

## GENERAL STANDARD 5

“Forms of interaction incorporated in the course motivate students and promote learning”

Engaging students to become active learners contributes to the learning process and to student persistence.



## UOR CREDIT HOUR POLICY

(a) Credit hour defined in accordance with applicable federal regulations and accreditation criteria

(b) Credit hour defined as the approximate amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement (360° Assessment)

Traditional credit hour definitions (the Carnegie Unit) = 45 hours of learning  
Student achievement of course learning outcomes is the ultimate validation  
Total credit hours assigned to a course is commensurate with the total student effort to achieve the course learning outcomes. 3 credit MA course = 135 hours

**\* Number of clock hours to complete a course is just ONE of the set of measures UoR uses to provide a holistic picture on quality**

## METHODOLOGY

(a) Two faculty members experienced in credit hour analysis familiar with the degree program and its courses

(b) A survey instrument in Qualtrics

(c) Standardized recording and clearly defined values for all learning activities is important for inter rater reliability

(d) Data analysis and inter-rater reliability is managed in Excel

## PROS

- Provides a view of course contact hours
- Identifies types of activities in each course
- Provides minimum standards for instructor and student engagement
- Engagement time is a basic compliance issue for any institution
- Credit hour is easy to understand, even by non-experts
- Provides reliable information on one dimension of education
- Uses data that is easily accessible and comparable for any institution

## CONS

- Emphasis on time versus performance or educational attainment
- Time-intensive task
- Student learning varies greatly even among individuals who are taught the same material
- It is an input measure with no real connection to learning or skills
- How it is applied causes problems for nontraditional students/schools
- As a federally regulated measure it can inhibit educational innovation
- No alignment to educational value by students, employers or schools



## FEDERAL DEFINITION OF CREDIT HOUR

Federal government uses a numerical definition of credit hour as a benchmark of degree program integrity using this formula:

- One hour of direct instruction (45 credit hours) plus at least two hours of independent student work per week for approximately fifteen weeks

## INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Institutions are responsible and accountable for demonstrating that each course has the appropriate amount of student work for students to achieve the level of competency (i.e., learning outcomes) defined by institutionally established course objectives
- Institutions are accountable for assigning an amount of title IV credit hours for each course that corresponds to the quantity of work reasonably expected to be required in order to achieve those learning outcomes, and for documenting student achievement of those objectives
- Institutions must assign credit hours in a way that complies with measures in federal regulation and that conforms with commonly accepted practice in higher education

## ACCREDITING AGENCIES' ROLE

- Accrediting agencies are responsible for setting credit hour standards and conducting reviews based on their interpretation of compliance
- Accrediting agencies are not expected to review every course and related documentation of learning outcomes, but rather, the agency's review is of the policies and procedures the institution uses to assign credit hours
- Typically this means verifying a sampling of the institution's degree and non-degree programs to encompass a variety of academic activities, disciplines, and delivery modes

## OUR CREDIT COURSE DEFINITION

- University of the Rockies has adopted the newer Carnegie Unit definition for its standard 3 Credit Course definition:
  - A credit hour is reasonably equivalent to 45 hours of lecture time and 90 hours out-of-class work/preparation hours
  - 135 total hours = 3 credit hour 6 week course
- Average weekly workload (in theory) for our students:
  - 7.5 hours weekly for directed study
  - 15 hours weekly for independent work/preparation time
- As the charts illustrate, there is not a standard course in terms of work expectations
- Subject matter experts, faculty and instructional designers collaborate on course workload in the light of current expectations and the increasing intellectual capabilities of our students
- To date, credit hour has not been used as a tool to formally evaluate the diversity of learning activities, but it could easily be applied for this purpose

## CLOSING THE LOOP ON CREDIT HOUR

- In 2012, the MA Human Services credit hour analysis indicated that HUM 5060 was below the 135 hour benchmark
  - In response, HUM 5060 was revised by a faculty member with subject matter expertise
- In 2012, the MA Psychology, Organizational Leadership Specialization credit hour analysis indicated that ORG 6300, ORG 6405, ORG 6520, and ORG 6499 were below the credit hour benchmark of 135 hours
  - In response, ORG 6300 and ORG 6405 were revised. ORG 6520 and ORG 6499 were scheduled for revision

	2012 Review	2013 Review
ORG 6512		74.3
ORG 6520	78	92.2
ORG 5100		116.5
ORG 6534		118.7
ORG 6499	85	288.2
ORG 6300	85	258.9
ORG 6405	105	137.42
HUM 5060	82.4	



- Courses with less than 135 hour credit hours are reviewed and revised by faculty with subject matter expertise and approved by the curriculum or program area coordinator and/or the dean

