

Principles governing the use of credits and contact hours.

The General Standard: One unit of credit requires the equivalent student effort of three hours per week actively engaged in learning (i.e., a total of 30 hours per credit per term). Typically this includes one hour of class time and two hours of outside work.

When courses do not meet this General Standard, the University Committee on Courses requires evidence (syllabus, departmental guidelines, procedures, etc.) outlining the nature of the additional work and explaining how it will be assessed.* Note the following:

If the hours and credits are not the same, then assignments should call for an additional three hours per week for each extra unit of credit awarded (i.e., a total of 30 hours per credit per term). For example:

- Writing projects that would involve an additional 30 hours of student effort per term for each additional unit of credit.
- Homework problems, experiments, or projects that are in addition to the normal preparation and will produce the additional 30 hours of student effort per term.

In addition, the justification for the course credit should include a demonstration of the means by which the student's performance of the work outside of class is assessed. This should be specified in the syllabus, departmental guidelines and/or procedures. Particular care should be taken to insure that this problem is adequately addressed in those courses where the enrollment exceeds 50 students.

Observations:

- The curricular committees (Undergraduate Council, the CAS Curricular Committee and the University Course Committee) are sensitive to the reality that departments can best determine in their discipline what the appropriate content is for a "credit hour" of work.
- Nonetheless the curricular committees believe that consistent standards can only be attained when departments articulate their expectations in a manner that guides faculty effectively.
- "Student effort" will remain somewhat nebulous, but there is probably no way to quantify the term in such a way as to cover the variety of intellectual efforts.
- The Council might also wish to recommend that we change the definition of "group satisfying course" to allow for courses of three credits.

Procedures to implement:

- We are asking then that departments write up their own standards governing the credit/contact issue, submit that report to their respective colleges in the course of

the spring term. The college course committees and the university curricular committees should then review these standards.

- After review in the colleges and by the curricular committees, the negotiated documents should be included in the curricular report presented to the UO Senate in the Fall Term, 2002

* The standards are not designed to apply to laboratory courses, practica, etc.; nonetheless, the General Standard governing “student effort” and the credits should be maintained in spirit.