Federal Definition of the Credit Hour

For purposes of the application of this policy and in accord with federal regulations, 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

1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours 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

2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 1 above 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.

Florida Tech Credit Hour Policy and Guidelines

Florida Institute of Technology defines “one hour of classroom time” as 50 minutes, in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education and in reasonable approximation of the Carnegie unit for contact time.

When courses are developed using new delivery models - such as, distance, online, hybrid, and low residency - they are created by campus faculty or appropriate academically qualified subject matter experts and submitted to the academic unit for review and endorsement. Academic units are responsible for identifying the amount of work that is represented in intended learning outcomes established for the course. Student engagement may include: online lectures, seminars, threaded discussions, video exercises, web-based labs, additional structured learning activities and independent work in lieu of class time. Final review and approval is the responsibility of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council to ensure that the work load and engagement required of the student are equivalent to standard credit hours. Conformity with the policy is also reinforced in a review of course content by the academic unit responsible.

The following are guidelines for implementation of Florida Tech’s credit hour policy.

Traditional Lecture Courses: A traditional one lecture credit hour is defined as a 50-minute in-class period for about 15 sessions over an academic semester (about 750 minutes), and a minimum of 100-minute combined out-of-class assignment/preparation period per session (about 1500 minutes), for a total of 2250 minutes of engaged learning time.

Hybrid or Online Courses: Credit hours associated with these organizational types of courses should be equivalent to credit hours for courses delivered traditionally. As stated above, academic units proposing these courses are responsible for identifying the amount of work that is represented in intended learning outcomes established for the course. Equivalency of the work load and engagement required of the student to standard credit hours will be determined by the UGCC or the Graduate Council.

Laboratory: A traditional one laboratory credit hour is defined as a 75- to 150-minutes in-lab period for at least 12 sessions over an academic semester, or 900 to 1800 minutes.
Fieldwork/Practicum: One credit hour of fieldwork/practicum translates to 200- to 335-minutes for 15 sessions over an academic semester.

Internship: A traditional one internship credit hour is defined as 200-minutes of on-site or site-related activity per week for 15 weeks.

Applied Music/Large Ensembles/Chamber and Specialty Ensembles: One credit hour of ensemble/chamber work is equivalent to approximately 3 hours of instruction and a minimum of three hours of practice each week, on average, for 15 weeks. One half-hour credit of applied music instruction is defined as approximately one hour of instruction and a minimum of three hours of practice each week, on average, for 14 weeks.

Supervised Research Experience/Undergraduate Research: Supervised research is designated as one credit or three credits only. A traditional one credit research experience is defined as 180- to 240-minutes per week of research-related activity. A traditional three credit experience is defined as 540- to 720-minutes per week of research-related activity, plus an end of the semester project deliverable.

Variable credit courses: Courses available for variable credit must meet Florida Tech’s credit hour policy requirements and must clearly demonstrate the amount of student work for each credit hour assigned.

Thesis/Dissertation: A one credit Thesis/Dissertation experience is defined as a minimum of 180 minutes per week of scholarly activity.