

Shepherd University requires this policy to be practiced by all faculty. All definitions and standards apply equally to courses regardless of section, instructor, location, modality or course length.

I. Federal Definition of Credit Hour

The federally-approved definition for a credit hour (34 CFR § 600.2) is:

Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that—

(1) Reasonably approximates not less than—

(i) 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 period of time; or

(ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) 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; and

(2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

Clock hour: A period of time consisting of—

(1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;

(2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or

(3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.

II. Shepherd University Definition of a Credit Hour

Shepherd University's definitions of a credit hour constitute a formalization of policy in order to ensure compliance with federal and accreditation expectations, as well as to provide consistency throughout the University. Courses may be composed of any combination of elements described, such as a lecture course which also has required laboratory periods, or a lecture course having an additional requirement for supervised independent study or tutorial activity.

III. Application of the Policy

The requirements which follow represent minimums for average students; some deviation in excess of these requirements may occur, particularly at the graduate level.

In the interest of accurate academic measurement and cross-campus comparability, the following policies and practices apply in controlling the relationship between classroom/direct hours, work outside of class, and credit hours.

Categories -

A. Lecture class (standard)

One semester credit hour is earned for one instructional hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction with the expectation of a minimum of two hours of outside student work for each session of instruction over approximately fifteen weeks.

B. Supervised group activity

Field trips are to be counted hour-for-hour as laboratory meetings (not including travel time).

Science Labs: 2 or 3 real world hours (depending on lab) = 1 CR (assuming standard out-of-class work)

Group Art Studio: 1 real world hour = 1 CR (assuming standard out-of-class work)

Music Ensembles (as of Fall 2025):

Ensemble	Contact Hours	Prep	A + B	Total Hours	Credit
MUEN 160/360 Band	4.5	1.5	6	90	1
MUEN 162/362 Jazz Ensemble	2.5	1	3.5	52.5	1
MUEN 163/363 Jazz Combo	1	2	3	45	1
MUEN 165/365 Flute Ens	1	2	3	45	1
MUEN 166/366 Sax Quartet	1	2	3	45	1
MUEN 169/369 Trombone Ens	1.5	1	2.5	37.5	1
MUEN 173/373 Piano Ens	1.5	1.5	3	45	1
MUEN 174/374 Camerata	2.5	1	3.5	52.5	1
MUEN 175/375 Masterworks	2	1	3	45	1
MUEN 176/376 Chamber Sing	3	1.5	4.5	67.5	1
MUEN 178/378 Orchestra	1.5	1	2.5	37.5	1
MUEN 182/382 Sym. Band	1.5	1	2.5	37.5	1
MUEN 199/399 Recorder Ens	1.5	1	2.5	37.5	1

Number of performances per semester varies by ensemble. Generally, time in performance is compensated back to students in cancelled rehearsal meeting times.

C. Supervised individual activity

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 one-hour sessions of student academic activity in a traditional 15-week semester (assuming standard out-of-class work).

Music: Individualized Music Lessons - 1 real world hours = 1 CR

Nursing:

NURS 631 = 1 CR (continuing course connected to completion of DNP project)

NURS 632: 60 real world hours = 1 CR

D. Clinical Experiences, student teaching, practicums

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.

Nursing

Clinical Rotations: 30 real world hours = 1 CR

Social Work

Clinical Rotations: 60 real world hours = 1 CR

Education

Practicums and Student Teaching (as of Fall 2025)

Field Hours Required	Course Credits	EDUC Courses	Other Secondary Education Courses
0-9	1	150	
10-49	3	200, 320, 420, 421, 422, 423, 570,571, 572.573, 581,582	ARED 345, MUSC 322, MUSC 325, MUSC 326
50-99	4	358,370	
100-199	5		
200-299	6	Residency 1 (Elementary 364, Secondary 400, 443 & *375=6 credits)	
300-399	7		
400-499	8		
500 and over	9	Residency 2/Student Teaching (450, 451.455.456.457) 601,602,603	

*EDUC 375 is considered 6 credits because students must take EDUC 400 and EDUC 443 as co-requisites and neither EDUC 400 or 443 have field hours.

E. Experiential Learning

At its discretion, Shepherd University may award credit hours for non-clinical learning acquired outside the institution (provided that such hours are an integral part of a program of study). When a life or work experience is to be credited as a concurrent portion of an academic program design, as in an internship, one semester credit hour will be awarded for each 50 clock-hour week of supervised academic activity that provides the learning considered necessary to program study. The number of such credits to be awarded is limited according to the policies stated in the University Catalog.

F. Credit by Examination

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. The University Catalog outlines those exams for which credit can be given.

Appendix: Higher Learning Commission requirements for regular and substantive interaction in distance education (Based on federal definition) -

“Institutions are expected to ensure regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors in their distance education and competency-based education offerings. An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency:

Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and

Monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

Providing direct instruction;

Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework;

Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;

Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or

Other instructional activities approved by HLC or the program’s accrediting agency.”