

Austin Peay State  
University

## Credit Hours

### POLICIES

**Issued:** ~~August 11, 2021~~

**Responsible Official:** Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic

**Official:** Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Academic Affairs

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#### Policy Statement

It is the policy of Austin Peay State University to adhere to the [regulations of the](#) U.S. Department of Education ~~regulations~~ and accreditation standards and policies of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (“SACSCOC” or “Commission”). The determination of the amount and level of credit awarded for courses is conducted by the faculty consistent with commonly accepted practices in higher education and in accordance with the mission and goals of Austin Peay State University.

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#### Purpose

For purposes of the application of this policy and in accordance with federal regulations, a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. This policy provides guidelines to measure the number of ~~contact~~ [direct faculty instruction and indirect instruction](#) hours required for each semester credit hour offered by Austin Peay State University, regardless of location or mode of delivery, including but not limited to traditional face-to-face courses, distance education courses, hybrid courses, and courses offered in a shortened session or at an off-campus instructional site. This policy applies to all levels of courses (undergraduate and graduate) and all types of courses, including but not limited to clinical, independent study, internship, laboratory, practicum, seminar, student teaching, studio, study abroad, and research.

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#### **Definitions**

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<b>Semester Hour of Credit</b>	<p>The University offers instruction and grants credit on the semester system. Standard semester hour credit is determined through the University's curriculum approval process as maintained in the official curriculum records in Academic Affairs. In accordance with federal regulation (34 CFR 600.2 and subsequent guidance), one semester credit (<del>equivalent to 1.5 quarter hours credit</del>) reasonably approximates the learning outcomes expected from one hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student academic engagement each week for 15 weeks. <del>At Austin Peay State University, one credit hour is defined as a minimum of 750 minutes per term.</del></p> <p>Courses offered in alternative calendars and course types require an equivalent amount of faculty and student engagement and learning outcomes. Laboratory and studio classes usually earn one credit for each two hours of attendance or equivalent for a semester unless otherwise indicated.</p>
<b>Shortened Face-to-Face Courses</b>	<p>A course that has been condensed into a time period less than a fifteen-week semester remains the same amount of credit hours. The students and instructor meet face-to-face at regular times for the same minimum number of total contact hours expected for</p>

the same course being offered in the traditional fifteen-week semester time period.

#### Curriculum Committees

Committees charged with reviewing curriculum proposals for new courses and programs, and proposals for modification of existing courses and programs, including the amount and level of credit awarded for a course. The university's curriculum committees include department curriculum committees, college curriculum committees, Graduate Academic Council, Teacher Education Council, and the University Curriculum Committee.

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#### Procedures

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#### College Credit Hours

All college credit courses at Austin Peay State University are expected to adhere to the Federal Definition of Credit Hour minimums as described by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Credit Hours Policy Statement.

The Office of Post-secondary Education, Department of Education in Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 600.2 defines credit hour as follows.

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:

a. 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

b. 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, clinical placements, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Austin Peay State University [uses the above definition to](#) determine and monitor credit hours regardless of format,

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delivery, location, time of day, and length of semester/term. APSU ensures that all ~~college~~ credit-bearing courses meets the ~~definition of semester~~ credit hour ~~of credit for a college credit course~~ definition regardless of course delivery (i.e., face-to-face, hybrid, online/distance learning, and independent study).

**Criteria for Determining Credit for Courses**

Faculty and curriculum committees determine the quantity of credits for a course in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education. Standards established by external discipline-specific accreditation agencies will be applied as required. Institutionally established criteria reflect professional standards and include some or all of the following:

- discipline-specific best practices;
- purpose and goals of the course;
- intellectual/learning outcomes;
- content and topics;
- major assignments;
- assessment methods;
- course level: lower or upper division undergraduate, undergraduate/graduate combined, graduate (master and/or doctoral).
- course schedule type: lecture, lab, clinical, studio, study abroad, internship, field placement, independent study, thesis, or dissertation;
- course delivery method: face-to-face (traditional), hybrid (blended), online, or other mode of delivery
- articulation and transferability of credit to other institutions; and
- other factors as appropriate

~~**Criteria for Determining Credit for Programs**~~

~~Faculty and curriculum committees determine the quantity of credits for courses and programs in accordance with commonly accepted discipline-specific best practices for undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificate programs, and policies of APSU, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.~~

**Process for Determining Credit**

Faculty develop courses and programs and provide justification for proposed credit amounts. College and university faculty committees conduct rigorous reviews of course and program proposals, including justifications for credit to be awarded, and are responsible for final approval of proposals. Final acceptance

of a proposal by each appropriate curriculum committee denotes the review and acceptance of the proposed number of credits.

**Responsibility for the Credit Hour Policy**

Faculty are responsible for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum; therefore, the responsibility for credit hour determination resides with the faculty. The amount and level of credit hours awarded for a course will be determined according to these guidelines and courses will be monitored to ensure that they meet or exceed these expectations. Faculty and academic departments are charged with following the credit hour policy in developing and offering new courses or new modes of delivering existing courses.

The University has established the Registrar to be responsible for ensuring the class contact hours for those classes that are completely 'face-to face' are scheduled to meet the minimum contact hour requirement maintained in the official Curriculum file. For distance education (online or hybrid class) courses, the University has established the department chair as responsible for ensuring that the class syllabus is designed to meet the intended learning outcomes.

**Internal Review**

The Office of Academic Affairs will periodically coordinate an audit ~~of a sampling of course syllabi~~ average direct and indirect instruction per week using a stratified random sampling to account for the various ~~inclusive of the~~ course levels, course schedule types, delivery methods and locations of courses, session lengths, instructor types, and numbers of credit hours at the university. ~~The audit will be conducted by qualified faculty and the curriculum committees.~~

**External Review**

External peer reviewers review proposed and existing programs and courses through the program approval, program review, and program and institutional accreditation processes, in accordance with best practices. APSU also provides its policy and procedure for awarding credit for compliance with SACSCOC standards and federal regulations.

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**Links**

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**Academic Course and Program Development**      <http://www.apsu.edu/academic-course-and-program-development/glossary.php>

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**Revisions**

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[APSU Policy 2:064 – Rev.:](#)  
APSU Policy 2:064 – Rev.: August 11, 2021  
APSU Policy 2:064 – Rev.: September 14, 2020  
APSU Policy 2:064 – Rev.: November 26, 2019  
APSU Policy 2:064 – Issued: January 23, 2018

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**Subject Areas:**

Academic	Finance	General	Human Resources	Information Technology	Student Affairs
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**Approved**

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President: signature on file

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