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Effective Date: April, 2013

Last Update: May 17, 2013

Responsible Officer: Dr. Kevin Beery

Enter officer title: Vice President of Academic Affairs

Policy Owner: Academic Affairs Committee

Online Committee

Policy Contact: Registrar

Enter contact name(s): Russell L. Cambria

POLICY STATEMENT

VFCC adheres to federal and state regulations for determining a credit hour. These regulations use the standard Carnegie Unit that stipulates one semester credit hour be awarded for fifteen, 50-minute sessions and an additional two hours per week of outside preparation by students. The College functions on a semester-based academic calendar of 14 weeks plus the final examination week. All courses must meet the required instructional hours, whether seated, online, hybrid, or in some other format.

A. Seated Instruction

Traditional seated courses at VFCC follow the federal standards for a credit hour by requiring the equivalent of one hour per week of in-class, faculty-led instruction along with two hours of learning activities outside of class. Typically, a three-semester credit hour course meets three, 50-minute sessions, or two, 75 minute sessions, or one, 150 minute session per week for fourteen weeks for a total of 42 sessions. The fifteenth week is finals week.

B. Hybrid Course

A hybrid course is a course where a portion of the required contact hours are fulfilled through a combination of faculty-led instruction and online delivery using VFCC's learning management system and other web-based tools. Faculty are expected to ensure that hybrid courses meet the semester hour requirement.

C. Online Course

An online course is defined as a course where all of the required contact hours are fulfilled through online delivery using VFCC's learning management system. The course syllabus and schedule for an online course must clearly show that academic engagement by the student is taking place on a weekly basis. This engagement may come in the form of reading course content, submitting an assignment, taking a quiz or exam, participating in an interactive synchronous or asynchronous discussion, or some other instructional format. Online courses have similar, if not identical student learning outcomes to those in the equivalent standard seated courses which are based upon the Carnegie unit. The meeting of these outcomes in online courses validates the awarding of

comparable credit hours.

D. Supervised Group

A supervised group is defined as a laboratory, extended field experience, or practicum. A semester credit hour is awarded for the equivalent of fifteen periods of such activity, where each activity period is 150 minutes or more in duration with little or no outside preparation expected. Forty-five, 50-minute sessions of such activity would also normally earn one semester credit hour.

E. Full-time Independent Study

A full-time independent study is defined as a student teaching, practicum, or internship. If students activities are essentially full-time (as in student teaching), one semester credit hour may be awarded for each week of work.

F. Guided Independent Study

A guided independent study course is defined as a course under the supervision of an instructor to one student or a small group of students. According to the *Faculty Handbook*, course requirements include the following:

- 1) At least 300 pages of reading, or its equivalent, for each credit hour.
- 2) Written assignments or projects, or their equivalent, equal to six or eight written pages per credit hours, or nine hours of practical experience of hands-on work per credit hour with appropriate written documentation.
- 3) At least four formal meetings with the professor or supervisor per the time period.

REASON FOR POLICY

- To safeguard the integrity of the standard credit hour.
- To ensure course equivalency relative to credit hours when designing learning activities and experiences.
- To be in compliance with federal and state regulations concerning credit hours.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Affairs Committee (AAC)

The AAC approves all new courses. Instructors submit a syllabus and completed VFCC Instructional Hours Calculator that totals the number of hours.

Online Committee

The Online Committee will establish the policies and procedures for online courses such that the AAC can implement them.

HISTORY

This Policy has no History at this time.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

This Policy has no Additional Contacts at this time.

PROCEDURES

This Policy has no Procedures at this time.

DEFINITIONS

Contact hour or clock hour: A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students.

Source: IPEDS

Credit or credit hour: A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other award.

Source: IPEDS

IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/glossary>)

Federal Regulations

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:

(1) 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,

(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.”

Federal Definition of Distance Education

Distance education means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

(1) The internet;

(2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;

(3) Audio conferencing; or

(4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.

PDE State Regulation

In accordance with 22 Pa. Code Chapter 31 (31.21-31.22), each assigned academic credit equates to either 14 hours of classroom instruction, exclusive of Final Examinations and any holidays.

Curricular Credit Policy: Ensuring Quality and Transferability.(March, 2008). Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Retrieved from [www.state.pa.us/portal/server.../curricular_credit_policy_08_pdf_\(2\)](http://www.state.pa.us/portal/server.../curricular_credit_policy_08_pdf_(2))

RELATED INFORMATION

Guided Individual Studies (Faculty Handbook)

A one credit GIS course shall have a total of 42 hours of instruction. A two credit GIS course shall have a total of 84 hours of instruction. A three credit GIS course shall have a total of 126 hours of instruction.

APPENDICES

Instructional Hours Calculator

VFCC's INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS CALCULATOR

rev. 2013 Mar

The ultimate goal of course design is to create significant learning experiences for students. Key components of high quality course design are 1) Learning Goals (including Student Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives), 2) Feedback and Assessment, and 3) Teaching and Learning Activities. This calculator is designed for two purposes. First, the calculator will assist faculty in developing high quality, rigorous courses in all formats. Second, the calculator is designed to comply with federal regulations regarding credit hour regulations. First, fill in the information below. Then click on sheet 2 to fill in the calculator. High quality courses include active teaching and learning experiences to engage students in the learning process. Assessment is carefully aligned to the learning goals and includes the most important concepts students need to learn.

Course Code & Title:

Course Developer:

Course Credit

Course Format: Place an "X" beside the appropriate format.

Seated:

Hybrid:

Online:

Supervised Group:

Full Time Independent Study:

GIS:

Experiential Learning:

LEARNING GOALS & COURSE OBJECTIVES

VFCC's COURSE DESIGN CALCULATOR

Enter the # of units (hours) and the # of assignments in the blue boxes to the right of each row. The COURSE HOURS will be automatically calculated and displayed in the white box. At the bottom of the sheet the total course hour will be displayed. Three credit courses = 126 clock hours.

Credits:

3

REQUIRED TOTAL COURSE HOURS

126

YOUR TOTAL COURSE HOURS

0

(: THIS IS THE RED LINE :)

<u>Developing Teaching and Learning Activities</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>Instructional Equivalencies</u>	<u># OF UNITS</u>	<u># OF ASSIGNMENTS</u>	<u>COURSE HOURS</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
SEATED/HYBRID Activities						
IN CLASS	Traditional Classroom Instruction including significant learning experiences. Lectures, Discussion, Debates, Role-Playing, Simulations, Dramatizations, Explanations, Demonstrations, Collaborative Group Experiences, Problem Based Learning, Case Studies, Investigations, Invited Speakers, Exercises	1 credit = 14 hours 2 credit = 28 hours 3 credit = 42 hours Online and GIS = 0	0	1	0.0	
ONLINE/GIS Activities						
WEBINARS, ETC	Webinars and all live presentations that include Powerpoint lectures and discussions and other significant learning experiences.	1 hour webinar, etc.	0	1	0.0	
INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA	Recorded Lectures that include Power Point, CDs, DVDs, videos, music etc. presenting Foundational Knowledge.	1 hour of instructional media	0	1	0.0	
INSTRUCTIONAL MEETING	Individual or small group meetings with instructor.	1 hour Meeting	0	1	0.0	
DISCUSSION FORUM	Asynchronous discussions that build learning communities through critical thinking and practical application of course content	1 hour discussion forum	0	1	0.0	
INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES AND HOMEWORK						
READING	The various levels of reading that may be used in your class are listed below.					
	POPULAR READING Any reading below the level of typical college textbook.	60 pages	0	1	0.0	
	STUDENT POST READING Reading Discussion Forums, Students posts or attached material on a website.	1 hour of reading and posting	0	1	0.0	
	TEXTBOOK READING Any reading at the level of typical college textbook.	30 pages	0	1	0.0	
	SCHOLARLY READING Any reading above the level of typical college textbook. 15 pages of reading.	30 pages	0	1	0.0	
WRITING	Assignment writing other than on tests. Enter the total pages for all the assignments of each of the types below. Pages should be defined as 250 words.					
	INFORMAL WRITING Personal reflections, reactions, un-researched opinion essays, journaling, etc.	2 Informal Essay Pages	0	1	0.0	
	FORMAL WRITING Essays, Case Studies, Stories, Observations, requiring minimal research.	1 Informal Essay Pages	0	1	0.0	
	RESEARCH WRITING The traditional research essay with citations, bibliography, etc. using primary and other reliable sources of information.	.5 pages of essay.	0	1	0.0	
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	Formative assessment occurs during the teaching and learning process and is used for feedback and analysis. Examples include concept maps, problem-solution questions, one-sentence summary, pro and con grids, process analysis,	Average Hours to Complete:	0	1	0.0	
FIELD TRIPS, CONFERENCE, ETC	Trips to places, events, etc. Travel, breaks, etc. should not be included. Planned discussions, exercises, etc. during travel, meals, etc. may be included. Essays and reports based on the event should be entered separately.	1 Field Trip, Conference, etc. hour.	0	2	0.0	
LABS, REHEARSALS, PRACTICES, ETC	Actual and virtual laboratories, music and drama rehearsals, sports practices, etc.	1 Lab, Rehearsal, Practice, etc. hour.	0	1	0.0	
Feedback, Evaluation and Assessment	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>					
ASSESSMENTS						
HOMEWORK	Instructor assigned problems, skill sets, independent work done outside of class	Average Hours to Complete:	0	1	0.0	
PROJECTS	Student centered work that challenges students to complete assignments related to the real world, may be individual or collaborative, may also include service learning.	Average Hours to Complete:	0	1	0.0	

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Enter the # of units (hours) and the # of assignments in the blue boxes to the right of each row. The COURSE HOURS will be automatically calculated and displayed in the white box. At the bottom of the sheet the total course hour will be displayed. Three credit courses = 126 clock hours.

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INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA	Recorded Lectures that include Power Point, CDs, DVDs, videos, music etc. presenting Foundational Knowledge.	1 hour of instructional media	0	1	0.0	
INSTRUCTIONAL MEETING	Individual or small group meetings with instructor.	1 hour Meeting	0	1	0.0	
DISCUSSION FORUM	Asynchronous discussions that build learning communities through critical thinking and practical application of course content	1 hour discussion forum	0	1	0.0	
INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES AND HOMEWORK						
READING	The various levels of reading that may be used in your class are listed below.					
	POPULAR READING Any reading below the level of typical college textbook.	60 pages	0	1	0.0	
	STUDENT POST READING Reading Discussion Forums, Students posts or attached material on a website.	1 hour of reading and posting	0	1	0.0	
	TEXTBOOK READING Any reading at the level of typical college textbook.	30 pages	0	1	0.0	
	SCHOLARLY READING Any reading above the level of typical college textbook. 15 pages of reading.	30 pages	0	1	0.0	
WRITING	Assignment writing other than on tests. Enter the total pages for all the assignments of each of the types below. Pages should be defined as 250 words.					
	INFORMAL WRITING Personal reflections, reactions, un-researched opinion essays, journaling, etc.	2 Informal Essay Pages	0	1	0.0	
	FORMAL WRITING Essays, Case Studies, Stories, Observations, requiring minimal research.	1 Informal Essay Pages	0	1	0.0	
	RESEARCH WRITING The traditional research essay with citations, bibliography, etc. using primary and other reliable sources of information.	.5 pages of essay.	0	1	0.0	
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	Formative assessment occurs during the teaching and learning process and is used for feedback and analysis. Examples include concept maps, problem-solution questions, one-sentence summary, pro and con grids, process analysis,	Average Hours to Complete:	0	1	0.0	
FIELD TRIPS, CONFERENCE, ETC	Trips to places, events, etc. Travel, breaks, etc. should not be included. Planned discussions, exercises, etc. during travel, meals, etc. may be included. Essays and reports based on the event should be entered separately.	1 Field Trip, Conference, etc. hour.	0	2	0.0	
LABS, REHEARSALS, PRACTICES, ETC	Actual and virtual laboratories, music and drama rehearsals, sports practices, etc.	1 Lab, Rehearsal, Practice, etc. hour.	0	1	0.0	
Feedback, Evaluation and Assessment	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>					
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