Definition of a Credit or Contact Hour

Policy

The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for all its courses. The Academic Program Review process ensures that internal and external reviewers determine that both the amount and level of credit are appropriate, and that course syllabi include course content, goals, and assignments.

The Health Science Center follows the requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the respective school-specific and program-specific accrediting organizations concerning the minimum length of courses and limitations on the amount of credit earned for a course, lecture, laboratory, seminar, practicum, clinical, or conference. In addition, the Health Science Center adheres to the minimum requirements as established by the federal definition of the credit hour.

Guidelines

General guidelines to support the credit/contact hour policy:

- A credit hour is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates the minimum amount of student work that includes evidence of intended student learning outcomes and student achievement.

- Credit hours are calculated based on the number of contact hours associated with each component of a course, and based on the school or program in which it is offered. In general, a credit hour is a unit of measure representing 50 minutes of instruction per class over a 15-week period in a semester system.

- Contact hour is a measure of the amount of contact, whether face-to-face or virtual, that a student has with an instructor or instructional assistant. The total number of contact hours across all components of a course help determine the number of semester credit hours awarded for successful completion of the course.

- The amount and level of credit awarded for courses for each program by the School is determined by the School's Dean's
Office, in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar uses established practices for awarding credit as specified by the THECB (Title 19 Texas Administrative Code, Section 4.6).

- Each School in collaboration and approved by the Registrar’s Office, has an established formal faculty review process to ensure that the amount and level of credit awarded for the undergraduate and graduate courses is compatible with the sound academic practice in the given field.

- Each School has established written policies on credit and contact hours and the number and type of courses that support the degree credential.

- The School of Nursing, School of Health Professionals, Dental School and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences adhere to the traditional Carnegie measure of credit: 50 minutes of instruction per class and a minimum of two-hours out of class student work over a 15-week period.

- Consistent with common practice in accredited medical education, the School of Medicine does not assign credit hours to course work. The School of Medicine academic calendar differs for each of the four years in which students are enrolled. School of Medicine criteria for graduation clearly articulate the total number and duration of courses and clinical experiences, as well as, licensure requirements that degree candidates must successfully meet. In addition, the School of Medicine is fully accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the accrediting body representing the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association and the Executive Council of the Association of American Medical Colleges.