



**Angelo State University**  
**Operating Policy and Procedure**

**OP 04.12: Definition and Calculation of Credit Hours**

**DATE:** May 20, 2015

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to set forth Angelo State University's policy on the definition of credit hour and determination of the amount and level of credit awarded for courses.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in May every five years, or as needed, by the Office of the Provost with revisions forwarded through the provost and vice president of academic affairs (PVPAA) to the president by June 15 of the same year.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

**1. Background**

Angelo State University has policies and procedures that conform to accepted practices for defining a credit hour and determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery.

**2. Definition of Credit Hour**

Angelo State University's academic components determine the amount of credit awarded for graduate and undergraduate courses based on the unit of the semester credit hour in accordance with Federal and State rules:

- a. In 34 CFR 600.2, the Department of Education (ED) defines a credit hour for Federal programs as follows:
  - (1) 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:
    - (a) 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
    - (b) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) 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. In the case of a program subject to the clock-to-credit-hour conversion requirements, institutions must determine the

credit hours to be awarded for coursework under those requirements. (See 34 CFR 668.8 (k) and (l).)

- (2) A credit hour for Federal purposes is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates some minimum amount of student work reflective of the amount of work expected in a Carnegie unit.

In determining the amount of work the institution's learning outcomes will entail, as under current practice, the institution may take into consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

- b. Angelo State University also applies the rule of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in the definition of the standard credit hour. According to Title 19 Texas Administrative Code, §4.6, the semester is defined as 15 weeks of instruction (45 contact hours) and a week for final examinations. To ensure quality of student learning, every college course is assumed to involve a significant amount of non-contact hour time for out-of-class student learning and reflection. Semester credit hours, therefore, are based on contact hours. Assuming a lecture format, the traditional 3 hour semester-credit-hour course, for example, contains 45 to 48 contact hours.

- (1) Courses taught in shortened timeframes are expected to have the same number of contact hour as courses taught in a normal semester.
- (2) Courses taught online may meet an alternate standard but only if the course has been reviewed and approved through a formal, institutional faculty review process that evaluates the course and its learning outcomes and determines that the course does, in fact, have equivalent learning outcomes to an equivalent, traditionally delivered course.

### **3. Determination of the Amount and Level of Credit Hours**

- a. Each academic component is responsible for establishing a formal faculty review process to ensure that the amount and level of credit awarded for the component's undergraduate and graduate courses is compatible with sound academic practice in the given field. Where appropriate, the components base their review policies and processes on the standards of discipline-specific professional organizations.
- b. The oversight of the curriculum as well as its courses and credit awarded involves the department and its chair; the college curriculum committee in which the originating department resides as well as the dean; the University Curriculum Committee; the office of the provost; and, when appropriate, the president and /or the Board of Regents. Each new or revised course must begin with a Curriculum Change form submitted by the originating department to the appropriate dean and college curriculum committee. All subsequent internal and external approvers review curriculum submissions for appropriateness of content, sequence, placement, and credit.