

## **Rules for Delinking Credit hours and Contact Hours**

**(approved by A&S faculty 4/5/16)**

Within Arts and Sciences, the Educational Policy Committee is responsible for monitoring credit hours in undergraduate courses. According to W&M's [Academic Credit Hour Policy](#), one credit hour is "an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement" that approximates 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.

In most traditional courses, one credit hour is equivalent to one contact hour (one hour of direct, face-to-face instruction in the same room). Well-known exceptions include independent studies, honors courses, and internships, which generally involve more independent student work. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences has also approved COLL 100 and COLL 150 courses as "delinked" courses: these courses normally meet for only three hours per week, but students receive four credits as compensation for greater expectations in writing assignments and presentations.

Credit hours in all other courses generally correspond to contact hours. When departments or programs propose to offer other "delinked" courses (courses where students receive credit that exceeds the number of contact hours), they must gain approval from EPC. This also applies to courses that replace face-to-face contact with alternative modalities (e.g., online courses, hybrid courses, and other distance courses).

EPC will accept proposals from chairs and directors through Curriculog for "delinked" courses. Proposals must include a syllabus and should explain why the department or program supports de-linking for this course. An acceptable course proposal must show one or more of the following:

- that the course involves instructor-student interaction outside the classroom that will be an integral part of the proposed course and have sufficient educational value to substitute for class time.
- that the special nature of the skills to be taught in the proposed course is such that students will clearly benefit from alternative modes of instruction. This may include labs, performances, forums, service projects, and online activities that stand in place of class time. In such cases, it may be difficult to decide whether the activity should be considered class time or homework: To qualify as class time, there must be additional assignments (written reports, readings etc.) involving the activity amounting to two hours per week for each hour of class time replaced.
- that the work required in the course significantly exceeds that found in comparable courses with the same number of contact hours. In accordance with W&M's Academic Credit Hour Policy, a three-credit course is expected to have six hours of readings and homework per week. Four credits may be justified for a course that requires eight hours of assignments per week. The course proposal should explain the number and types of projects students will undertake and the way these will be evaluated. Faculty should generally expect to confer formally with individual students several times as needed over the course of the semester to assess their progress.