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* POLICY NAME:	CREDIT HOURS POLICY
* POLICY TYPE:	Presidential Policy – University Academic Policy
POLICY #:	D.5.3.
* STATUS:	Active
*CONTACT OFFICE:	Academic Affairs/Office of the Provost
*OVERSIGHT EXECUTIVE:	Provost
*APPLIES TO:	This policy governs all credit hours granted by the University of Mary Washington (UMW) and applies to all students, faculty, administrators, and staff.
*PURPOSE:	The purpose of this policy is to detail the credit hour policy at the University of Mary Washington.
DEFINITIONS:	<p><i>Credit hour:</i> 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 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/outlined in item 1 above 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. <p><i>Contact hour:</i> An amount of scheduled time spent in the classroom or under direct faculty instruction equal to 50 minutes.</p> <p>These definitions are from the standards articulated in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 34 CFR § 600.2.</p>
*POLICY STATEMENT:	<p>For a semester length course, the UMW credit hour standard is one credit hour per one contact hour (50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty instruction over 14 weeks (excluding the final examination week). For laboratories, the standard is one credit hour for two hours of class student work (100 minutes) for 14-week semesters (excluding the final exam week). In abbreviated terms and nontraditional courses, an equivalent amount of time and work is required. Credit hour determinations at the University of Mary Washington shall be made by the faculty consistent with common practices in higher education, guidelines of professional bodies and accrediting agencies and federal standards. Faculty within the appropriate discipline determine the amount and level of credit awarded for courses as part of curricular and program development, planning, revision, and course approval processes.</p> <p>This policy applies to all credit hours awarded by the University and compliance is mandatory.</p>

PROCEDURES:	
<p>* General Procedures for Implementation:</p>	<p>Procedures for Credit Hour Determination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Week Semester Courses – Courses offered during the 14-week fall and spring semester must generally have 14 contact hours per credit hour. A three-hour course requires 42 contact hours (or 2,100 total minutes) and is generally delivered over 14 weeks at 150 minutes per week (not including examination week). For each hour spent in class, students are generally expected to have two hours of outside of class responsibility (homework, assigned projects, class preparation, writing assignments, etc.); this standard is consistent with the credit hour definitions found in 34 CFR §600.2. The syllabus, required of all courses by the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> (5.6.4), must contain a “course calendar” which constitutes primary documentation that the course meets the contact hour requirement. • Abbreviated/Accelerated Term Courses - Courses offered during abbreviated terms (eight-week terms, summer sessions, etc.) must generally be equivalent to those found in semester-long courses and the course work must be suitable to the compressed schedule required of an abbreviated/accelerated term. Prior to appearing on the “Course Schedule,” courses are individually evaluated at the departmental level by program coordinators/department chairs, at the college level by the dean, and at the university level by the registrar. The syllabus, required of all courses by the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> (5.6.4), must contain a “course calendar” which constitutes primary documentation that the course meets the contact hour requirement. • Laboratory classes – Labs attached to courses at the University adhere to the standard practice in higher education of using the equivalency of two hours (100 minutes) of laboratory time as the minimum to equal to one contact hour. In laboratory classes, the expectation is that for each hour of time in lab, there is typically one hour in outside of class responsibility. The syllabus, required of all courses by the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> (5.6.4), must contain a “course calendar” which constitutes primary documentation that the laboratory meets the contact hour requirement. • Internships - For undergraduate internship courses (classes numbered 499), credit is awarded according to work assignment and time commitment consistent with an equivalent amount of work for the credit hour standard applied to courses. The minimum number of worksite contact hours required for each internship credit hour is 14 (42 hours for the 14-week semester for a three-credit internship). This is the same standard that is applied to courses. For internships offered during abbreviated terms, and for graduate-level internships or externships, both the faculty sponsor and the department chair evaluate the proposed project and assign credit in accordance with standards for semester-long internships. In all cases, the number of credit hours earned for a particular internship is determined by the “Faculty Sponsor” in accordance with University credit hour policies and are documented on the “Academic Internship Contract.” Once credit hours are assessed by the faculty sponsor, they are to be agreed

to by the student, the faculty sponsor, the department, and the designated representative of the Office of the Provost prior to registration. The “Academic Internship Contract” constitutes primary documentation that the internship has been deemed to meet the contact hour requirement.

- **Individual/Independent Study and Undergraduate Research** - In each case (whether fixed or variable credit), credit hours are awarded to reflect the amount and complexity of the academic work to be done consistent with an equivalent amount of work for the credit hour standard applied to courses. For individual research courses, such as any course numbered 491/492, the faculty member sponsoring the study and the department offering the course credit review an independent study application and judge that the amount of work required by the independent research project is consistent with the credit hour expectations associated with traditional format courses. In URES 197 courses, for example, in which students contribute to the faculty member’s research, the minimum is three hours of work per week per credit hour (42 hours for one credit hour over the course of a semester, with an equivalent expectation for courses offered in an abbreviated term). In all cases, credit hours are to be assessed by the faculty sponsor and approved by the department prior to registration. The application form with proper signatures constitutes primary documentation that the individual study/research course has been deemed to meet the contact hour requirement.

- **Distance and Blended Learning Courses** - For courses with an alternative delivery format such as blended or online instruction, credit hours assigned are equal to those for the same course when taught in a traditional format. Academic departments are expected to periodically examine courses taught via multiple delivery methods to ensure their comparability with traditional format courses. For online and hybrid courses, course instructional time includes direct faculty/student course contact either in physical and/or virtual teaching space. Examples of virtual teaching contact activities include but are not limited to:
 - a. Student content creation via website, blog, wiki, or other presentation system
 - b. Communication via threaded discussion board, email, chat, texting, or other social networking system
 - c. Synchronous web-conferencing
 - d. Interaction in online simulations, games, virtual environments, or other interactive experience.

The syllabus, required of all courses by the *Faculty Handbook* (5.6.4), must contain a “course calendar” which constitutes primary documentation that the course meets the contact hour requirement.

- **Student Teaching** – Student teaching credits vary across programs depending on the requirements of the specific program that are embedded in the student teaching experience. All programs require the minimum number of contact hours stipulated by the Virginia

	<p>Department of Education for <i>Responsible Actual Teaching Time</i>—150 clock hours, and <i>Total Time Required for Student Teaching</i>—300 clock hours. The minimum number of credits for Student Teaching is six in the M.Ed. programs to a maximum of 12 credit hours in the MS in Elementary Education Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practica – Practica are courses in a specialized area of study designed to give students practical experiences in specialized courses of study. Practica have been approved by the faculty as courses consistent with the credit hour requirements of a course and appear in the University’s academic catalogs. The syllabus, required of all courses by the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> (5.6.4), must contain a “course calendar,” which constitutes primary documentation that the course meets the contact hour requirement. In cases where a normal “course calendar” is not appropriate for the individual practicum, there should be a clear statement of the expectations of time and work required which are consistent with the credit hour standard identified in this policy. <p>Field Experience/Study Abroad - In each case (whether fixed or variable credit), credit hours are awarded to reflect the amount and complexity of the academic work to be done consistent with an equivalent amount of work for the credit hour standard applied to courses. Non-lecture instructional contact hours (e.g. field experience or study abroad excursion) are counted toward the required number of instructional contact hours using a 2:1 ratio (2 hours of field experience time equals one instructional contact hour). Travel time is not counted toward the required number of instructional contact hours. In all cases, credit hours are to be assessed by the faculty sponsor and the Provost’s designee. The syllabus and a detailed itinerary constitute primary documentation that the field experience/study abroad meets the contact hour requirement.</p>
<p>* Process for Developing, Approving, and Amending Procedures:</p>	<p>The University Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC) of the University Faculty Council (UFC) is responsible for developing, approving, and amending these procedures in accordance with the provisions of the University Faculty Handbook. Subsequent revisions shall originate with the UAAC and be approved by the UFC.</p>
<p>* Publication and Communication:</p>	<p>This policy shall be published in the digital repository of University policies.</p> <p>The Office of the Provost is responsible for ensuring that this information is distributed to academic departments as part of the scheduling instructions provided by the college deans and the Office of the Registrar.</p>
<p>* Compliance Monitoring and Reporting:</p>	<p>Compliance with this policy is monitored by the Office of the Provost, which has supervisory authority over the colleges and the Office of the Registrar, through an annual audit of credit hours granted by the institution. Deficiencies shall be reported to the appropriate college or university official for remediation.</p>
<p>RELATED INFORMATION:</p>	
<p>Policy Background:</p>	

* Policy Category:	Academic Affairs
Category Cross Reference:	I.2. Federal Policies
Related Policies:	
HISTORY:	
* Origination Date:	December 2010, Originated from the Office of the Provost
* Approved by:	University Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC) and the University Faculty Council (UFC)
* Approval Date:	October 21, 2011 (UAAC) and December 6, 2011 (UFC)
* Effective Date:	January 1, 2012
* Review Process:	The credit hour policy is reviewed as needed by the UAAC concomitant with changes in common practices in higher education, guidelines of professional bodies and accrediting agencies, and federal standards.
* Next Scheduled Review:	September 3, 2015
Revision History:	Rev. 1 – Originally drafted by the Office of the Provost, this policy was considered and approved by the University Academic Affairs Committee to satisfy the expectations of the University’s “Policy on Policies” and the federal credit hour requirements contained in 34 CFR § 600.2 (2011).