



Policy

DEFINITION OF A SEMESTER CREDIT HOUR

DCB.441

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define a semester credit hour (hereafter referred to simply as a credit hour) at Dakota College at Bottineau (DCB), in accordance with Higher Learning Commission and U.S. Department of Education requirements.

Definition

Dakota College at Bottineau (DCB) defines a credit hour as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes, and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. Forty-five to fifty (45-50) minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks during one semester.
 - a) Over a sixteen-week semester this is equivalent to one 45-50-minute period of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class work each week for approximately 15 weeks plus a final exam period for all classes requiring a final exam.
 - b) Classes scheduled as shorter sessions will meet the equivalent amount of classroom or direct faculty instruction time per credit as full semester length classes.
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by DCB, including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
 - a) For a breakdown of ‘other academic activities,’ refer to page three of this document.
3. This credit hour policy applies to all courses and other academic activities offered for credit by DCB regardless of format, delivery modes, course length and technological enhancements. These formats and delivery modes include, but are not limited to, the following: traditional, interactive video networking, online, and hybrid.
 - a) Technological enhancements may include such things as audio and video recorded lectures and demonstrations, electronic texts and other learning materials, and self-paced learning modules. The expectation is that regardless of new technologies and pedagogical techniques employed by the instructor the average student workload will remain consistent with the definition approved by DCB.

- b) Each traditional course that has been converted to a different format is expected to maintain the same learning outcomes and level of student achievement in the new format or delivery mode, and thus meets the definition of a credit hour.
 - c) In cases where new DCB courses are developed only for online delivery, academic departments will compare online-only courses to similar courses offered in traditional and online modes to ensure the definition of a credit hour is met.
4. Each academic department is responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work meeting or exceeding the requirements as defined in this policy.
 - a) The DCB Faculty, in cooperation with their academic department, will maintain the standards set forth in this policy through the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate as new courses are proposed and approved.
 - b) Academic departments will evaluate their curricula as needed to ensure these standards are met.
5. It is understood and embraced by DCB that the amount of work required of a given student to earn a specified grade in a class can be highly variable, depending on factors such as course content, student aptitude, background, and motivation. Therefore, the definition is meant to represent the amount of effort required for an average student to achieve an average grade while mastering course content and meeting the expected learning outcomes. Individual students may spend more or less time to achieve the same levels of mastery.
6. **Incoming Transfer Credit** – DCB policy accepts transfer courses at full value if earned in colleges and universities which are members of or hold candidate-for-accreditation status from regional accrediting institutions. Semester credit will be awarded on a 1 -to- 1 basis where semester credit was earned. Quarter hour credit will be awarded at a rate of one quarter hour being equal to $\frac{2}{3}$ semester hour. These equivalencies are based on the assumption of similar levels of academic rigor at other regionally accredited institutions.

Contact Hour to Credit Hour Conversion Guideline

The following matrix is intended to provide guidance when assigning credit for academic work. It is not intended to be all inclusive for every situation. The appropriate department may consult the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

Learning Experience	Minimum Contact Hours	Meetings per Week	# of Weeks per Semester	Recommended Credit
Classroom or Direct Faculty Instruction	45-50 minutes + 2 hrs of out-of-class work	1	15	1
Laboratory Work	Two 45-50-minute periods + 1 hour out-of-class work	1	15	1
Practicum	Two 45-50 minutes + 2 hrs of out-of-class work	1	15	1
Studio Work	45-50 minutes + 2 hrs of out-of-class work	1	15	1
Seminar and Capstone	45-50 minutes + 2 hrs of out-of-class work	1	15	1
Clinical Experiences ¹	Departmental determination	Departmental determination	Departmental determination	Departmental determination
Cooperative Education ²	40 hours per/Semester	As arranged	As arranged	1
Independent Study ³	Varies	Departmental determination	Departmental determination	Dependent on experience and time commitment
Internship ⁴	40 hours per/Semester	As arranged	As arranged	1
Field Studies ⁴	40 hours per/Semester	As arranged	As arranged	1
Study Tours-Faculty Led	13 hours direct faculty instruction + 26 hours additional student work	As arranged based on experience	As arranged based on experience	1

¹ Clinical experiences are determined by each department that requires a clinical experience as part of the major program of study. In most cases, the length of the experience and the amount of time required to be engaged in the experience is determined by the program's professional accrediting body.

² Cooperative Education credits and limits are determined by the academic department:

³ Independent study credit is determined by the appropriate academic department. It is based on the nature of the experience and the required student learning time commitment.

⁴ Credits for an internship or field studies are determined by the appropriate academic department.