

## 10.7 Policies for awarding credit

The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.

**Compliance Judgment:** In Compliance

### Rationale

**Policies for Awarding Credit.** All educational programs at the University of South Carolina Aiken (USC Aiken) are based on credit hours; the institution does not have direct assessment programs. The credit value of each course is determined by the amount of formal instructional time per week for one 15-week long semester. At least 700 minutes of instruction (and at least twice that for laboratory time) is expected per credit hour. This policy, rooted in the Carnegie unit, is standard within the USC system in accordance with [system policy ACAF 2.03 – Creation and Revision of Academic Courses](#) <sup>[1]</sup> and is the norm at institutions that use the semester system throughout the United States.

Department and schools at the University of South Carolina Aiken employ course levels to provide direction to students in the sequencing of courses to be taken in keeping with the system policy. Lower courses at the 100 and 200 levels provide the foundation and prerequisite knowledge for more advanced classes and are often taken by freshman and sophomores. Survey types of courses and upper level undergraduate classes are typically presented at the 300 and 400 level for juniors and seniors. Advanced undergraduate and graduate entry level courses are presented at the 500-600 levels. Courses at the 700 level and above are for graduate students only.

Seminar courses, distance education courses, internet courses, internships, field classes, and other courses which do not share the traditional lecture/laboratory format

require the same number of contact or instructional hours required for traditional lecture/laboratory classes.

**Publication of Policies, Course Credit Hours, and Course Activities.** Policy ACAF 2.03 – Creation and Revision of Academic Courses is published on the [USC Policy and Procedures website](#).<sup>[2]</sup> Credit hours associated with each course is included with the course description published in the [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin](#).<sup>[3]</sup> Table 10.7-1 provides a representative sample of course syllabi showing a time-allocation framework of activities within each course for various course formats and delivery modes. The sample shows courses for each level, academic unit, format, and delivery mode. All course syllabi for the 2019-20 academic year are available as linked documents to the faculty rosters in the [narrative response to Standard 6.2.a – Faculty qualifications](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

**Table 10.7-1. Representative Course Syllabi Showing Activities for Credit Hours**

Course (links to syllabus)	Course Characteristics
<a href="#">IDST A598</a> <sup>[5]</sup>	An interdisciplinary, directed capstone internship or service learning course
<a href="#">COMM A201</a> <sup>[6]</sup>	A traditional lectured format, undergraduate communication course
<a href="#">ENGL A494</a> <sup>[7]</sup>	A variable credit, independent study contract for an undergraduate English course
<a href="#">PHIL A211</a> <sup>[8]</sup>	A traditional lectured format, undergraduate philosophy course
<a href="#">MUED A457</a> <sup>[9]</sup>	An online, 2 credit-hour, undergraduate music education course
<a href="#">SOCY A410</a> <sup>[10]</sup>	A 4 credit-hour, undergraduate, sociology, combined lecture - lab course
<a href="#">SPAN A102</a> <sup>[11]</sup>	An online 4 credit-hour, undergraduate, Spanish course
<a href="#">BIOL A121</a> <sup>[12]</sup>	A 4 credit-hour, introductory, Biology, combined lecture – lab course
<a href="#">GEOL A399</a> <sup>[13]</sup>	A 4 credit-hour independent biogeochemical research course with required lab time
<a href="#">CHEM A541L</a> <sup>[14]</sup>	A 1 credit-hour senior-level laboratory Chemistry course
<a href="#">PHYS A101</a> <sup>[15]</sup>	A 4 credit-hour, introductory, Physics, combined lecture-lab course
<a href="#">EXSC A401</a> <sup>[16]</sup>	A 3 credit-hour, hybrid, Exercise Science course
<a href="#">MATH A108</a> <sup>[17]</sup>	A 3 credit-hour, introductory, traditional lectured format Math course
<a href="#">PSYC A792</a> <sup>[18]</sup>	A variable credit, internship contract for a graduate Psychology course
<a href="#">MGMT A728</a> <sup>[19]</sup>	An online, 3 credit-hour, 7 week-long, graduate MBA course
<a href="#">BADM A225</a> <sup>[20]</sup>	An online, 3 credit-hour, undergraduate, Business Administration course
<a href="#">EDET A650</a> <sup>[21]</sup>	An online, 3 credit-hour, graduate level Educational Technology Internship course
<a href="#">EDUC A110</a> <sup>[22]</sup>	A 3 credit-hour, dual credit, remote site instruction, Education course
<a href="#">EDFN A321</a> <sup>[23]</sup>	A 3 credit-hour, undergraduate, tradition lectured, remote site, Education course
<a href="#">NURS A309</a> <sup>[24]</sup>	A 5 credit-hour, undergraduate, combined lecture-lab-clinical Nursing course

**Faculty Oversight of Course Credit Hour Determinations.** Faculty in the discipline use their judgment and consider the typical sequencing of courses within their area of expertise when designing courses. When a course is created, it is also identified by the proposing academic unit as either a fixed or a variable credit course. Courses may possibly be taken more than once until a specified maximum number of credits have been earned, as defined by the proposing academic unit and recorded with the course description in the Academic Bulletin.

After examined at the academic unit level, course proposals are vetted by the appropriate faculty governance body. Undergraduate course proposals are examined by the [Courses and Curricula Committee](#) <sup>[25]</sup> and graduate course proposals are examined by the [Graduate Advisory Council](#) <sup>[26]</sup> – both are standing committees of Faculty Assembly. As delineated in the [narrative response to Standard 10.4 – Academic governance](#) <sup>[27]</sup>, the committees consider, among other things, if the proposed credits of each course is justified by the course requirements. Additional scrutiny occurs for distance education, contract, special topic, non-standard session, independent study, and internship courses. System policy ACAF 2.03 details the definitions of the various course formats and modes of delivery.

Faculty at the academic unit level submit course proposals to the appropriate oversight committee using either a new course proposal form (e.g., [CRJU A290 new course proposal](#) <sup>[28]</sup>) or a course change proposal form (e.g., [PSYC A325 course change proposal](#) <sup>[29]</sup>). The forms indicate the activities and credits associated with the course. Representative minutes of deliberations and actions taken are presented from the [September 11, 2018 meeting](#) <sup>[30]</sup> and [November 19, 2018 meeting](#) <sup>[31]</sup> of the Courses and Curricula Committee. An [end-of-year report from the Courses and Curricula Committee](#) <sup>[32]</sup> shows all actions taken by the committee in the 2018-19 academic year. Representative minutes are also presented from the [November 18, 2016 meeting](#) <sup>[33]</sup> and the [February 21, 2017 meeting](#) <sup>[34]</sup> of the Graduate Advisory Council. The 2018-19 [end-of-year report from the Graduate Advisory Council](#) <sup>[35]</sup> showing actions taken by the committee is also provided.

## Supporting Documentation

1. [System Policy ACAF 2.03 – Creation and Revision of Academic Courses](#)
  2. [USC Policy and Procedures website](#)
  3. [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin](#)
  4. [Narrative response to Standard 6.2.a – Faculty qualifications](#)
  5. [Course Syllabus: IDST A598](#)
  6. [Course Syllabus: COMM A201](#)
  7. [Course Syllabus: ENGL A494](#)
  8. [Course Syllabus: PHIL A211](#)
  9. [Course Syllabus: MUED A457](#)
  10. [Course Syllabus: SOCY A410](#)
  11. [Course Syllabus: SPAN A102](#)
  12. [Course Syllabus: BIOL A121](#)
  13. [Course Syllabus: GEOL A399](#)
  14. [Course Syllabus: CHEM A541L](#)
  15. [Course Syllabus: PHYS A101](#)
  16. [Course Syllabus: EXSC A401](#)
  17. [Course Syllabus: MATH A108](#)
  18. [Course Syllabus: PSYC A792](#)
  19. [Course Syllabus: MGMT A728](#)
  20. [Course Syllabus: BADM A225](#)
  21. [Course Syllabus: EDET A650](#)
  22. [Course Syllabus: EDUC A110](#)
  23. [Course Syllabus: EDFN A321](#)
  24. [Course Syllabus: NURS A309](#)
  25. [Faculty Manual: Courses and Curricula Committee](#)
  26. [Faculty Manual: Graduate Advisory Council](#)
  27. [Narrative response to Standard 10.4 – Academic governance](#)
  28. [CRJU A290 new course proposal](#)
  29. [PSYC A325 course change proposal](#)
-

30. [Minutes of the Courses and Curricula Committee September 11, 2018 meeting](#)
31. [Minutes of the Courses and Curricula Committee November 19, 2018 meeting](#)
32. [2018-19 End-of-year Report from the Courses and Curricula Committee](#)
33. [Minutes of the Graduate Advisory Council November 18, 2016 meeting](#)
34. [Minutes of the Graduate Advisory Council February 21, 2017 meeting](#)
35. [2018-19 End-of-year Report from the Graduate Advisory Council](#)