

## **Albright College School of Professional Studies Assignment of Credit Hours**

### **Policy Description**

All courses taken through Albright College's School of Professional Studies which are credit bearing and count towards the completion of a degree conform to the state of Pennsylvania and federal regulations pertaining to the assignment of credit hours regardless of format or mode delivery. These guidelines are in compliance with policies established by the federal government, state of Pennsylvania and in accordance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Albright College School of Professional Studies follows a semester system one fall and one spring semester.

### **Credit Hour Standards for School of Professional Studies**

All School of Professional Studies courses are established around the federal definition of credit hour (Title 34, §600.2), which says:

*"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 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."*

### **Semesters in School of Professional Studies**

The Albright College School of Professional Studies operates two standard semester terms in each academic year. The terms are traditional in nature of at least fifteen weeks in length per semester, where full-time students earn a minimum of 24 credits in an academic year.

All accelerated courses under the School of Professional Studies must comply with the defined contact time as defined below regardless of mode of the course.

#### *Federal Definition Guideline of Credit Hour*

For the typical three-unit class, a student spends three hours per week in class. The total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 15.

4 Unit Course 4 units x 15 weeks 60 instruction hours

3 Unit Course 3 units x 15 weeks 45 instruction hours

An SPS General Studies course is 4 credits. This requires 60 hours of instruction. If, for example, a 4-unit course meets 7 times for 4 hours, that totals 28 face-to-face hours, leaving 32 remaining instructional hours to be accounted for (60 – 28). Instructional hours are defined in course syllabi for General Studies courses in the School of Professional Studies.

An SPS Major course is 3 credits. This requires 45 hours of instruction. The face-to-face hours in

each course are generally 20 (more for some majors). In the example of 20 in-class hours, this leaves 25 instructional hours (45-20) to be accounted for in the course facilitator guides (or course syllabi).

### **Online Courses in School of Professional Studies**

In terms of instructional time and assignment of credits, online courses are defined as any other course would be. These courses have the same learning outcomes and components as a traditional or accelerated course. Instructional hours must be defined in the course syllabus to ensure compliance with Albright College Assignment of Credit Hours Policy.

### **Homework**

“Instructional hours” does not include homework, which must be counted separately. The federal definition for student homework expectations would be two hours of homework per week, per credit, across a fifteen-week semester.

### **Instructional Equivalency Charts**

Albright College maintains an Instructional Equivalency Chart, available for faculty to develop and maintain accelerated courses in compliance with the assignment of credit hours. The chart can be found at:

<http://faculty.albright.edu/edu/teach%20toolkit/supporting%20documents%20for%20download/instructional%20equivalencies%20chart%20carnegie%20units%20updated%209-22-15.pdf>

### **New Course Equivalency & Annual Review**

The Director of School of Professional Studies is responsible for the initial and annual review of courses within each discipline and in general studies to ensure credit hour compliance. SPS Academic Program Chairs are responsible for ensuring credit hour equivalency documents exist for each course under their area. Curriculum that is developed for an SPS major is locked, meaning a instructional facilitators guide is created to ensure consistency across faculty members teaching the course. All facilitator guides are required to have an instructional equivalency chart associated with the course to ensure credit hour compliance. This information is stored on a shared drive for all reviewers as well as accessible to all faculty in a Moodle administrative course.

### **Credit Hour Compliance Training**

A self-paced training on instructional equivalencies is available to all Albright College faculty members at: <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/xu9aw> . An Albright College faculty Lion Link username and password is required. This training is included as part of new faculty orientation in School of Professional Studies.