

# METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS



## CREDIT HOUR POLICY

### **Policy #2180**

#### **Section 1. PURPOSE**

The policy sets the standards for determining the assignment of credit hours to academic courses, however delivered, and to other academic experiences which are expected to be credit bearing.

#### **Section 2: AUTHORITY**

This policy is issued pursuant to authority granted under the Rules and Regulations of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU).

#### **Section 3. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy shall become effective upon signature by the President and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and shall remain in effect until modified or expressly revoked.

#### **Section 4. RESPONSIBILITY**

Responsibility for this policy is assigned to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

#### **Section 5: BACKGROUND**

This policy is required by the regulations of the U.S. Department of Education pursuant to TITLE IV of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act and by the regulations of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the accrediting body for Metropolitan State University. The University, as a participant in Title IV federal financial aid as an accredited institution, shall demonstrate that it has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded to courses and programs that are in keeping with commonly-accepted practices in higher education and with the federal definition of a credit hour.

## **Section 6: DEFINITONS OF LEARNING MODALITIES**

Traditional face-to-face: faculty and students meet for a defined period of time each week for the entire fifteen week semester.

Accelerated: courses with the normal number of seat time hours, but in a more compressed time than a traditional semester length. The course may be termed late start or early end.

Blended/Hybrid: courses defined as reduced seat time with an online component and with the same outcomes as the traditional face-to-face class.

Online: courses defined as completely presented in an online environment with the same outcomes as the traditional face-to-face class.

Internship: a for-credit, structured field experience in which a student acquires and applies knowledge and skills, while working in a responsible role within a community, business, or government and attaining specified learning outcomes.

Clinical courses: similar hours as a traditional course per credit with specific identified outcomes. Actual hours may be dictated by an accrediting agency.

Studio courses have defined outcomes and expected class attendance times throughout the fifteen week semester. Students engage in hands-on activities related to the discipline under study. Examples of studio classes include but are not limited to art, music and theater classes.

Lab classes have defined outcomes and expected attendance for lab activities throughout the fifteen week semester. Students engage in hands-on activities related to the discipline under study. These classes have an expectation of a minimum of one hour per week with hands-on lab activity. Examples of lab classes include but are not limited to biology, geosciences, chemistry, physics, and nursing classes.

Credit for prior learning: provide students with opportunities to demonstrate college-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings according to procedures and practices established for evaluating and granting undergraduate credit for such learning. Credits will be assigned after demonstration of the learning outcomes has been completed and documented in accordance with Policy #2150 & Procedure #215 (Prior Learning Assessment), and Minnesota State College and University System Policy 3.35 (Credit for Prior Learning Policy) and Procedure 3.35.1 (Credit for Prior Learning Procedure).

## **Section 6: POLICY**

Metropolitan State University shall assign and award credit hours in a reasonable and systematic way that shall conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

Under Federal law and regulation a credit hour is defined as:

*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 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. 34CFR 600.2*

Metropolitan State affirms that all grades for academic work are based on the quality of the work submitted to the faculty member who is the instructor for the course and not on the amount of time expended on the submitted work.

The definition of a credit hour is not meant to dictate that no more than three (3) hours a week of work will be required. Actual work time may vary depending on the characteristics of the students. Metropolitan State also understands that the nature of the specific courses and class activities may require more than three hours of work per week for each credit hour. Instructors should communicate their expectations for time to be expended on course activities to the students enrolled in the course.

Credit hours shall be assigned to online, distance and blended hybrid courses on the same basis as the credit hours assigned to the same course outcomes based on the amount of time needed to achieve those outcomes in a face-to-face format.

Internship credits are assessed in 40-hour increments: 3 credits = a minimum of 120 hours; 4 credits = a minimum of 160 hours (Metropolitan State University Policy #2040).

Studio: two hours of contact time per credit with the faculty member in class, and with additional time spent outside of the class to complete the projects/assignments

Clinical courses and practical credits shall be applied in accordance with the requirements of accrediting agencies governing these disciplines, applicable state law, and other relevant factors. Inter-Faculty Organization (IFO) curriculum committees, IFO Academic Affairs Committee, the Deans and the Provost are expected to review and approve information on course proposals to assure that the standards of this policy are met.

## **Section 7: Review**

This policy will be reviewed and modified as appropriate.

**Section 8: SIGNATURES**

Effective on the first day of January, 2014.

*Virginia Arthur*

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Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

*Sue K. Hammerstein*

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President