

GRAYS HARBOR COLLEGE
Operational Policy

Subject: CREDIT HOUR POLICY

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Operational Policy Number: 321

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Grays Harbor College determines credit hour based on the following policy definitions established by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to guide instructional practice, with each definition equating to a minimum of three weekly hours of student effort per credit. These are based on U.S. Department of Education credit hour definitions and referenced by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

A credit hour is 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 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 the above paragraph for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practicums, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

The following definitions have been established to guide instructional practice, with each definition equating to a minimum of three weekly hours of students effort per credit.

Theory: Students are engaged with faculty and class members in learning theoretical material and/or engaging in activities to apply the theory leading to mastery of course outcomes. Modes of instructional delivery could include but are not limited to: lecture, small group discussion, guided conversation, demonstration, case studies, role playing, problem based inquiry, and collaborative activities. Instruction may be a mix of presentation, facilitation, and guided activities evidenced by frequent ongoing communication between instructor and students. Such activities could take place in a variety of instructional modalities. One credit is generated by one weekly contact hour of instruction, or the equivalent amount of work distributed over a different amount of time. Generally requires out-of-class student effort, typically two hours per class hour.

Guided Practice: Students are actively engaged in practicing and mastering skills under the supervision of the instructor. This category of instruction could include but are not limited to labs, studios, shops, clinical experiences, computer-mediated learning, hands-on projects, or other skill building activities. Instruction may be individualized or group-focused and include skills assessment. Such activities could take place in a variety of instructional modalities. One credit is generated by two weekly contact hours of instruction, or the equivalent amount of work distributed over a different amount of time. May also include out-of-class student effort, typically one hour per two class hours.

Field-based experience: Students are engaged in autonomous study or related work activity under the intermittent supervision of the instructor. This mode includes working with or under the direction of professional practitioners and may include preceptorships, co-ops, internships, or service learning activities. Verification of learning outcomes is documented by college faculty in collaboration with professional practitioners. One credit is generated by a minimum of three weekly contact hours of supervised learning experience, or the equivalent amount of work distributed over a different amount of time. Programs may determine that additional hours are needed for the student learning needs. However, only one credit will be generated for enrollment counting purposes.

To ensure consistency and accuracy, Grays Harbor College requires that any change in credit hour determination be reviewed by Division Chairs and Instructional Council prior to implementation.

Reference: [SBCTC Policy Manual Chapter 5, 5.40.10](#)