




MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President
From: Richard L. Williamson 
Chair, Faculty Senate
Date: April 19, 2013
Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2012-31(B) –Change to University of Miami’s Definition of Credit Hour as required by SACS to Conform to Federal Requirements

At its April 17, 2013 meeting, the Faculty Senate unanimously approved the change to the University of Miami’s definition of Credit Hour as required by SACS to conform to federal requirements. Adoption of the federal definition of the credit hour will remove any question or ambiguity regarding its definition. Currently, the credit hour is defined using similar but different language. This definition does not change the credit hour, only the wording of the definition.

This legislation is now forwarded to you for your action.

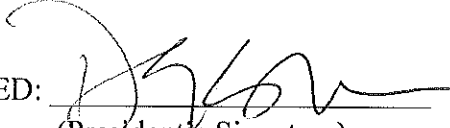
RW/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
William Green, Senior Vice Provost, Dean of Undergraduate Education
David Wiles, Executive Director, Assessment and Accreditation
Karen Beckett, University Registrar

CAPSULE: Faculty Senate Legislation #2012-31(B) – Change to University of Miami’s
Definition of Credit Hour as required by SACS to Conform to Federal Requirements

PRESIDENT’S RESPONSE

APPROVED:  DATE: April 26, 2013
(President’s Signature)

OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO IMPLEMENT: REGISTRAR

EFFECTIVE DATE OF LEGISLATION: IMMEDIATELY
(if other than June 1 next following)

NOT APPROVED AND REFERRED TO: _____

REMARKS (IF NOT APPROVED): _____

PROPOSED CHANGE TO UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI'S
DEFINITION OF CREDIT HOUR
per SACSCOC FEDERAL REQUIREMENT 4.9

March 11, 2013

CURRENT POLICY STATEMENT

ACADEMIC CREDITS

The University operates on the semester system and, for its measure of academic course work, uses academic credits (referred to as semester credits, semester hours, credit hours, hours, or credits).

An academic credit (of work) is given for one 50-minute period a week throughout an academic semester or its equivalent per week for a semester of fifteen weeks or its equivalent in summer session. Two or three laboratory hours each week throughout a semester are considered the equivalent of one lecture hour in counting credits earned in an undergraduate laboratory or studio course.

No grades or credits are given for audited courses.

(University of Miami Bulletin 2012-2013, page 4)

PROPOSED POLICY STATEMENT

[The University of Miami adopted the following Federal Definition of the Credit Hour at the Faculty Senate meeting on {date} that appears in the Credit Hours policy statement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACS\), Federal Requirement 4.9:](#)

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF THE CREDIT HOUR

For purposes of the application of this policy and in accord with federal regulations, 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:

1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours 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 outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

APPLICATION OF CREDIT HOUR POLICY

This credit hour policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate programs that award academic credit (i.e., any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University) regardless of the delivery method including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. Academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

The expectation of contact time inside the classroom and student effort outside the classroom is the same in all formats of a course whether it be online, a hybrid of face-to-face contact with some content delivered electronically, or one delivered in lecture or seminar format. The University operates on the semester system and, for its measure of academic course work, uses academic credits (referred to as semester credits, semester hours, credit hours, hours, or credits).

Courses that have less structured classroom schedules, such as research seminars, independent studies, internships, practica, studio work, or any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours, at a minimum, should state clearly learning objectives and expected outcomes and workload expectations that meet the standards set forth above.

Two or three laboratory hours each week throughout a semester are considered the equivalent of one lecture hour in counting credits earned in an undergraduate laboratory or studio course.

No grades or credits are given for audited courses.

CAMPUS PROCESSES – ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The University of Miami adheres to a reasonable approximation of the Carnegie unit for contact time. In addition, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class in preparation for every classroom hour. The Academic Calendar is the official record of academic instruction. The standard meeting times for three-credit courses are a 50-minute, Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule or a 75-minute, Tuesday-Thursday schedule. The calendar is planned to ensure 69 class days (41 Monday-Wednesday-Friday meeting days and 28 Tuesday-Thursday meeting days) and at least five days for final examinations. The policy allows a mandatory examination period to be counted in the minutes of instruction, but does not count reading days. The University has a required two-and-a-half-hour final examination policy that adds 150 minutes of instruction, resulting in a minimum of 2,200 minutes of classroom instruction in a three-credit hour course for all undergraduate and graduate terms in the Academic Calendar. The calculation for summer sessions and other abbreviated terms follows this same standard which means longer class meeting times over the duration of the shortened term.

The University Registrar maintains the official Academic Calendar on its website:
<http://www.miami.edu/index.php/registrar/calendar/>.

School of Business Administration

In the School of Business Administration, graduate programs include terms of varying length. The School follows federal and SACS guidelines for the credit hour. All graduate business programs have a minimum of 750 minutes of instructional contact time per credit hour, including the final examination. Students are expected to dedicate at least two hours of course-related work for each hour of instruction.

School of Law

The School of Law is accredited by the American Bar Association and follows federal and SACS guidelines for the credit hour. Ordinarily, full-time students must enroll for a minimum of 11 credits and a maximum of 16 credits (please consult the [Student Handbook and Honor Code](#)). For one credit hour, a student receives 700 minutes of instruction, exclusive of examination time. For a three-credit hour course, this equates to 2,100 minutes of classroom instruction. An additional 180 minutes of instruction is allotted for the final exam session in a three-credit course. The faculty expect students to spend at least two hours outside the classroom in preparation for each hour of instruction.

Miller School of Medicine

The Miller School of Medicine is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). The School's Department of Physical Therapy is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). The length of all educational programs is appropriate for each degree, based on national standards and accreditation criteria. The School follows federal and SACS guidelines for the credit hour. Completion of the M.D. program ordinarily takes four years. Although credit hours are not specified by the LCME, the medical education program leading to the M.D. must include at least 130 weeks of instruction. The University of Miami's curriculum consists of 161 weeks and may be referenced here: <http://admissions.med.miami.edu/md-programs/general-md/curriculum>

CAMPUS PROCESSES – CURRICULUM REVIEW

Each College or School within the University of Miami is charged with following the policy on credit hours in its review and approval of all undergraduate and graduate courses and for certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the credit hour standard. The determination of credit hours is made when a new course or a revision to an existing course is proposed. The submitted syllabus is examined for contact time as well as for assignments and evaluation mechanisms.

The Office of the University Registrar requires training for class scheduling before granting access to any departmental staff approved by a department for scheduling classes.