

 Prescott College	Policy Number: 740	
	Policy Category: Academic Policies	
	Academic Credit Hour	
	Policy Summary: <i>This policy defines the academic credit hour.</i>	
	Approval Date: 08/11/25	Effective Date: 08/11/25
	Policy Owner: <i>Dean, Academic Affairs</i>	
	Scheduled for Review: <i>Spring 2030</i>	

Policy Statement

Credit awards are based on qualified faculty evaluation of evidence that demonstrates appropriate quality, rigor, and applicability to course or program level learning outcomes.

Typical semester credit hour equivalencies are based on a minimum ratio of 1:2 where for each hour of direct contact time, students additionally engage in 2 hours of out-of-class learning time. The minimum time per credit hour is:

- Direct: 12.5 hours or 750 minutes
- Out-of-class learning time: 25 hours or 1,500 minutes

See chart included in Procedures section for variations.

Definitions

Credit Hour: Prescott College uses the semester credit hour for awarding of academic credit. The credit hour is defined by Prescott College in accordance with HLC Policy FDCR.A.10.020 (11/2020) and with the Federal Policy as follows:

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 not less than: 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 amount of time; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.

34CFR 600.2

Reason for Policy

The Code of Federal Regulations requires regional accrediting agencies to monitor compliance by assuring through their review practices that:

- a. Institutions have a formal policy in place that defines the credit hour and its application to all courses and programs provided by the institution;
- b. The institution periodically reviews the application of its policy to assure that credit hour assignments are accurate and reliable; and
- c. Any variances in the assignment of credit hours conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

Responsibilities

For following policy:	All faculty
For enforcement of policy:	Dean, Academic Affairs
For oversight of policy:	Dean, Academic Affairs
For procedures implementing the policy:	Dean, Academic Affairs
For notification:	Policy Librarian

Procedures

The following chart demonstrates the variation in direct contact to out-of-class learning time for various course types. Face-to-face courses will be scheduled in accordance with the chart based on course type. Course types are based on primary academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory or studio work, internships, practica, dissertation, and/or other academic field-based work. If there is an interruption to the published schedule caused by instructor illness, college weather closures or other reasons, the requisite hours will be made up using an alternative schedule or additional activities meeting the direct instruction definition.

Course Type (20 character limit)	Credit Value	Contact Hours/Ratios (1 Credit = 12.5 Hours)			Description/Notes
Theory-Based	2 (or) 3 (or) 4	25 Hours 37.5 Hours 50 Hours	1 : 2 1 : 2 1 : 2	25 : 50 37.5 : 75 50 : 100	Synchronous and asynchronous courses.
Limited Field	4	50 Hours	1.5 : 1.5	75 : 75	Field days and/or multiple field trips.
Immersive Field	3 (or) 4 (or) 6	37.5 Hours 50 Hours 75 Hours	2.5 : 0.5 2.5 : 0.5 2.5 : 0.5	95 : 18 125 : 25 187.5 : 37.5	Field-based for the majority of the course.
Individualized	1 (to) 6; 4 or 8 for	6.25 (to) 37.5 hours	0.5 : 25	25 : 125	Includes Self-Directed Studies, Prior Learning Assessment, Senior

	Senior Projects	25 or 50 hours for Senior Projects			Project, Practicum, and Internship. Contact hours may be compensated with the equivalent amount of academically engaged time. *
Lab/Studio	4	50 Hours	1.5 : 1.5	75 : 75	Use of College lab/studios on a weekly basis
Skill/Novelty	1 (or) 2	12.5 Hours 25 Hours	2 : 1 2 : 1	25 : 12.5 50 : 25	Skill-building, orientations, accelerated cohort(s), workshops, and/or novelty work.
Capstone/Thesis	3	37.5 Hours	1 : 2	37.5 : 75	
Dissertation	up to 18 total	12.5 Hours	1 : 2	12.5 : 25	Repeatable for a cumulative total of 18 credits.
Clinical Practicum	1 (to) 8	12.5 Hours 100 Hours	1 : 2 1 : 2	12.5 : 25 100 : 200	
Clinical Internship	1 (to) 5	12.5 Hours 62.5 Hours	1 : 2 1 : 2	12.5 : 25 62.5 : 125	
Student Teaching	8	100 Hours	1 : 2	100 : 200	

* Academically engaged time includes such activities as: completion of reading assignments, dialogue sessions, studio work, laboratory time, problem sets, library research, field log, and the synthesis of this scholarly work, studio work, laboratory and/or field research through short essays, problem sets, writing assignments, reading responses and the creation of and/or reporting on a final project research paper, creative work, reportage of findings.

Because the pace of reading, writing and other learning activities, time needed to complete coursework varies widely among learners. Actual time spent in learning activities to achieve course learning outcomes will vary.

Cross Referenced Policies

Continuous Improvement and Assessment Policy 725
Program Curriculum Policy 730

Revision History

Clarified credit hour policy for individualized studies – August 2025