

Policy and Procedure

Policy Number: 243

Date: July 2012

Revision Date:

Division/Department: Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

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Subject: Credit Hours and Program Length

Authorities: Higher Learning Commission/Federal Compliance Policy 3.10; MnSCU Policy 3.36 and Procedures 3.361 Academic Programs; Minnesota State College Faculty Contract (MSCF)

Purpose: This policy establishes the procedures for assigning credit hours to courses and overall credit requirements to programs in a reasonable and systematic way. Credit hour assignments and degree program requirements should fit within the range of good practice currently in higher education in the United States.

In 34 CFR 600.2 of the federal regulations, a credit hour for Federal programs, including the Federal student financial assistance programs, is defined 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 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 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.

MnSCU Policy 3.36 Academic Programs identifies the awards each institution type is eligible to confer and the attributes of each academic award.

Policy: Pine Technical College will assign credit hours to courses in a reasonable and systematic way that ensures a credit hour is a unit of measure that reflects the value of the level of instruction, academic rigor, and time requirements of the course. All degree programs offered by Pine Technical College will be approved through the established MnSCU procedures and meet the attributes of each award—overall credit hour requirements, minimum general education credit requirements, minimum field of study credit requirements.

Procedure: In assigning credit hours, Pine Technical College will utilize and adhere to the federal regulations as well as the information for calculating student contact hours outlined in the MSCF Contract:

“For purposes of calculating a ‘student contact hour’ one (1) lecture credit equals (1) weekly student contact hour and one (1) lab credit equals two (2) weekly student contact hour. Two weekly student contact hours in any lab is equal to one (1) lab credit.”

The number of semester hours of credit allowed for = on-the-job-training, internships, practica, clinical experiences shall be assigned by the college based on the amount of time needed to achieve the course objectives.

The number of semester hours of credit allowed for each distance education or blended hybrid courses shall be assigned by the college based on the amount of time needed to achieve the same course outcomes in a purely face-to-face format.

Responsibilities: AASC reviews and approves information as course and program proposals are submitted to the committee to ensure campus standards are met.

Dissemination: Each Division Chair will be responsible for disseminating the policy to Program Faculty in his/her division. Copies will be posted on the Pine Technical College website.

Reviewed by Campus Roundtable: July 2, 2012 and July 16, 2012

Reviewed by Faculty Shared Governance: September 5, 2012

Reviewed by Managers Meeting: (Insert name of person/group that did the review and the date)

Approved: September 5, 2012

Robert Musgrove, Ph.D., President **date**