

POLICY

Ocean County College abides by the Federal and New Jersey State definitions of a credit hour and adopts a policy consistent with the Carnegie Unit. A one-credit class represents 150 minutes of academic work per week (e.g., one 50-minute class meeting plus 100 minutes of student preparation). For a 15-week term, this is equivalent to 37.5 hours. The standard OCC term is 15 weeks.

The US Department of Education requires that post-secondary institutions develop written policies regarding assignment of credit hours that conform to the definition in the Federal Register. The federal definition for a credit hour, which is consistent with the Carnegie Unit, is:

“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; 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.” (CFR 600.2)

The New Jersey Administrative Code defines term credit hour as:

“50 minutes of face-to-face class activity each week for 15 weeks (or the equivalent attained by scheduling more minutes of face-to-face class activity per week for fewer weeks in the semester) in one semester complemented by at least 100 minutes each week of laboratory or outside assignments (or the equivalent thereof for semesters of different length).” (A:1-1.2)

This policy applies to all types of courses and all delivery formats, as outlined below:

Lecture

One credit hour for a lecture (LEC) course represents 50 minutes per week of scheduled class time and a minimum of 100 minutes per week of student preparation time for a regular (15-week) term. For instance, a three-credit class represents 37.5 hours of in-class time and 75 hours of preparation time, or 112.5 hours total.

Lab and Studio

One credit hour for a lab (LAB) or studio course represents a minimum of 100 minutes per week of class time, either individual or supervised.

Practicum (includes Clinical, Field Experience, Internship, Performance)

One credit hour for a Clinical (CLN), Field Experience, Internship, Performance, represents a minimum of 150 minutes per week of supervised and/or independent practice.

Delivery Formats

The above definitions refer to face-to-face courses. The total amount of academic work per credit hour for online or blended formats remains the same. Academic work is comprised of, as appropriate, class meeting time, synchronous online course activities, asynchronous online course activities, and student preparation.

Non-Standard Length Semesters

The total amount of academic work per term for courses offered for fewer or more than 15 weeks is adjusted accordingly to achieve the total 37.5 hours of academic work per term.

The below chart is included for clarification (ratios come from the Middle States administrative code)

Mode of Instruction	Term Hours Per Week*	Minutes Per Week*	Minutes Per Term
Lecture (Credit Ratio 1:1)			
1 credit	1	50	750
2 credit	2	100	1,500
3 credit	3	150	2,250
Lab (Credit Ratio 2:1)			
1 credit	2-3	100-150	1,500-2,250
2 credit	4	200	3,000
Practicum/Clinical (Credit Ratio 3:1)			
1 credit	3	150	2,250
2 credit	6	300	4,500
3 credit	9	450	6,750

* Based on Standard 15 Week Term

"Specialized Associate in Applied Science Programs may use a different practicum credit-to-contact hour ratio to align with programmatic accreditation requirements. For specific calculations, refer to the relevant Program Student Handbook and Policy Manual."

Adopted: May 28, 2013

Revised: May 28, 2020

Revised: April 24, 2025