



MEMORANDUM

August 20, 2014

TO: Chief Academic Officers and Provosts
Vice Presidents for Finance and Administration
Campus Registrars
Campus Directors of Student Financial Aid

FROM: Annamarie Bianco, University Registrar

RE: **Credit Hour Guidelines**

All City University of New York (CUNY) degree and certificate programs are approved by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The University's method for awarding credit for courses in degree and certificate programs follow NYSED guidelines which are based on the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *credit hour*.

Below are the state and federal credit hour definitions and URL to their source documents.

NYSED – Credit Hour Definition

All courses and degree programs at the University must comply with Section 50.1 (o) of the New York State Commissioner of Education Regulations:

- *Semester hour* means a credit, point, or other unit granted for the satisfactory completion of a course which requires at least 15 hours (of 50 minutes each) of instruction and at least 30 hours of supplementary assignments, except as otherwise provided pursuant to section 52.2(c)(4) of this Subchapter. This basic measure shall be adjusted proportionately to translate the value of other academic calendars and formats of study in relation to the credit granted for study during the two semesters that comprise an academic year.

Source: http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/title_8_chapter_ii_regulations_o.htm

United States Department of Education – Credit Hour 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:

- 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,
- 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.

Source: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr;sid=473ab369b9b3a0636d2a56d0122de50f;rgn=div2;view=text;node=20101029:1.21;idno=34;cc=ecfr;start=1;size=25>

Middle State Accreditation

CUNY Colleges are accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) issued a “credit hour policy” in August 2012 that requires MSCHE institutions to comply with the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of “credit hour.”

MSCHE also noted in the statement that institutions must provide this information to the Commission’s evaluators “at appropriate points of accreditation review so they can verify compliance with the credit hour regulations.”

Middle States Documents

- Credit Hour Policy (2012):
 - <http://www.msche.org/documents/CreditHourPolicyRev112012.pdf>
- Degrees and Credit Guidelines (2009):
 - [http://www.msche.org/documents/Degree-and-Credit-Guidelines-062209-FINAL\[1\].pdf](http://www.msche.org/documents/Degree-and-Credit-Guidelines-062209-FINAL[1].pdf)
- Compliance with Federal Regulations (2014):
 - <http://www.msche.org/publications/ComplianceBook2014FINAL.pdf>

If there are any questions about this policy or the implementation information in this memorandum please contact me at our@cuny.edu.

Cc: Chancellor James B. Milliken
Chancellor’s Cabinet
University Dean for Enrollment Management
University Controller
University Director of Financial Aid Management
University Bursar
Vice Presidents for Student Services
Enrollment Management Council
Campus Business Managers
Campus Bursars