NATIONAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Credit Hour Policy

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Policy

All National American University undergraduate and graduate courses comply with the Federal Credit Hour Definition and the Higher Learning Commission's policy governing the assignment of credit hours:

US Department of Education Credit Hour Definition (34 CFR 600.2)

https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600

Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that—

1. Reasonably approximates not less than—

    (i) 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 hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or

    (ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) (i) of this definition 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; and

2. Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

HLC Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition Policy (FDCR.A.10.020)

https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assignment-of-credits.html

An institution shall be able to equate its learning experiences with semester or quarter credit hours using practices common to institutions of higher education, to justify the lengths of its programs in comparison to similar programs found in accredited institutions of higher education, and to justify any program-specific tuition in terms of program costs, program length, and program objectives. Institutions shall notify HLC of any significant changes in the relationships among credits, program length, and tuition.

Assignment of Credit Hours. The institution's assignment and award of credit hours shall conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education. Those institutions seeking, or participating in, Title IV federal financial aid, shall demonstrate that they have policies determining the credit hours awarded to courses and programs in keeping with commonly-accepted practices in higher education and with any federal definition of the credit hour, as may appear in federal regulations and that institutions also have procedures that result in an appropriate awarding of institutional credit in conformity with the policies established by the institution.

Credit Hour Standard by Instructional Method

In recognition of the dynamic nature of the online classroom and that classroom instruction may happen at any time, no distinction is made between classroom or faculty instruction and "out-of-class" student work. Time estimates for assigning credit hours are defined as the total time spent by students in fulfillment of course requirements, which may occur inside or outside the online course platform. For purposes of calculating the total time equivalent to credits students are expected to spend a minimum of three hours per week on course requirements for each credit earned. One semester credit hour consists of 15 hours of academic engagement and 30 hours of preparation, a total of 45 hours in a semester. One quarter credit hour consists of 10 hours of academic engagement and 20 hours of preparation, or 30 hours in a quarter. The number and kind of activities estimated to fulfill academic engagement and preparation time requirements vary by degree level, student learning style, student familiarity with delivery method, and student familiarity with curricular content.

Online Courses require contact (engagement) time that can be satisfied by several means, including, but not limited to: 1) regular instruction or interaction with a university faculty member once a week for each week the course runs or 2) academic engagement through interactive tutorials, labs, group discussions moderated by faculty, virtual study/project groups, engaging with class peers and computer tutorials reviewed and graded by faculty.

Internship Experience are courses of study in which a university faculty member regularly interacts and directs student outcomes with periodic contact. The learning experience also contains a site supervisor and directed activity or learning outside of a lecture setting. Required contact time is a minimum of 2.5 hours each week during the 10-week period for each credit awarded.

Module Courses/Accelerated Courses are courses a) that are shorter in length than the standard quarter and trimester, b) in which contact time is reduced, or c) both shorter in length and contact time. The content and substantive learning outcomes are the same as those in the standard quarter or semester. When instruction is offered in a compressed format, learning may be determined, organized, and evaluated as being equivalent when a clear demonstration of intended learning outcomes is apparent. This may be demonstrated through course assessment practices including but not limited to demonstration of mastery of competencies, assessment of learning, portfolio submission, or a product demonstrating mastery of learning.

Process for Assigning and Evaluating Credit Hours
When a course is developed or a major revision is required, a proposal must be approved by all applicable NAU governance bodies. This includes verification of how learning outcomes are met in accordance with time spent with direct instruction and assignment of instruction and learning activities.

This is assessed regularly through tracking on the master syllabus, CAP committee analysis, and dean review, scheduling and the curriculum development process as outlined in the NAU Curriculum Manual.

1. Assignment of credit hours for individual courses occurs during the course approval process, is monitored by Academic Leadership and approved by the Academic Affairs Council and the Board of Governors when the course is part of a new degree program.

2. Review of credit hour assignments is included as part of regular curriculum reviews. In the event of a major revision or new course design, the Dean (or designee) must provide appropriate documentation as evidence of such reviews (beginning 2024). A template to assess contact hour by activity is available in SharePoint.

3. All sections of a given course must be mutually consistent in terms of purpose, scope, quality, assessment, and expected learning outcomes according to the NAU credit hour definition.

4. Each time a course is offered, the course syllabus provides information on the minimum investment of time by the average student necessary to achieve the learning goals of the course. Such information is tailored to the length of the session and the format of the course.

The following chart is utilized as a guideline for course development and as a tool for periodic assessment of course compliance with the Credit Hour Policy.

COURSE: _____

Activity	Assignments	Estimated Hours
Academic Engagement	Reading instructor and/ or peer responses and feedback--.5-1HR per assignment	
	Linking to 2-5 outside websites or 25 pages per hour--1 HR per Module (.5 per week)	
	Reading course lectures: 25 pages per hour (1 per week)	
	Viewing course-related video or films--2 HRs dependent on video length	
	Listening to course-related audio, podcast, lecture--dependent on audio length per hour	
	Quiz--Engagement--.5-1 HR per quiz	
	Test--Engagement-1-2 HR	
	Exam--Engagement 1-2 HR	
	Written Comprehensive Course Assessment--Engagement-2-3 HRS	
	Discussion Forum--Engagement--.5-1 HR per forum	
	Interacting with Instructor and/ or Peers .5-1 HR dependent on activity	
	Interactive or Learning Quiz--Engagement--.5-1 HR	
	Group Information Compilations--Engagement--1 HR	
	Annotated Bibliography--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Research Paper or Essay--Engagement--1 HR	
	Research Project--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Research Point--smaller research activity that involves use of the Virtual Library--Engagement--.5 HRs	
	Research Assignment--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Applying knowledge from readings or research to written assignments or discussions--2 HRS per page	

Activity	Assignments	Estimated Hours
Academic Engagement	Literature Review--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Project--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Portfolio--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Reflective Assignment--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Analysis--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Evaluation--Engagement--2 HRs	
	Report--Engagement--.5-1 HR	
	Process, Descriptive, Compare/ Contrast, Illustration, Cause and Effect, Classification Writing--Engagement--2 HRs w/Research, .5-1 HR w/o research.	
	Science lab--Engagement--1-2 HRS	
	Language lab--Engagement--1-2 HRS	
	Data or Statistical Analysis--Engagement--1-5 HRS (depending on scope of task)	
	Case Study/ Case Analysis--Engagement--1-5 HRS (depending on scope of task)	
	Real-world problem solving--Engagement--1-5 HRS (depending on scope of task) per problem	
	Presentations (PowerPoint, video, podcast, student reports) -- -Engagement 1 HR (depending on scope of task)	
	Designing subject matter content-related plan, map, or task--Engagement--2-3 HRS per page	
	Subject matter content-related simulations or games--Engagement--1-5 HRS (depending on scope of task)	
	TOTAL: should be at least 45 hours per term (40.5-49.5)	
Preparation (outside of class)	Reading 30 pages--average level--1 HR	
	Reading 20 pages--difficult level--1 HR	
	Quiz--Preparation--2 HRS	
	Test--Preparation--3-4 HRS	
	Exam-- Preparation-4-5 HRS	
	Written Comprehensive Course Assessment--Preparation 6-8 HRS	
	Discussion Forum--Preparation--1-2 HRS per forum	
	Discussion Questions (1-3)--Preparation--2 HRS	
	Short Writing Assignment--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Interactive assignment--Preparation--1 HR	
	Group Information Compilations--Preparation--2HRS	
	Annotated Bibliography--Preparation--4 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing)	
	Research Paper or Essay--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing)	
	Research Project--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing)	
	Research Point--smaller research activity that involves use of the Virtual Library--Preparation: 1-2 HRS per point	
	Research Assignment--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing)	
	Literature Review--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing)	
	Project--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, revising, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	

Activity	Assignments	Estimated Hours
Preparation (outside of class)	Portfolio--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, revising, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Reflective Assignment--Preparation--2 HRS per page	
	Analysis--Preparation--5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Evaluation--Preparation---5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Report--Preparation---5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Process, Descriptive, Compare/ Contrast, Illustration, Cause and Effect, Classification Writing-- 5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing)-3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Science lab--Preparation--2-3 HRS	
	Language lab--Preparation--2-3 HRS-	
	Data or Statistical Analysis--Preparation--1-5 HRS (depending on scope of task)	
	Case Study/ Case Analysis--Preparation---5 HRS per page (writing, researching, editing) --3 HRS per page w/out research	
	Presentations (PowerPoint, video, podcast, student reports) --Preparation--5-30 HRS (depending on scope of task)	
	TOTAL: should be at least 90 hours per term (81-99)	
Overall Total	**Approx 135 hours for a 4.5 quarter hour course (121.5-148.5)**	

This chart is available: Credit Hour Verification Template.xlsx