

Bluefield State College
Office of the Provost
Academic Affairs Administrative Policy
Academic Credit Hour Definition

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The basic unit of college credit at Bluefield State College is calculated by credit hour for all courses and modalities. As defined by the **Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, §600.2**, 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, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Classification of Degree-Seeking Students	
Freshman	Completed fewer than 30 semester credit hours
Sophomore	Completed a minimum of 30, but fewer than 60 semester credit hours
Junior	Completed a minimum of 60, but fewer than 90 semester credit hours
Senior	Completed a minimum of 90, but fewer than 120 semester credit hours

Academic Credit Load

To be designated as a full-time student, one must be enrolled for at least 12 semester hours. Consistent with 15-to-Finish, students are encouraged to enroll in a least 15 hours per semester to complete their baccalaureate degree in four years.

Credit Hour Calculations as defined by Title 34, Section 600.2(1)

Basic one credit hour [§ 600.2(1)]

At least 15 contact hours (with each hour being 50 minutes) of recitation, lecture, discussion, seminar, or colloquium, as well as a minimum of 30 hours of student homework, are required for each unit of student credit.

Lecture, traditional class [§ 600.2(1)]

- A semester credit hour is earned for fifteen 50-minute sessions of classroom instruction with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study (homework, reading assignments, preparation for class) for each class session (meeting time). Typically, a three-semester credit hour course meets for three 50-minute sessions per week for fifteen weeks, for approximately 45 sessions and 90 hours of work outside of the classroom.

Supervised group activity [§ 600.2(2)] (laboratory, field trip, practicum, workshop, group studio)

- The equivalent of three 50-minute sessions per week over a traditional 15-week semester of a lab, rehearsal, or studio time would qualify for one semester credit hour.
- Where such activity involves substantial outside preparation by the student, the equivalent of two 50-minute sessions will earn one semester credit hour.
- Field trips are to be counted hour-for-hour as laboratory meetings (not including travel time).

Supervised individual activity [§ 600.2(2)] (independent study, individual studio, tutorial, dissertation)

- One semester credit hour credit for independent study (defined as study given initial guidance, criticism, review and final evaluation of student performance by a faculty member) will be awarded for the equivalent of three one-hour sessions of student academic activity in a traditional 15-week semester.

Full-time Independent Study [§ 600.2(2)] (clinical placements, student teaching, practicum)

- If a student's academic activity is essentially full-time (as in a student teaching or in a clinical placement), at least one full-time, eight-hour per day, 40-hour, five-day week of such experience will be required for one credit hour. Depending on specific curriculum, programs may require more than one week in order to award one credit hour.
- Clinical placement experiences are defined as “a part of the program that allows for observation, participation, studies of individual pupils or clients, individual field work, and practicums both on and off campus.”
- Credit for clinical experiences is determined in accordance with recommendations of a program's specific best practices, accrediting body, or applicable state regulation.

Short Sessions [§ 600.2(1)]

- Credit hours may be earned in short sessions (summer sessions, intersessions, weekend sessions, workshops, seminars, etc.) proportionately to those earned for the same course during a traditional 15-week semester, normally at no more than one credit per week of full-time study.

Courses offered over a period of time other than a traditional 15-week semester will require the same amount of classroom and out-of-class work per credit hour as is required of semester-long courses. The same amount of work will be distributed over a shorter period of time and may be allocated in various ways.

Forty-five (45) hours of work are required to earn one (1) credit hour. The portion of face-to-face instruction and work outside of class may vary. Examples include:

- For one credit, a workshop could require 15 hours of contact time and 30 homework hours.
 - (total hours = 45)
- For one credit, a seminar could require 20 hours of contact time and 25 homework hours.
 - (total hours = 45)
- For one credit, a studio could require 30 hours of contact time and 15 homework hours.
 - (total hours = 45)

Credit by Examination [§ 600.2(2)]

- At its discretion, an institution may award semester hour credits for mastery demonstrated through credit-by-examination. When such credit by examination is allowed, it may be used to satisfy degree requirements or to reduce the total number of remaining hours required for a degree.

Distance Education, Internet and Hybrid (Blended) Courses [§ 600.2(1)]

- Bluefield State College's credit hour policy for distance education, Internet and hybrid courses is consistent with the standards for courses offered through face-to-face instruction, although some or all of course content and faculty-student interaction occur through one or more forms of distance education (modalities).

Length of Terms

Term	Length
Fall and Spring Semesters	16-week (15 weeks of instruction and one week of final exams) 8-week sessions (2)
Winter Intercession	5-week session (1)
Summer Sessions	5-week session (2) 10-week session (1)