



Credit Hour Policy (October 2025)

Definitions:

The U.S. Department of Education Definition

[Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 Section 600.2](#)

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.

[Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 Section 668.8\(k\)](#)

Undergraduate educational program in credit hours. If an institution offers an undergraduate educational program in credit hours, the institution must use the formula contained in [paragraph \(l\)](#) of this section to determine whether that program satisfies the requirements contained in [paragraph \(c\)\(3\)](#) or [\(d\)](#) of this section, and the number of credit hours in that educational program for purposes of the title IV, HEA programs, unless—

(1) The program is at least two academic years in length and provides an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, a professional degree, or an equivalent degree as determined by the Secretary; or

(2) Each course within the program is acceptable for full credit toward completion of an eligible program offered by the institution that provides an associate degree, bachelor's degree, professional degree, or equivalent degree as determined by the Secretary, provided that—

(i) The eligible program requires at least two academic years of study; and

(ii) The institution can demonstrate that least one student graduated from the program during the current award year or the two preceding award years.

[Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 Section 668.8 \(l\)](#)

Formula. For purposes of determining whether a program described in [paragraph \(h\)](#) of this section satisfies the requirements contained in [paragraph \(c\)\(3\)](#) or [\(d\)](#) of this section, and the number of credit hours in that educational program for the purposes of the title IV, HEA programs—

(1) A semester or trimester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction;

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Definition

[22 Pa. Code Section 31.21 \(b\)](#)

A semester credit hour represents a unit of curricular material that normally can be taught in a minimum of 14 hours of classroom instruction, plus appropriate outside preparation or the equivalent as determined by the faculty.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

[Credit Hour Policy](#)

Credit hour. 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 (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; 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. (federal definition in 34 CFR § 600.2).

Geneva College's Credit Hour Policy:

Geneva complies with federal, state, and accreditation (MSCHE) standards and regulations pertaining to the assignment of credit hours. In all courses, the College complies with the PDE regulation of 14 hours of classroom instruction (or direct faculty instruction) per semester hour of credit. Further, the College interprets the USDoE's guidance of "...or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time..." to equal a minimum of 37.5 hours (2,250 minutes) of educational student engagement per semester hour of credit awarded.

The traditional undergraduate program at Geneva follows a semester system, with the terms identified as Fall and Spring. Each term consists of 15 weeks, including a finals week, and a break is observed between the terms as stated in the College's catalog and on the website. The College utilizes a summer term for graduate programs and a small number of undergraduate courses.

All courses must comply with the College's Credit Hour Policy regardless of degree level, designation (e.g., internships, independent studies, etc.), or modality. Specific details regarding the process of determining credit hour compliance by delivery method are included below.

Synchronous Instruction (Classroom and Remote):

1. For each semester hour of credit, courses that meet synchronously, whether in a classroom or remotely, should include approximately one 50-60-minute class with the instructor (i.e., direct instruction) and 120 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks. In addition, the semester includes a final exam period of approximately 120 minutes for courses of more than one credit. In total, the expectation is no less than 2,250 minutes of educational student engagement per semester hour of credit.

For example:

- A) 1 credit hour: One period of 55 minutes of direct instruction + 120 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks = 2,450 minutes of educational student engagement.
- B) 3 credit hours: Three periods of 55 minutes of direct instruction + 360 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks + a 120 minute final exam period = 7,470 minutes of educational student engagement (2,490 minutes per credit)

- C) 3 credit hours: Two periods of 80 minutes of direct instruction + 320 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks + a 120-minute final exam period = 6,840 minutes of educational student engagement (2,280 minutes/credit hour).
 - D) 3 credit hours: One period of 180 minutes of direct instruction + 300 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks + a 120-minute final exam period = 6,840 minutes of educational student engagement (2,280 minutes/credit hour).
 - E) 3 credit hours: One period of 240 minutes + 605 minutes per week of out-of-class work for eight weeks = 6,760 minutes of educational student engagement (2,253 minutes/credit hour)
 - F) 3 credits hours: One period of 150 minutes for 16 days + 270 minutes of out-of-class work for 16 days and a 120 minute final = 6,840 minutes of educational student engagement (2,280 minutes/credit hour)
2. One semester hour of credit may be awarded for discussion, recitation, laboratory or fine art performance sections or courses that meet for a minimum of 50 minutes per week or a maximum of 210 minutes per week for 14 weeks.

For example:

- A) 1 credit hour: One period of laboratory ranging for 180 minutes + 60 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks (3,360 minutes/credit hour)
 - B) 1 credit hour: One period of a book discussion course for 55 minutes + 120 minutes of out-of-class work for 14 weeks. (2,450 minutes/credit hour)
 - C) 3 credit hours: One 55 minute period of direct instruction + 480 minutes of research and laboratory work on senior design projects for 14 weeks = 7,490 minutes of educational student engagement (2,497 minutes/credit hour)
3. For each semester hour of internship credit, students should spend 45 hours at the work site.
4. For each semester hour of a independent study credits, students should spend no less than 2,250 minutes of educational student engagement.
5. Any course offered in a shortened term must meet equivalent direct instruction and out-of-class work totals as is required of a semester-length course.

For example:

- A) 3 credit hours: 4 hours of direct instruction + 8.5 hours of out-of-class work for 9 weeks = 112.5 hours (6,750 minutes) of educational student engagement (2,250 minutes/credit hour).

6. Graduate courses must require the same total educational student engagement hours although the ratio of direct instruction to out-of-class work may shift within reasonable limits.

For example:

- A) 3 credit hours: 240 minutes of direct instruction + 605 minutes of out-of-class work for 8 weeks = 6,760 minutes of educational student engagement (2,253 minutes/credit hour).
- B) 3 credit hours: 480 minutes of direct instruction for five days + 4350 minutes of out-of-class work following the weeklong intensive = 6,750 minutes (2,250 minutes/credit hour).
- C) 3 credit hours: 240 minutes of direct instruction + 725 minutes of out-of-class work for seven weeks = 6,755 minutes (2,250 minutes/credit hour)

Asynchronous Instruction (Remote and Hybrid):

1. Courses with an instructional method that is not fully synchronous (e.g., hybrid or remote courses) meet the credit hour standards if the course includes at least 14 hours of direct instruction and 23.5 hours of out-of-class work for a total of at least 2,250 minutes of educational student engagement for one semester hour of credit.

The curriculum for each asynchronous course must be evaluated by the appropriate academic department and College for content and rigor. The College will confirm that the credit hours to be awarded are appropriate through completion of the *Credit Hour Compliance Audit Form*.

For example:

- A) 1 credit hour: 14 hours asynchronous direct instruction + 23.5 hours out-of-class work = 37.5 hours of educational student engagement (2,250 minutes/credit hour).
- B) 3 credit hours: 42 hours of asynchronous direct instruction + 70.5 hours out-of-class work = 112.5 hours (6,750 minutes) of educational student engagement (2,250 minutes/credit hour).
- C) 3 credit hours: 21 hours of synchronous direct instruction + 21 hours of asynchronous direct instruction + 70.5 hours of out-of-class work = 112.5 hours (6,750 minutes) of educational student engagement (2,250 minutes/credit hour).