

# Standard Administrative Procedure

## 11.03.99.J0.01 Definition of a Credit Hour



Approved: September 16, 2025

Next Scheduled Review: September 16, 2025

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### Procedure Summary

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The University employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of the format or the mode of course delivery. A&M-Victoria assigns academic credit for courses based on the rules and policies of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). In keeping with *TAMU System Policy 11.03, Shortened Courses*, the University may also offer courses in a nontraditional way (over the internet or through a shortened, intensive format) that does not meet standard contact requirements if the course has been reviewed and approved through a formal institutional faculty review process that evaluates the course and its learning outcomes and determines whether the course does, in fact, have equivalent learning outcomes to an equivalent, traditionally delivered course. All online courses, summer courses or other shortened course formats shall contain sufficient content to meet THECB requirements for contact hours.

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### Definitions

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Standard Contact Hour – 50 minutes of instruction with a 10-minute break per course.

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### Procedure

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#### 1. CREDIT HOUR

1.1 *Federal Credit Hour Requirements, 34 CFR 600.2* - 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 reasonable approximates not less than:

- (a) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours 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
- (b) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) 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.

- 1.2 *THECB Rules and Regulations, Chapter 4.A, Item 4.6* – Requires that traditionally-delivered three semester credit hour courses should contain 15 weeks of instruction (45 contact hours) plus a week for final examinations so that such a course contains 45 to 48 contact hours depending on whether there is a final exam. Every college course is assumed to involve a significant amount of non-contact hour time for out-of-class student learning and reflection. To ensure the quality of student learning, institutions should not allow students to carry more courses in any term (that is, regular or shortened semester) that would allow them to earn more than one semester credit hour per week over the course of the term without special permission from their college dean or academic advisor. For example, in a five-and-a-half-week summer term, students should not generally be allowed to enroll for more than six semester credit hours.
- 1.3 Courses delivered in shortened semesters are expected to have the same number of contact hours and the same requirement for out-of-class learning as courses taught in a normal semester. Institutions may offer a course in a non-traditional way (for example, over the internet, or through a shortened, intensive format) that does not meet these contact hour requirements, if the course has been reviewed and approved through a formal, institutional faculty review process that evaluates the course and its learning outcomes and determines that the course does, in fact, have equivalent learning outcomes to an equivalent, traditionally delivered course.

## 2. MINIMUM COURSE LENGTH REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 All UHV courses shall comply with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board policies and Texas A&M System Policies regarding course length.
- 2.2 The “typical” three-semester credit hour course contains at least 15 weeks of instruction (45 contact hours) plus a week for final examinations so that the course contains at least 45-48 contact hours, depending on whether a final exam is included in course requirements. Summer courses or other shortened course formats must still meet the contact hour requirements. The final exam schedule is posted in the Academic Calendar maintained by the Office of the Registrar and Student Records. Online courses are expected to contain sufficient content to meet these requirements for contact hours. Instructors are required to be available when classes start and to have regularly scheduled course meetings through finals week. Departures from this schedule shall be approved in advance by the dean.
- 2.3 All A&M-Victoria courses must comply with this policy. Deans are responsible for ensuring compliance during the scheduling process.

## 3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS

- 3.1 Unless noted otherwise, credit for courses for international students is treated in the same manner as for domestic students: Credit for courses at the University is measured in semester hours as defined above.

- 3.2 International students on F-1/J-1 visas must maintain a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters. Full-time for graduate students is a minimum of 9 semester hours and 12 semester hours for undergraduate students to comply with immigration requirements. In some programs, only 6 semester hours are offered per semester; in these cases, the student should seek the input of the International Programs Office.
- 3.3 Only one online course may count toward the full course of study requirement each semester. International students may qualify to register for additional online courses depending upon the academic program, please consult the International Programs Office for requirements.

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## **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

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[Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 1, Rule 4.6](#)

[System Regulation 11.03, \*Shortened Courses\*](#)

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## **Contact Office**

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