

Academic Credit Hour Policy

I. Introduction

All graduate and undergraduate courses are described in terms of academic credit hours. UNC Charlotte adheres to a commonly accepted definition of the academic credit hour which all academic units are expected to follow.

II. Policy Statement

CREDIT/SEMESTER HOURS

A credit/semester hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. **UNC Charlotte adheres to the Carnegie unit, which is a nationally recognized equivalency that consists of not less than:**

1. **750 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 1500 minutes of out of class student work for one semester hour of credit. Each credit hour corresponds to 50 minutes per week of classroom or direct faculty instruction and 100 minutes of out of class work per week for a 15 week semester, 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 or instructional modes of delivery as established by the institution including distance education, hybrid, and face-to-face instruction, laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

The University Registrar prepares and recommends the annual Academic Calendar for approval by the Chancellor no less than 18 months in advance of the planned academic year. Departments are responsible for scheduling courses that meet the Carnegie unit standard, and monitoring compliance with this standard through their annual process of peer evaluation of teaching.

III. Definitions

- **Credit hour** – 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. **750 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 1500 minutes of out of class student work for one semester hour of credit;** 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.
- **Semester or Term** – A period of study of approximately **15** weeks, usually half of the academic year (i.e., fall and spring semesters). The fall semester begins in August and the spring semester

begins in January at UNC Charlotte. There are summer terms as well: one ten-week and two five-week terms.

IV. Policy Contact(s)

- **Authority:** Faculty Council [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Subcommittee]
- **Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- **Additional Contact(s):** Office of the Registrar

V. History

- Approved: July 10, 1980
- Modified: , 2015

VI. Related Policies, Procedures and Resources

- [Designing courses that meet the contact hour standards](#)
- [Activities constituting contact and non-contact hours in different types of course formats](#)

VII. Frequently Asked Questions

- **Which students are covered under this policy?**

This policy applies to all graduate and undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte.

- ~~**Can courses be offered for zero (0) credit?**~~

~~Departments are advised against the creation of new zero credit courses, which are in violation of the University's credit hour policy. If, for example, a department wishes to offer a 4 credit course that includes a breakout or recitation section, the best solution is to offer the corresponding course for 3 credits and the recitation for 1 credit.~~

Baccalaureate Degree Progression and Tuition Surcharge Policy

I. Introduction

All baccalaureate degrees require completion of a minimum of 120 semester hours of credit, including all requirements for a major field of study. Undergraduate students who attempt more than 140 credit hours (or more than 110% of the hours required to complete their baccalaureate degree program) are subject to a 50% tuition surcharge on the excess hours taken.

II. Policy Statement

COURSE LOAD

A course load of 15-18 hours constitutes a normal full semester load for undergraduates. A student must complete 15-16 hours per semester to complete a bachelor's degree in four academic years. Enrollment in more than 18 hours in a semester requires advance approval of the dean of the student's major college. An undergraduate student enrolled in 12 or more hours is considered to be a full-time student and must pay full tuition and fees.

A standard load for an undergraduate student enrolled in a summer session is up to 7 credit hours. Enrollment in more than 7 credit hours in a single summer session, or in concurrent summer sessions (e.g., a 10-week and a 5-week session), requires advance approval of the dean of the student's major college.

The appropriate course load for an undergraduate student is dependent on two factors: scholastic ability as reflected by the student's academic history and available study time. Successful academic achievement usually requires at least two hours of study per week outside of class for each credit hour in which the student is enrolled. For example, enrollment in 16 credit hours would require minimally 32 hours of outside preparation per week.

TUITION SURCHARGE

UNC Charlotte follows regulations regarding Tuition Surcharge established by the State of North Carolina. These regulations change frequently. The current state policy can be found at <http://registrar.uncc.edu/common-requested-information/tuition-surcharge>.

STUDENT CLASSIFICATION

At the beginning of each semester, students working toward a bachelor's degree are classified on the basis of earned semester hours (also referred to as credit hours):

Classification	Earned Semester Hours
Freshman	0-29
Sophomore	30-59
Junior	60-89
Senior	90 or more

III. Definitions

- **Bachelor's degree or baccalaureate** – The degree of bachelor of arts (B.A.) or bachelor of science (B.S.), typically requiring a minimum of 120 hours of specified course work. A bachelor's degree is comprised of General Education courses, a major program(s), elective courses, and, in some cases, a minor program(s), and, in general, is completed in four years.
- **Credit hour** – 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. 750 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 1500 minutes of out of class student work for one semester hour of credit; 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.
- **Semester or Term** – A period of study of approximately 15 weeks, usually half of the academic year (i.e., fall and spring semesters). The fall semester begins in August and the spring semester begins in January at UNC Charlotte. There are summer terms as well: one ten-week and two five-week terms.
- **Tuition** – The amount of money that colleges charge for coursework and other instruction. Tuition can vary widely between educational institutions, and does not cover fees, cost of books, and other materials.

IV. Policy Contact(s)

- **Authority:** Faculty Council [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Subcommittee]
- **Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- **Additional Contact(s):** Office of the Registrar

V. History

- Approved: July 10, 1980
- Split off from Academic Credit Hour Policy, ...,2015

VI. Related Policies, Procedures and Resources

- Academic Credit Hour Policy
- [Tuition Surcharge Frequently Asked Questions](#)

VII. Frequently Asked Questions

- **Which students are covered under this policy?**
This policy applies to all undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte.

- **What is the difference between full time and part time?**

In the Fall and Spring semesters, undergraduate students are defined as full time at 12 hours, at half time at 6 hours, and less than half time below 6 hours. In the Summer terms, undergraduate students are defined as full time at 6 hours, at half time at 3 hours, and less than half time below 3 hours.

~~In the Fall and Spring semesters, graduate students are defined as full time at 9 hours, at half time at 3 hours, and less than half time below 3 hours. In the Summer terms, graduate students are defined as full time at 3 hours, and at half time at 1 hour.~~