

Adopted: March 25, 2021

**ACADEMIC SENATE
Of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-922-21

RESOLUTION ON HOW CREDIT HOUR POLICY ADHERENCE IS ASSESSED AND ASSURED

Impact on Existing Policyⁱ:

- (1) This resolution does not change existing credit hour policy, but does formalize and routinize program-, college-, and university-level policies and processes that communicate and ensure the application of credit hour policy as specified by the federal government, WSCUC, and CSU.**
- (2) This resolution cites AS-838-17 “Resolution on Review of Courses with Condensed Time Schedules” and AS-896-20 “Resolution on Online Teaching and Learning” but does not supersede or rescind them.**

1 WHEREAS, the California State University uses the equivalent of the Carnegie Unit
2 for measuring and awarding academic credit that represents student
3 work and achievement and that is also consistent with requirements of
4 our accreditor, the WASC Senior College and University Commission
5 (WSCUC); and
6

7 WHEREAS, Cal Poly will host a WSCUC Accreditation site visit in April 2022; and
8

9 WHEREAS, WSCUC’s Credit Hour Policy (revised November 2020) states that peer
10 review teams will now examine documentation on
11 “1. The adoption of a policy on credit hour for all courses and programs
12 at the institution.
13 2. The processes the institution employs to review periodically the
14 application of its policy on credit hour across the institution to assure
15 that credit hour assignments are accurate, reliable, and consistently
16 applied;” and
17

18 WHEREAS, a CSU Chancellor’s Office memo of December 2020 states that
19 “For purposes of accreditation, all CSU campuses are required to
20 develop, communicate and implement procedures for regular, periodic
21 review of this credit hour policy to ensure that credit hour assignments
22 are accurate, reliable and consistently applied;” and

23
24 WHEREAS, this same CSU memo continues, "Campuses will be responsible
25 (effective summer 2021) for publishing a clearly stated practice or
26 process that ensures they are in compliance with the student credit
27 hour definition;" and
28
29 WHEREAS, AS-838-17 "Resolution on Review of Courses with Condensed Time
30 Schedules" helps explicate and apply credit hour policy to courses
31 offered outside of the conventional ten-week quarter format; and
32
33 WHEREAS, AS-896-20 "Resolution on Online Teaching and Learning" helps to
34 clarify how credit hour equivalents can be calculated for all modes of
35 face-to-face and online course delivery; and
36
37 WHEREAS, the curricular review process as supervised by the faculty and the
38 course scheduling process as instituted quarterly by the Office of the
39 Registrar both provide a rigorous assurance of the credit hour policy;
40 therefore be it
41
42 RESOLVED: Cal Poly updates and unifies its credit hour policy as per the attached
43 "Statement on Credit Hour Policy Assessment and Assurance
44 (proposed May 2021)."

Proposed by: Office of Academic Programs and Planning,
Academic Senate Curriculum Committee
Date: May 11, 2021

ⁱ (1) Describe how this resolution impacts existing policy on educational matters that affect the faculty. Examples include curricula, academic personnel policies, and academic standards.
(2) Indicate if this resolution supersedes or rescinds current resolutions.
(3) If there is no impact on existing policy, please indicate NONE.

Statement on Credit Hour Policy Assessment and Assurance

Historically, the CSU has used the equivalent of the Carnegie Unit for measuring and awarding academic credit that represents student work and achievement. The credit hour measure has also been consistent with requirements of the accreditor, the WASC Senior College and University Commission.

Federal law requires all accredited institutions to comply with the federal definition of the credit hour. CSU policy is consistent with this federal definition, and states that:

[F]or all CSU degree programs and courses bearing academic credit, the “credit hour” is defined as “the 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.”

As in the past, a credit hour is assumed to be a 50-minute (not 60-minute) period.¹

Credit hours, classroom time, and minimum expectations for out-of-class work correspond to different course modes as follows:

Course Mode	Weekly hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction per unit	Weekly minimum hours of out-of-class student work per unit
Lecture/Seminar	1	2
Activity	2	1
Laboratory	3	0

¹ From CSU memo [AA 2011-14](#): “CSU Definition of Credit Hour” (revised October 2011), most of which is posted on the Academic Programs and Planning [“Definition of a Credit Hour”](#) page, in the Cal Poly Catalog in the [“About the Catalog”](#) section, and in Campus Administrative Policies 210.5 ([“Credit Hour Definition”](#)). The entire memorandum is also enclosed in Academic Senate Resolution AS-838-17 ([“Resolution on Review of Courses with Condensed Time Schedules”](#)).

Courses offered in shorter time frames (less than ten weeks) must provide the equivalent required number of classroom or contact hours.

The credit hour policy applies to all instructional modes and modalities, as well as to courses at the bachelor's and master's levels.

Review Processes. The application of this policy across the institution, to ensure that credit hour assignments are accurate, reliable, appropriate to the degree level, and conforming to commonly accepted practices in higher education, is assured by the following existing review processes:

- the New Course Proposal form, which, in order to “maintain accreditation standards and quality curricular control,” asks the proposer to specify the number of hours of face-to-face, direct synchronous, and/or asynchronous instruction, and the number of hours of out-of-class work;
- the curricular review process as supervised by the faculty, in which the approval of any course includes evaluations by the department, college, and Academic Senate curriculum committees of the course credit hours assigned;
- the course scheduling process as instituted quarterly by the Office of the Registrar, which specifically checks and confirms the correspondence between credit hour assignment and class meeting times.

Faculty are encouraged to acknowledge this policy in course syllabi so that students understand conventional expectations for work outside the classroom.

Departments are encouraged to design their own policies for the review of current courses and their adherence to credit hour policy.

Sources.

Academic Senate Resolution [AS-838-17](#): “Resolution on Review of Courses with Condensed Time Schedules.”

Academic Senate Resolution [AS-896-20](#): “Resolution on Online Teaching and Learning.”

California State University Coded Memorandum [AA 2011-14](#): “CSU Definition of Credit Hour” (revised October 2011).

California State University Office of the Chancellor, “Update to Federal Definition of the Student Credit Hour,” official memorandum (December 21, 2020).

WSCUC (WASC Senior College and University Commission), “[Credit Hour Policy](#)” (revised November 2020).



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Thomas Gutierrez
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: June 7, 2021

From: Jeffery D. Armstrong
President

Jeffery D. Armstrong

Copies: Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore
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Subject: Response to AS-922-21 Resolution on How Credit Hour Policy Adherence is Assessed and Assured

By way of this memo, I acknowledge and approve the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution. I thank all who were involved with this effort to promptly update and unify Cal Poly's credit hour policy in response to WSCUC policy and CSU direction. The collaboration between the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee and the office of Academic Programs and Planning is an exemplar of effective shared governance.

Please extend my thanks to the members of the Academic Senate for their attention to this important matter.