

John Carroll University Credit-Hour Policy and Definitions

Revised Policy: 9 October 2013

Amended: 23 October 2013 - General Faculty Meeting

US Department of Education Policy

The United States Department of Education requires that each institution develops a written credit hour policy that conforms to the definition of a credit hour outlined in its Program Integrity Regulations.

Federal regulations define the 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 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
- 2.) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward the award of credit hours.

JCU Credit-Hour Definition

The semester credit hour is the official unit of instruction at John Carroll University. One semester credit hour is awarded for a minimum of one class hour of direct faculty instruction (the class hour is defined as 50 minutes) plus a minimum of two hours of out-of-class work each week delivered over a 15-week term. In addition to the consecutive weekly format, courses may also meet in a variety of compressed formats of varying length within the beginning and ending dates of a given semester or summer term.

The measure of instructional contact time may be adjusted for different formats of study or lengths of academic sessions. Such adjustments made by faculty still must reflect the intended student outcomes and established equivalencies of the credit hour set by John Carroll University and reasonably approximate the requirements established by the Department of Education Program Integrity Regulations.

Contact Hours for Undergraduate and Graduate Courses by Instructional Method

- a. **Classroom-based Courses** (e.g., lectures, seminars, and labs) – Must meet a minimum of 50 minutes per credit per week for 15 weeks. In addition, it is assumed that instructors will assign coursework outside of the classroom equal to 120 minutes per week for each academic credit (for a total of 170 minutes per credit hour per week).
- b. **Blended and Non-Classroom Based Courses** (e.g., hybrid or online courses) – Must include some form of instruction, and/or homework, and/or student activity that equals the minimum of 170 minutes per credit per week over the duration of the full 15 week semester.
- c. This 170-minute requirement also must be met for all **individualized methods of instruction**, such as research, independent studies, internships, and directed readings courses that confer academic credit.
- d. Regardless of the delivery method, courses that meet in a **compressed format** (i.e., fewer than 15 weeks) must require the same total time commitment as a 15 week course of equal credit.
- e. **Contact Hours Guidelines:**

1 credit – minimum of 50 minutes + 120 minutes of additional coursework per week for approximately 15 weeks (or equivalent for compressed format)

2 credits – minimum of 100 minutes + 240 minutes of additional coursework per week for approximately 15 weeks (or equivalent for compressed format)

3 credits – minimum of 150 minutes per week + 360 minutes of additional coursework per week for approximately 15 weeks (or equivalent for compressed format)

4 credits – minimum of 200 minutes per week + 480 minutes of additional coursework per week for approximately 15 weeks (or equivalent for compressed format)