FEDERAL CREDIT HOUR POLICY

Credit hour: A credit hour is a unit of measure that gives value to the level of instruction, academic rigor and time requirement for a course taken at an educational institution. At its most basic, a credit hour is a proxy measure of a unit of student learning. The definition of a credit hour will establish a basis for measuring eligibility for federal funding. Alternative methods of measuring student learning may be utilized as long as they result in institutional equivalencies that reasonably approximate the definition of a credit hour for federal purposes.

Concordia complies with the 2011 federal definition of the credit hour as stated in 75 FR 66832 Regulation 600.2, Program Integrity Issues:

Federal Credit Hour Definition: *A credit hour is 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 15 weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10-12 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 activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours. (Higher Learning Commission, 2011)

The above federal definition includes several important components that Concordia has further defined below:

1. An hour of instruction:
    a. One credit hour of instruction is 50-60 minutes of scheduled academic engagement.
    b. The number of weekly hours of instruction is defined by the number of credit hours for the course.
    c. For each hour of faculty-directed instruction, there should be a minimum of two hours of additional student academic work each week.
2. A week of instruction:
   A week of instruction must contain at least one day of scheduled academic engagement.
3. A semester of instruction:
   A semester of instruction contains approximately 15 weeks of instruction or equivalent academic engagement.
4. Equivalent academic engagement:
    a. Equivalent academic engagement may be substituted for scheduled classroom instruction when appropriate and as long as the learning outcomes and/or requirement for number of hours and weeks of instruction are met.
    b. Equivalent academic engagement may include laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, independent study, music lessons, and other academic work that leads to the awarding of credit hours and meets the federal and institutional requirements.
5. Alternate delivery formats: Classes that do not have the required face-to-face contact time (for example, asynchronous or hybrid courses) meet the credit hour standard by accomplishing one of the following criteria:
    a. The course meets the same learning outcomes as a face-to-face version of the same course and has been reviewed by the department/program.
    b. The course has been evaluated by the department/program and curricular committees, and the department/program and committees have approved the credit to be awarded. Approval must be documented.