no outside preparation expected, or (3) thirty practicum periods with substantial outside preparation required, or (4) forty-five 50-minute sessions of student academic activity given initial guidance, review, criticism, and final evaluation.

A class period is a fifty-minute period in which a group teaching method is employed, including recitations, lectures, discussion, demonstrations, or combinations of these.

A practicum period is a fifty-minute period devoted to the direction and guidance of student application and/or development of principles and concepts in a particular physical environment. Included are laboratory, studio periods, drafting work, and field trips.

Guidelines are also provided for awarding credit by examination and for experimental learning/PLA.

Course Delivery Methods

Traditional Classroom (Laboratory/non laboratory): Courses meet on campus or at an approved location. These courses are face-to-face courses in which an instructor leads students through the course curriculum during a series of on campus class sessions. Course requirements for class meetings and work to be completed outside of class are defined by the number of course credits and based upon the information contained in Table 1.

Independent Study: The faculty member regularly meets with the student and applies the same criteria as outlined in the course syllabus for independent course study.

Instructional contact time and outside work requirements are determined based on the information in Table 1 per the course credit hours. All courses match the total amount of time required to meet the course credit hours through a combination of instructional time and work that the student completes outside of instructional meetings. The

faculty member is required to keep records of the meeting times and student work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated.

Internship: Courses of study in which a faculty member regularly interacts and directs student outcomes with periodic contact, but where the actual learning environment takes place off-campus at an approved internship site. The faculty member facilitates the students' learning through a series of meetings, interaction with a site supervisor, and the assignment of directed activities that students must complete outside of a lecture setting. Instructional contact time and outside work requirements are determined based on the information in Table 1 per the course credit hours. The faculty member is responsible for the experience and is required to keep records of the amount of supervised work and the amount of outside work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated. Internship courses range from 1-3 credits requiring 45 hours in internship-site work per credit. Credit may be granted for face-to-face time as well, resulting in a combination of hours.

Field Placement: Like the Internship format, a Field Placement course is one in which a faculty member regularly interacts with students and directs student outcomes, but where the actual learning environment resides off-campus at an approved field placement site. The faculty member facilitates students' learning through a series of classes, interaction with a field placement supervisor, and the assignment of directed activities that students must complete outside of a lecture setting. Instructional contact time and outside work requirements are determined based on the information in Table 1 per the course credit hours. The faculty member is responsible for the experience and is required to keep records of the amount of supervised work and the amount of outside work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated. Field Placement courses range from 3-4 credits requiring 45 hours of field placement work per credit.

Online Courses: Courses are offered entirely online without any on-site face-to-face meetings required. These courses have the same learning outcomes and follow the same syllabus of a lecture course using online delivery methods. Contact time is satisfied by various means as outlined in each course syllabus. These methods can include, but are not limited to, activities such as projects, papers, exams, and online discussions conducted through the Learning Management System. In all cases online courses, just as with any other course format, meet the instructional time and outside course work time as specified in Table 1 based upon the number of course credits.

Hybrid Courses: Hybrid courses are comprised of a combination of online and face-to-face meetings. Courses include a combination of one or more on-site face-to-face class sessions and at least one or more online sessions, both containing direct interaction with a faculty member. In all cases, hybrid courses, just as with any other course format, meet the instructional time and outside course work requirements as specified in Table 1 based upon the number of course credits.

Hy-Flex Courses: Hy-Flex combines the terms "hybrid" and "flexible." Hybrid learning, as defined above, refers to learning that integrates complementary face-to-face (synchronous) and online learning (asynchronous) experiences in service of intended learning objectives. The flexible portion allows students to choose which version of a course's learning, synchronous or asynchronous, they wish to participate in.

Procedures

Procedures needed to implement and enforce policy (if needed).