

ACC Policy on Credit Hours:

- [1] The Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC) of Western Washington University is responsible, among other things, for ensuring that every approved course at Western is assigned an appropriate number of credit hours.
- [2] Western Washington University defines an academic credit hour as a unit of student work. A single credit hour at Western equals approximately three hours of work each week over the course of a 10-week quarter, thus equaling a total of approximately 30 hours of work for any given credit hour in any given course, whatever the actual calendar length of the course.
- [3] Western's definition of a credit hour is in full accordance with the definition provided in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), as well as the "Credit Hour Policy" of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. For the WAC definition, see [WAC 250-61-050](#) (19).
- [4] The standard calculation of a credit hour. At Western, a credit hour is typically based on the calculation of either (a) one hour of direct instruction (as, for example, in a lecture, seminar, or discussion) and two hours of additional work per week, or (b) two hours of direct instruction (as, for example, in laboratory, studio, rehearsal, or field work) and one hour of additional work per week. In the case of both (a) and (b), the faculty member and students meet synchronously. In current practice an hour of direct instruction at Western equals approximately 50 minutes. Within the parameters outlined here, the schedule of class meeting times is at the discretion of individual faculty members and their respective departments and programs, as long as the total unit of work per single credit hour equals approximately 30 hours per course.
- [5] Variations on the standard calculation of a credit hour. Western also approves variations on the typical calculation of a credit hour, as long as the total unit of work per single credit hour equals approximately 30 hours per course. There are several categories of courses approved for academic credit at Western in which a given course sometimes has less than one hour of direct instruction per credit hour per week (over a 10-week period), which is to say less than 10 hours of direct instruction per credit hour per course. These currently include, but are not limited to, correspondence courses, online courses, study abroad courses, research seminars, independent study courses, thesis writing courses, and internships.
- [6] When a new course is proposed for approval, the proposal must include a detailed account of the total amount of work required for the course, according to the number of credit hours in the proposed course. A revised course, for which the revision includes a change in credit hours or a significant change in course content or a change in modality, including a change from direct to online instruction, a change from online to direct instruction, or a change from campus instruction to study abroad, must also be approved by the ACC. When a revised course is proposed for approval, the proposal must include a detailed account of the total amount of work required for the course, according to the number of credit hours in the proposed course. In most cases, a syllabus, with a weekly schedule of required work, attached to the proposal for a new or revised course provides a sufficiently detailed account. For each proposed credit hour, the proposal must account for approximately 30 hours of work.
- [7] This policy replaces Section 1.2 and Appendix 1 in the ACC Handbook

Policy approved at ACC meeting of 23 May 2017 and Faculty Senate meeting of 16 October 2017