

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. (Practices for awarding credit)

Off-site Committee's Response

Texas College does not appear to be in compliance because: 1) the assumption that contact hour and credit hour are the same thing permeates; 2) the documentation of process of awarding credit does not include information used to evaluate credit (materials such as syllabi, course descriptions or proposals, etc.); and 3) the example provided to illustrate the process appears to concern developmental courses that are not college-level and therefore have little relevance to what this standard is about.

Texas College states its policy on credit hours, but that policy concerns contact hours only. The stated policy includes no reference to student work outside of class, or what criteria are used to determine level of credit. Consequently, the explanation of process provided no evidence related to these aspects of the evaluation of credit. Defining credit hours in terms of contact hours is particularly problematic when applied to the online courses the institution offers (listed among Faculty Load documents provided in CR 2.8).

A decision-making process was outlined: first step is a "narrative submission" from a department or program, submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Council. The criteria for this body's review are listed ("program offerings, mission relatedness, and program appropriateness"), but how these criteria specifically relate to the amount and level of credit is not explained. If approved, it is vetted again by the Administrative Cabinet. Documents demonstrating some aspects of the practical application were provided (one set of minutes of the Lower College, a body not identified, and the minutes of the Administrative Cabinet). However, Texas College provided no example of the "narrative submission" which was supposed to provide a "justification of a change consisting of the scope, depth, and breadth of a course(s)." One expects that such a document would include descriptions of course elements, such as requirements, assignments, level of intellectual challenge, learning outcomes, and/or a course syllabus. The minutes of the Lower College gave little concrete information about the courses, for instance, course numbers were not included. Without documents about the courses themselves, the Off-site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to make a determination about the nature of the review undertaken in making decisions about credit.

The examples presented in the Compliance Certification Report were for a contact hour change for the Reading, Writing, and Mathematics developmental courses. Though the course numbers were not included, it seems these examples were those listed on p. 41 of the Catalog, a series of courses that are not college-level courses. If this is the case, these developmental courses would not be appropriate

examples to demonstrate the award of credit. From the minutes of the Administrative Cabinet it appears that teaching load and student load were the only criteria used to decision about amount of credit.

Institution's Response

The Off-site Committee established that it could not make a decision that the institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery.

Pursuant to the response by the Committee, the institution is confirming that it has and uses codified practices that are sound and acceptable to higher education standards in determining the levels and credit amounts awarded (regardless of the mode of delivery). For determining credit, the institution has adopted the *Carnegie Unit* method of calculation. Accordingly, a "*credit hour*" as a unit measure is based on the number of classroom hours per week throughout a term. A semester unit of credit is equal to a minimum of three hours of work per week for a 16 week period. Within this timeframe, a unit may include: 1 hour lecture plus 2 hours of homework/out of class study, or 3 hours of lab for 16 weeks.

Further, Texas College *Texas College* defines one unit as one hour of lecture class time and two hours per week is expected for homework. With this calculation, for a three-unit class, a student spends three hours per week in class and six hours of homework/out of class study is expected. In keeping with the Carnegie method, the total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16. The aforementioned measure of calculation (although not the same) is parallel in function to the rules applied to the public institutions of higher education in Texas (per, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter A: Rule 4.6)

Units for *internships* will be awarded in keeping with the formula for the lecture class. This purports that a students will spend the minimum number of hours per week with the internship that coincides with the seat-time for the lecture. Hours for homework are not considered. In keeping with the Carnegie method, the total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16. And, as it pertains to laboratory classes, the hours per week are considered to be all in class with no outside assignments. Thus, one unit is three hours per week of laboratory time.

Documentation:

- Board Minutes approving the *Carnegie Unit Method*
- Texas Administrative Code

Board Minutes approving the *Carnegie*
Unit Method

**Board of Trustees
Teleconference Meeting
Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees
August 11, 2015
4:00 p.m.**

Executive Committee Members Present:

Board Chairman Lawrence L. Reddick
Trustee Jessie Jones, Chair, Student Affairs Committee
Trustee Tyrone Davis, Chair, Finance and Audit Committee
Trustee Leon McCowan, Chair, Investment Committee
Trustee Patricia McKenzie, Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

Executive Committee Members Absent:

Trustee Bobby Best, Chair, Institutional Advancement Committee (Annual Conference)
Trustee Donald Matlock, Chair, Buildings and Grounds Committee (Doctor's appointment)
Trustee Jerry Christian, Trusteeship Committee (Submitted Proxy to Bishop Reddick)

Staff Members Present:

President Dwight Fennell
Dr. Cynthia Marshall-Biggins, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. James Harris, Vice President for Business and Finance

The meeting began with comments from Chairman Reddick sharing appreciation for all individuals participating on the call. He then asked Trustee McCowan to give the prayer. Following prayer, Chairman Reddick asked for the roll call; it was determined that there was a quorum of the Executive Committee.

Chairman Reddick asked President Fennell whether there were any remarks to be made. President Fennell made brief remarks and gave an overview of the College's readiness for SACSCOC. It was shared that the Focus Report would be submitted to the On-Site Committee Chair by Aug 24th. It was also shared that a couple of policy matters needed to be addressed prior to submission of the report.

Trustee Davis provided comments and information on behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee for the College Audits that had been received from the auditors. It was shared that the Committee agreed that the audit was in good order; the financials were in a stronger position than in previous years; the State Audit had no current findings or any prior findings; the Federal Audit had no current findings and prior findings were cleared with exception of one minor item with an immaterial dollar amount; and the Memorandum of Understanding had fewer items than in prior years. Discussion was had.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Davis for the Executive Committee to receive and approve the audit. The motion was seconded by Trustee McCowan. There was a call for the question by Chairman Reddick. The motion was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee to receive and accept the audit.

Trustee McKenzie provided comments and information from the Academic Affairs Committee regarding the Academic Affairs policy recommendation to accept the Carnegie Units as the method for determining credit hours. Discussion was had.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee McKenzie for the Executive Committee to receive and accept the Carnegie Units as the method for determining credit hours. The motion was seconded by Trustee Jones. There was a call for the question by Chairman Reddick. The motion was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee to receive and accept the Carnegie Units as the method for determining credit hours. The policy becomes effective immediately.

Trustees Davis provided additional comments on behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee. He shared recommendations to receive as policy a Texas College Work-Study Handbook and Financial Aid Handbook Guide for Students and Parents. Discussion was had and it was determined that a vote would be had seriatim.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Davis to accept and approve the Texas College Work-Study Handbook. The motion was seconded by Trustee McKenzie. There was a call for the question by Chairman Reddick. The motion was unanimously accepted and approved.

A second motion was made by Trustee Davis to accept and approve the Financial Aid Handbook Guide for Students and Parents. The motion was seconded by Trustee McCowan. There was a call for the question by Chairman Reddick. The motion was unanimously accepted and approved.

Chairman Reddick then stated that all items listed on the agenda had been approved. He then asked whether there were any other items that needed to be addressed. There were no other items. He then thanked President Fennell, the staff and administration and the Executive Committee Members.

Closing prayer was given by Trustee McKenzie.

The meeting was adjourned.



*2404 North Grand Avenue
Tyler, Texas 75702*

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

TO:	Board of Trustees	DATE:	August 11, 2015
FROM:	Academic Affairs	CATEGORY:	Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Proposed Policy: Texas College Policy and Procedure for Determining Credit Hours Awarded for Courses and Programs

REASON FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

BACKGROUND:

Policy recommendation for determining award of credit hours.

RECOMMENDATION:

The administration of Texas College proposes the Carnegie Unit formula for determining the award of credit hours for courses/programs offered by the College. The formula will also apply for internships provided by the College, i.e. the minimum number of hours per week for the internship will coincide with the seat time for the lecture. Hours for homework are not considered and the total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16. **See recommended policy attached.**

INITIATOR: Office of Academic Affairs

BOARD ACTION DATE: August 11, 2015

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 11, 2015

**Recommended Texas College Policy and Procedure
for
Determining Credit Hours Awarded for Courses and Programs**

Using the Carnegie unit as a definitional method, Texas College recognizes:

A "*credit hour*" as a unit of measuring educational credit, based on the number of classroom hours per week throughout a term. More specifically, a semester unit of credit is equal to a minimum of three hours of work per week for a 16 week period. Within this timeframe, a unit may include: 1 hour lecture plus 2 hours of homework/out of class study, or 3 hours of lab for 16 weeks.

Lecture Classes

Texas College defines one unit as one hour of lecture class time and two hours per week is expected for homework. With this calculation, for a three-unit class, a student spends three hours per week in class and six hours of homework/out of class study is expected. In keeping with the Carnegie method, the total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16.

Internships

Units for the *internship* will be awarded in keeping with the formula for the lecture class. This purports that students will spend the minimum number of hours per week with the internship that coincides with the seat-time for the lecture. Hours for homework are not considered. In keeping with the Carnegie method, the total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16.

Laboratory Classes

For a laboratory classes, the hours per week are considered to be all in class with no outside assignments. Thus, one unit is three hours per week of laboratory time.

Out of Class Work

In keeping with the example given by the Committee, the Carnegie method would equate to the amount of work out-of-class being equivalent to, or not less than, one hour of classroom work or direct faculty instruction, and/or a minimum of two hours of class work each week for approximately sixteen weeks.

Texas Administrative Code

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Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19**EDUCATION****PART 1****TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD****CHAPTER 4****RULES APPLYING TO ALL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION IN TEXAS****SUBCHAPTER A****GENERAL PROVISIONS****RULE §4.6****Minimum Length of Courses and Limitation on the Amount of Credit
that a Student May Earn in a Given Time Period**

(a) 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.

(b) 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), which would allow them to earn more than one semester credit hour per week over the course of the term. 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.

(c) Institutions should have a formal written policy for addressing any exceptions to subsection (b) of this section.

(d) 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.

(e) 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.

Source Note: The provisions of this §4.6 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4107

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1. The opportunity to enroll in advanced level courses in the area of proficiency.
2. The opportunity of satisfying various college or departmental "area" of or proficiency requirements without taking prescribed courses.

Proficiency or exemption examinations for many courses are available to any student currently enrolled in a degree program at the HSC. A student may be eligible to earn credit for a course at by passing the examination designated and administered by an academic department. Not all departments offer credit by examination, and departments set the passing scores. Students should consult with their Dean's Office or academic department for more information.

Credit by examination is reported to the Office of the Registrar by the academic department upon request from the student using the Credit by Exam Form. The Office of the Registrar will post the credit earned by examination on the student's official transcript upon confirmation of payment for the credit to be awarded. Credits earned by examination are not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average.

CREDIT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning allows students to receive college/university credit for equivalent educational experiences acquired through earlier schooling situations, work/on-the-job training or life experiences. Upon approval of the appropriate department chair and/or director, a student may develop a petition for a course or courses offered by the HSC to gain college-level credit. Petitions are reviewed by the appropriate department chair and/or director and submitted to the Dean's Office for approval. A petition for semester credit for experiential learning is a document that demonstrates learning and knowledge gained through work and life experiences. The petition must specifically state the skills and knowledge gained that is equivalent to those taught in the course(s). The petition can include knowledge and skills gained from a wide variety of sources including, but not limited to: Full or part-time jobs, independent reading and study, training program or in-service courses, volunteer work, cultural and artistic pursuits, military service and travel study.

The approval process for awarding semester credit for experiential learning will include the following steps in addition to the General Rules and Regulations for Credit Awards:

1. The student submits the *Credit by Exam Form* along with a formal written petition for credit for experiential learning and supporting documentation to the department. Based on the documentation and evaluation of the credentials, experience and skills listed on the petition for semester credit for experiential learning, the department chair/director may:
 - a. Recommend approval of equivalent SCH course credit to the Dean's Office or
 - b. Close the request with no recommendation for approval.

The department chair/director will notify the student promptly when the request for SCH equivalent course credit is closed with no recommendation for approval. If approved, the department chair/director forwards the Credit by Exam Form and documentation to the Dean's Office.

2. The Dean's Office may:
 - a. Recommend approval of equivalent SCH course credit to the Office of the Registrar or
 - b. Close the request with no recommendation for approval.

The Dean's Office will notify the student promptly when the request for SCH equivalent course credit is closed with no recommendation for approval. If approved, the Credit Award form and supporting documentation is forwarded to the Office of the Registrar.

3. The Office of the Registrar receives the recommendation form with related documentation for processing.