CREDIT HOUR

All courses offered for credit at Slippery Rock University (SRU) toward the completion of a degree and/or certificates are in line with applicable state and federal regulations related to the assignment of credit hours. The following credit hour policy is based on the guidelines set forth by the PASSHE Board of Governors Policies, System Academic and Financial Procedures and Data Collection Definitions: Reference Number, SA-040. PASSHE Policy: Policy 1990-06-A: Academic Degrees, 1985-01-A: Requirements for Initiation or Change of Credit-Based Academic Programs, Policy 1999-01: The Academic Passport and Student Transfer Policy. (http://www.passhe.edu/inside/policies/BOG_Policies/Policy%201990-06-A.pdf)

This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure continued relevance and alignment with University goals by the Academic Policy Review Committee.

Credit Hour Assignment

Slippery Rock University's academic year is divided into Fall and Spring semesters of approximately 15 weeks each. Summer, winter and special accelerated sessions may vary in length. A credit hour at Slippery Rock University reflects the Carnegie unit, what has served as the traditional unit of measure in higher education. One semester credit is equivalent to one hour (50 minutes) of faculty instruction one time per week for 14 weeks (for a total of no less than 700 minutes) along with 120 minutes for the final examination, and a minimum of two hours of student preparation time outside of the classroom each week per credit hour. A typical 3 credit hour course will meet 2,220 minutes.

An equivalent amount of work is required for lectures, laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, accelerated, hybrid and online education, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. Departments may determine contact time over the minimum requirements as needed to achieve student learning goals and maintain compliance with programmatic accreditation bodies.

The Institution's University Curriculum Committee (UCC) provides a systematic review, evaluation, and change of the curriculum at the university level, in compliance with the APSCUF Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Assignment of credit hours for courses are determined by the faculty and program administrators based on expertise, learning objectives, and programmatic accreditation requirements. UCC is charged with review of all courses and curricula. Reviewed courses are sent to the Office of the Provost and once approved are sent to the Office of Academic Records and Registration for inclusion in the course catalogs. Academic Records reviews each schedule course to ensure that credit hours assigned meet the minimum number of minutes required. Discrepancies are brought to the attention of the appropriate Academic Dean/Department for correction or clarification.

Credit Hour Assignment by Course Type

Lecture and Seminar—courses with multiple students that meet to engage students in various forms of group instruction. These courses are generally awarded 1-3 credit hours and meet for 700 minutes (plus 120 minutes final exam time, for a total of 820 minutes) and 2100 minutes (plus 120 minutes final exam time, for a total of 2220 minutes.

Laboratory— 1 credit science labs included in the Liberal Studies requirement meet for a minimum of 75 minutes per week. Within the sciences labs associated with majors meet for a minimum of 110 minutes per week. Departments/programs may set higher standards in accordance with professional organization and accreditation bodies.

Internship, Practicum, Field Experience, & Student Teaching—3-12 credits hours with the minimum standard of 40 clock hours per credit hours.

Studio and Lessons—Departments may Departments/programs may set standards in accordance with professional organization and accreditation bodies.

- Visual art studio courses award one credit hour for a minimum of one hour and fifty-five minutes of scheduled supervised studio work. A 3 credit studio class would meet for a minimum of 4,620 minutes of class time with a 120 minute final exam/experience for a total of 4,740 minutes during a 15 week semester.
- Music lecture/seminar courses are awarded 3 credits consistent with the above stated minimum of 2,220 minutes per 15 week semester inclusive of the 120 minute final exam/experience.
- Music courses awarding 2 credits meet for a minimum of 1,520 minutes per 15 week semester inclusive of the 120 minute final exam/experience. Music courses awarding 1 credit (ex. Class Piano) meet for a minimum of 1,520 minutes inclusive of the 120 minute final exam/experience. Performing ensembles meet for differing lengths of time, ensembles are awarded one credit meet for a minimum of 1,470 minutes inclusive of the final exam/experience.
- Applied Instruction in Music (lessons) are awarded one credit, and students receive ½ hour weekly instruction per week, for a total of seven individual instructional hours during a 15 week semester. This contact is in addition to the time spent in studio and master classes. Music performance majors are awarded three credits, and students receive one hour of weekly instruction per week, for a total of 15 individual instruction hours during a 15 week semester.

Independent Study/Individualized Instruction – Courses delivered through these methods are required to meet the same credit hour guidelines and learning outcomes as traditional course delivery options.

Accelerated Courses – Any courses offered outside of a standard 15 week semester with equivalent learning outcomes and course content must meet an equal minimum amount of instructional and out of class student work to as the examples above within an accelerated time frame.

Hybrid/Blended Courses – Any courses offered in a blended format with a minimum of 1 on-site face-to-face class sessions and a minimum of one online session, both with direct faculty contact. In all instances, these courses must meet the total amount of instructional and out of class student work as courses offered through traditional delivery methods.

Online Courses – Any courses offered exclusively online without any face-to-face meetings. These courses have the same learning outcomes and substantive components with an alternative delivery method. Contact time is satisfied through a variety of online interactions and assignments. In all instances, these courses have learning outcomes that meet the total amount of instructional and out of class student work time as courses offered through traditional delivery methods.

Out of Class Student Expectations – For each credit hour earned, students should expect to spend a minimum of 100-150 minutes preparing/studying outside of class.

Transfer Credits - Transfer credits are evaluated by university administrators following the guidelines of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Pennsylvania State System Board of Governors and program specific accreditation body requirements. Transfer

policies (https://www.sru.edu/admissions/transfer-and-military-admissions/transfer-process/) and transfer course equivalencies (https://www.sru.edu/admissions/transfer-and-military-admissions/transfer-credit-evaluation/) are detailed on the university web site.

Instructional Contact Time – The measure of instructional contact time may be adjusted to reflect different formats of study or length of academic sessions as per the APSCUF CBA. These adjustments are reflective of the intended student learning outcomes and established equivalencies of the semester credit hour set by the institution and reasonably reflect the requirements established by MSCHE.

Credit Hour Definition Guidelines

Slippery Rock's policy also aligns with the following definitions and guidelines from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the US Department of Education, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation.

United States Department of Education (USDE)

The definition as published in the regulations is as follows:

"Credit Hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), 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 –

1. 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 academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (MSCHE)

The Commission's Requirements of Affiliation stipulate that accredited institutions comply with all Federal, state, and other relevant government policies, regulations, and requirements, which generally include requirements and expectations for degrees. The Commission's accreditation standards, particularly Standards 11 (Educational Offerings) and 14 (Assessment of Student Learning), require evidence of:

- academic study of sufficient content, breadth, and length;
- levels of rigor appropriate to the programs or degrees offered;
- statements of expected student learning outcomes that are consonant with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines;
- direct evidence of student learning; and
- assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes.

MSCHE Credit Hour Policy

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Pennsylvania Code, Title 22, Subpart C, & 31.21*

1. The curricula must provide the opportunity for the achievement of the stated objectives of the institution, as related to its statement of philosophy and mission, and must be structured in a group of coherent, integrated degree programs.
2. Degree requirements stated in this section may be stated in terms of semester credit hours or quarter credit hours, as determined by the institution and conforming to generally accepted academic practices. General education, as defined in this section, refers to the curricular inclusion of humanities, arts, communications, social sciences, mathematics, technology and science courses in support of the mission of the institution. A semester credit hour represents a unit of curricular material that normally can be taught in a minimum of 14 hours of classroom instruction, plus appropriate outside preparation or the equivalent as determined by the faculty. A quarter credit hour represents a unit of curricular material that normally can be taught in a minimum of 10 hours of classroom instruction, plus appropriate outside preparation or the equivalent as determined by the faculty.
   a. An associate degree exclusive of a specialized associate degree must require the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 60 semester credit hours, which includes a minimum of 20 semester credit hours of general education, or a minimum of 90 quarter credit hours, which must include a minimum of 30 quarter credit hours of general education.
   b. A specialized associate degree must require the satisfactory completion of at least 60 semester credit hours or a minimum of 1,500 clock hours or a Ch. 31 GENERAL PROVISIONS 22 § 31.21 31-13 (366297) No. 464 Jul. 13 a minimum of 90 quarter credit hours. At least 70%, but no more than 80%, of the program must consist of specialized instruction that bears directly upon the employment objectives of the program; and at least 20% of the program must consist of general education.
   c. A baccalaureate degree must require the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 120 semester credit hours or a minimum of 180 quarter credits. Of the total baccalaureate degree program course requirements, at least 40 semester credit hours or 60 quarter credit hours must be in general education and represent a broad spectrum of disciplines in general education.
   d. A first professional degree, except those for the preparation of professional educators, must require the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours for admission to the degree program and the satisfactory completion of a total minimum of 150 semester credit hours or 225 quarter credit hours for the program. Professional educator preparation programs must comply with Chapter 354 (relating to preparation of professional educators).
   e. A master's degree must require the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 30 semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours beyond the baccalaureate level.
   f. The number of semester or quarter credit hours for a degree beyond a first professional or master's degree shall be determined by the faculty and reflect the recommendations of professional associations or National learned societies.
      i. An institution may enter into agreements with other institutions, individuals or other providers of educational services to provide all or part of certain programs on behalf of the institution. A course offered for institutional credit shall be operated directly by or under the control of the institution granting the credit.
      ii. To assure academic integrity, an institution shall provide students in a distance education program access to academic and student services, including textbooks, study guides, library and other learning resources, personal

interaction with faculty, tutors or other educational personnel by computer, telephone, mail or face-to-face meetings. The institution shall assure integrity of student work and provide opportunity for student assessment. These programs must comply with the regulations that apply to resident-based programs as prescribed in this chapter and Chapters 35, 36, 40 and 42 and conform to generally accepted academic practices for delivery of instruction through distance education.