

SMLR Policies and Procedures on Credit Hours and Standards of Rigor

Undergraduate instruction in the School of Management & Labor Relations in New Brunswick is overseen by two academic departments, the Department of Labor Studies & Employment Relations and the Department of Human Resource Management, in conjunction with the School of Arts & Sciences, as necessary, pursuant to the provisions in University policy #10.1. Bachelor of Science students are under the purview of SMLR, while Bachelor of Arts students receive a joint degree from SMLR and the School of Arts & Sciences.

Each SMLR department reviews proposals for new courses; modifications in existing courses, major, minor, and certificate requirements; and any experiential for-credit learning experiences such as independent studies or internships. Both departments remain engaged in on-going review of the scope, rigor, and effectiveness of its offerings through annual reporting on embedded assessments of student learning outcomes in its curriculum. The Director of Academic Programs in a department, in consultation with appropriate faculty and staff (particularly where a matter is not determined by another University unit), also make decisions about the equivalency of courses presented for transfer credits. Department review is guided by best-practices at fellow AAU institutions; University policy #10.2, and credit hour policies codified in the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 9A and by Middle States Commission on Higher Education (implementing U.S. Department of Education policy).

Department proposals for new courses; major, minor, and certificate requirements; and any experiential for-credit learning experience, after review of the faculty of the department involved are then submitted to a School-wide faculty curriculum committee. The curriculum committee is attentive to issues of consistency in expectations and rigor. SMLR has further ensured that online and hybrid courses meet a similar level of rigor as live courses through periodic review by the department involved, and its Director of Academic Programs.

Additional assurance of consistent and ongoing adherence to University and government regulations on credit-hours, and the University's cross-discipline standards of rigor, is provided by the SAS Core Requirements Committee. The Labor Studies department has over a dozen undergraduate courses certified as meeting SAS Core Curriculum requirements.

[RUTGERS POLICY](#)

10.2.4 UNITS OF CREDIT

- A. The course credit shall be the academic currency to be used in all schools and colleges of Rutgers University in measuring a student's progress towards a degree and shall be the official unit of record.
- B. The number of credits granted a student for any course in Rutgers University shall be determined by the college, school, or Faculty authorizing the course. The credit value of a course shall be assigned on the basis of the estimated amount of time a median student can be expected to devote to the course, at the rate of three hours a week per credit, including time in class, in laboratory, in conference with the teacher, or in reading, writing and preparing for class.
- C. Within Rutgers University, students matriculated in one school or college who register with the approval of the school or college of matriculation for a course offered by another school, college, or Faculty shall receive the credits assigned to that course by the school, college, or Faculty offering it.

[New Jersey Administrative Code Title 9A](#)

Sub-Chapter 1: 9A:1-1.2

"Semester credit hour" means 50 minutes of face-to-face class activity each week for 15 weeks (or the equivalent attained by scheduling more minutes of face-to-face class activity per week for fewer weeks in the semester) in one semester complemented by at least 100 minutes each week of laboratory or outside assignments (or the equivalent thereof for semesters of different length).

Sub-Chapter 2: 9A:1-2.1

- (c) A semester credit hour shall not be counted on an hour-for-hour basis for library, independent-study, laboratory, or physical education activities. No more than one semester credit hour shall be granted for an experience compressed into one week's time or less unless prior approval is obtained from the Commission in consultation with the Presidents' Council. A semester credit hour is not required to be counted on an hour-for-hour basis for distance learning or blended (or hybrid) learning.
- (d) Credit courses offered by a college in conjunction with or under contract with a noncollegiate organization shall meet the same requirements the college applies to its own courses with respect to quality, course content, class attendance and participation, student evaluation, etc. The standards presented at N.J.A.C. 9A:1-6.3, dealing with off-campus sites at which credit courses are offered by a college in conjunction with or under contract with a noncollegiate organization, shall apply to such courses offered at the principal campus.
- (e) The rigor of all credit-bearing courses shall be substantially the same, regardless of the type of educational delivery mode ("distance learning," "blended (or hybrid) learning" or "traditional face-to-face learning"), as demonstrated by the institution through various forms of evidence. Such evidence shall include, but shall not be limited to, at least two of the following: syllabi, documented faculty interaction with students, learning outcomes, documented units of curricular material and other documentation which objectively demonstrates the amount of time and/or the level of rigor necessary to complete coursework. Institutions of higher education offering or proposing to offer a course solely through only one educational delivery mode may demonstrate the rigor of the course through comparisons with the above forms of evidence for similar courses offered by institutions accredited by the Middle States Association.

[Middle States Commission on Higher Education,](#)

Credit Hour Policy Effective August 23, 2012, Rev. October 30, 2012

Definition

The U.S. Department of Education defines "credit hour" as:

"...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 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, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

The U.S. Department of Education establishes the credit hour as the basis for measuring an institution's eligibility for federal funding. The Carnegie unit, represented in point (1) above, has served as the traditional unit of measure, but the Department also recognizes that institutions are developing other measures of educational content and credit equivalency. The purpose of the credit hour policy is to ensure that credit hour measures are reasonably equivalent regardless of how institutions award credit hours to courses and programs in various modes of instruction and teaching and learning