

# **Pennsylvania College of Technology**

## **Policy Statement**

**Title:** Course Credit Hour Assignment      **Number:** P 4.55

**Approved by:**  
Presidential Action

**Approved Date:**  
**Implementation Date:** 02/2014  
**Last Review Date:** 02/2026  
**Last Revision Date:** 11/2021

**Persons/Departments Affected:**  
Academic Affairs, Faculty, School deans

**Responsible Department:**  
Academic Affairs

**Definitions:**  
Credit Hour: a time-based unit of instruction comprised of various combinations of lecture, lab, and student preparation/practice time as delineated below.

### **Policy:**

- I. Course developers shall divide the requisite competencies and required student learning outcomes of new or revised courses into manageable, related blocks of classroom instruction and activities, supported as necessary by various types of hands-on student practice.
  - a. An instructional hour is equivalent to 50 minutes of instruction.
  - b. An academic semester consists of 15 weeks of instruction followed by a week of final exams.
    - i. Courses may be structured in alternative format lengths, such as 8-week durations, or shorter, depending on program requirements.
    - ii. Alternative formats do not include a final exam period.
  - c. An academic year consists of two academic semesters, Fall and Spring. Summer sessions may consist of terms of varying lengths that fall within the end of the spring semester to the beginning of the Fall semester.
- II. New and revised courses developed shall conform to the definition of credit hours defined below (all definitions apply over a semester of 15 weeks plus a final exam week):

- a. One lecture (taught) or seminar (discussion) credit hour represents 1 hour per week of scheduled class/seminar time and 2 hours of student preparation time.
- b. One laboratory credit hour represents a combination of lecture/discussion and scheduled supervised or independent laboratory work for 3 hours per week.
- c. One practice credit hour (supervised clinical rounds, visual or performing art studio, etc.) represents 3-4 hours per week of supervised and/or independent practice.
- d. Independent study credit hours are calculated similarly to practice credit hours.
- e. Internship credit hours are determined by negotiation between the supervising faculty/staff and the work supervisor at the cooperating site, with sufficient hours assigned to accomplish the required student learning outcomes. The credit formula is similar to that for practice credit.
  - i. An internship credit hour is usually defined as a minimum of 5 hours per week over a 15-week period, or a total of 75 hours per semester.
  - ii. More internship hours per credit hour may be required in some instances to assure the student is able to acquire the requisite learning outcomes.
  - iii. Internships may be paid or unpaid.
- f. Global experience credit hours are assigned to courses carrying the global experience course designator (GLB). A global experience credit hour is defined as a minimum of 75 hours of integrated travel experience associated with GLB-designated courses.
- g. The following table summarizes the requirements for the minimum number of instructional contact hours for the various methods of instruction. Course developers should use these guidelines as they develop new or revised courses. Exceptions to these guidelines are to be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost prior to offering the course.

Method of Instruction	Minimum Contact per Credit Hour Hours/Week; Hours/Semester	Course Description Designator	Faculty Present
Lecture	1 hour/15 hours	(1 Lecture - 0 Lab)	Yes
Lab	3 hours/45 hours	(0 Lecture - 3 Lab)	Yes
Internship	5 hours/75 hours	(0 Lecture - 5 Internship)	No
Clinical Experience	3 hours/45 hours	(0 Lecture - 3 Clinical Experience)	Yes/No
Independent Study	3 hours/45 hours	(TBD)	No
Global Experience	5 hours/75 hours	(0 Lecture – 5 Global Experience)	Yes

- III. Faculty developing courses intended for delivery using distance learning modalities (hybrid or fully online) must consider assignment of credit hours based on expected student workloads and active participation that combines the lecture/preparation times required above, e.g., a 1-credit hour course will require a student to spend approximately three hours a week for 15 weeks meeting course requirements. Shorter terms will require commensurately higher numbers of hours per week.
- IV. The assignment of the duration of the course (8 or 16 weeks, or other alternatives) and the number of credit hours in the course are determined by the developer with consideration of accreditation requirements and the need to achieve the required learning outcomes by course end. While assigning credit hours in whole increments is the usual custom, it is not a requirement.
- V. All courses, regardless of duration (e.g., summer terms, 8-week terms, etc.), are required to meet the requisite number of instructional hours per semester. For example, a 1 credit hour class will meet 1 hour per week for 15 weeks during a full semester for a total of 15 instructional hours (50-minute classes); the same class held over an 8-week term would meet 2 hours per week until at least 15 instructional hours were completed. Some differences in the number of instructional hours may occur in different formats due to semester-long courses having final exam periods assigned during the last week. Course designations (e.g., 2 lecture – 3 lab) remain the same regardless of the time format for the course.
- VI. Special consideration for alternate credit hour assignments may be given when accreditation requirements for internship or clinical experience hours exceed the above definitions. Exceptions to these guidelines are to be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost prior to offering the course.
- VII. Credit hour assignments for new and revised courses are approved by the dean. Credit hour assignments for all courses within a major or department are reviewed by the dean during the specified program review period.

**Revision History:**

Date: 02/2026 – Reviewed; no changes

Date: 11/2021 – Revised to eliminate student teaching and field work from examples of practice credit hours and clarify that internships may be supervised by faculty or staff.

Date: 10/2019 – Revised to include global experience credit hours.

Date: 06/2019 – Periodic review. No changes needed.

Date: 12/2013 – Initiated to codify existing practice.

**Cross References:** None