

College of William & Mary
ACADEMIC CREDIT HOUR POLICY

Effective Date: Fall 2014

Scope: This policy defines academic credit hours awarded by the College of William & Mary (W&M) at all levels and in all schools and programs. This does not address non-credit instruction or continuing education units (CEUs).

Purpose: This document provides general definition and school-specific requirements for the awarding of academic credit hours. It includes requirements articulated by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the faculties of the College.

Policy:

Federal Definition of the Credit Hour (from USDOE): 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.

In the document “Regulations Governing Certification of Certain Institutions to Confer Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates” the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) further notes: “Emerging delivery methodologies may necessitate determining a unit of undergraduate or graduate credit with non-time-based methods. These courses shall use demonstration of competency, demonstration of proficiency, or fulfillment of learning outcomes to ensure these courses are equivalent to traditionally delivered courses.”

William & Mary adopts the federal and state definitions of credit hour as outlined above, regardless of the mode of delivery including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. William & Mary further acknowledges credit-hour stipulations required by accrediting agencies for specific schools and levels.

Responsibilities:

1. Academic deans, department chairs and program directors ensure that credit hours are appropriately awarded in accordance with this policy and federal guidelines.
2. In the process of approving courses, faculty committees governing educational policy in each school ensure that the proposed instruction, required learning activities and stated learning outcomes meet this credit-hour standard.
3. In the process of building the schedule, the University Registrar's Office, academic deans and academic program/department staff are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are accurately established.

Approval and Amendment:

This policy was approved by the Provost effective October 31, 2014.