

4.9

Definition of Credit Hours

The institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to Commission policy. (See Commission policy "Credit Hours.")

Judgment

Compliance Partial Compliance Non-Compliance Not Applicable

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) has defined and published a policy for credit hours. The TTU Credit Hour policy covers the definition of credit hours and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs [1].

TTU Definition of the Credit Hour

TTU is responsible for determining the credit hours awarded for course work in its programs in accordance with the definition of a credit hour for federal program purposes. The definition of a credit hour applies to courses on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Definition of a Credit Hour in TTU Policy 222 [1] states:

TTU is organized on a semester basis. When the term "hour" or "credit" is used, it refers to a semester-hour credit. One semester hour of credit requires one hour (55 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks.

Two or more hours of laboratory or studio work are required per hour of credit. An equivalent amount of work is required for practica and other academic activities that award credit. Summer, intersession, or other alternate course formats require the equivalent amount of work per credit hour. Laboratory hours per credit are determined by the department or college. Semester credit hours earned in courses such as internships, research, theses, dissertations, study abroad, etc. are based on outcome expectations established by the academic program.

TTU's online courses and other non-traditional methods of offering courses are held to the same standards as the traditional on-campus courses as described in the two previous paragraphs. The online/non-traditional course must offer an equivalent learning experience and learning outcomes as the on-campus course [2].

TTU's definition of the credit hours is also published in the TTU Undergraduate Catalog in the Section of Academic Regulations and Registration (Page 34, 2014-2015 Undergraduate Catalog) [3].

Procedures for Determining the Credit Hours Awarded for Courses and Programs

Undergraduate courses, including the credit hours associated with the course, and curricula are proposed by academic departments and reviewed for compliance with University standards by the University Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of faculty members, administrators, students, and advisory members appointed by the President of the University. Graduate courses are proposed and reviewed by the Graduate Studies Executive Committee, consisting of faculty members, administrators, students, and advisory members appointed by the President of the University. Procedures and memberships of the University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Studies

Executive Committee are published at the respective committee websites [4] [5]. Actions of the University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Studies Executive Committee are reviewed by the Academic Council prior to consideration by the Provost and by the President of the University. Academic Council procedures and membership [6] can be found at the Academic Council website.

Departmental chairs oversee conditions supporting student progress in programs. Typically, departmental chairs monitor faculty compliance with policies of the University through class scheduling and the assessment of learning outcomes of a department's courses and programs. Course content and systems of delivery are subject to ongoing review and report in periodic self-studies produced to verify compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requirements and those of professional accrediting agencies specific to colleges, schools, and departments. The Tennessee Board of Regents also reviews a portion of the University's programs each year via the Academic Audit, a mandatory peer-review process.

Studio work at TTU is calculated according to the policy on laboratory work. This definition of credit is applied to the scheduling of studio classes at the foundations level, in introductory classes, and in upper-division studio classes. Studio classes are scheduled to meet approximately two clock hours per credit per week. Therefore, the majority of studio classes, which produce three semester credits, meet for six clock hours per week in two sessions, three hours each.

Similarly, in course formats that do not have regularly scheduled class meetings, such as Independent Studies, Special Problems, Studio Practica, Senior Thesis, distance education, and other similar courses, a standard of three to four clock hours of work per week for one credit hour is used for planning and evaluation.

The Office of the Registrar oversees timely and accurate record keeping of course credit and grades.

Credit Hours Requirements in Course Description and Program Curricula

Course descriptions in the TTU Undergraduate Catalog [3] and the TTU Graduate Catalog [7] specify the course credit hours, required lecture hours and/or laboratory hours, as well as other hours as appropriate, along with brief course descriptions.

Samples of program requirements and course requirements are presented below to demonstrate the application of the policy of the credit hours.

Samples of Course Requirements.

- HEC 3310. Textiles I. Lec. 2. Lab 2. Credit 3. This three credit-hour undergraduate course requires two lecture hours and two laboratory hours, wherein two laboratory hours equate to one credit hour (Page 251) [3].
- CHE 3021. Separations and Solution Thermodynamics. Lec. 3. Lab 2. Credit 4. This four credit-hour undergraduate-level course requires three lecture hours and two laboratory hours, wherein two laboratory hours equate to one credit hour (Page 196) [3].
- ART 2010. Three-Dimensional Design. Studio 6. Credit 3. This three credit-hour, undergraduate-level course requires six studio hours, wherein six studio hours equate to three credit hours (Page 182) [3].
- BIOL 6350. Management of Wetland Wildlife, Lec. 3. Lab 3. Credit. 4. This four credit-hour, graduate-level course requires three lecture hours and three laboratory hours, wherein three laboratory hours equate to one credit hour (Page 114) [7].
- ACCT 6620. Auditing and Attestation. Lec. 3. Cr. 3. This three credit-hour, graduate-level course requires three lecture hours (Page 108) [7].

Samples of Program Requirements.

- Chemistry B.S., Applied Chemistry Concentration, BS (Page 112-113) [3]
- Master's Degree Requirements (Pages 35-36) [7]
 - Credit Requirements

Conclusion

In summary, TTU has defined and published a policy for credit hours. TTU's definition of a credit hour conforms to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to SACSCOC Commission policy. The procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs are in place to ensure compliance with applicable University policies. Therefore, TTU is in compliance with the Federal Requirement 4.9.

Sources

-  [1] TTU Policy 222_Credit Hours
-  [2] Distance Education Policy 223_July 1_2015
-  [3] 2014_2015 Undergraduate Catalog
-  [4] Curriculum Committee Procedures and Memberships
-  [5] Graduate Studies Executive Committee Procedures
-  [6] Academic Council Procedures and Memberships
-  [7] 2014_2015 Graduate Catalog