

To: Committee on Academic Priorities

From: Gretchen Herringer, Registrar

Date: November 14, 2017

Re: Statement of credit hour and academically engaged time requirements

Credit Hours and Academically Engaged Time

Smith College's academic calendar consists of two 14-week semesters, each comprising 13 weeks of class instruction, a period of study days, and 4 days of final exams. A three-week January interterm comprises 14 days of instruction.

Smith complies with federal regulations defining a credit hour. (See federal definition below.) Normally, a four-credit Smith course involves 12 hours per week of academically engaged time over the course of the semester. Academically engaged time is generally three class or contact hours per week plus nine additional hours of work for the course per week for the semester (e.g., out-of-class assignments, reading, writing, and other academic activities). For courses carrying more or fewer than four credits, the Smith College expectation is three hours per week of academically engaged time per credit over the course of the semester. Courses meeting less than the full semester (e.g., interterm or half of semester) must meet the full, required in- and out-of-class hours for their credit value, compressed into the shorter term length. [Code of Faculty Legislation, 61.c. & d.]

The overall time expectations for each credit hour awarded for laboratory, studio, or performance courses are the same as for lecture/colloquium/seminar courses; however, the proportion of time spent in class versus outside of class may vary. For a laboratory section, the academically engaged hours per week are considered to be primarily in class with less out-of-class work expected. Normally, three hours per week of laboratory time is required for one credit. (This may be either a "free-standing" credit or a fifth credit when combined with the lecture.) Laboratories with fewer in-class hours must be supplemented by higher levels of out-of-class work. Studio/performance courses typically require two hours of in-class time for each one hour of out-of-class time per week, per credit hour.

Although special studies/independent research typically involve less formal instructional time, students must meet with the instructor on a regular and substantive basis throughout the semester. The credit weight assigned to the special studies/independent research course must be equivalent to the standard of 3 hours combined direct instruction and student work per week, per credit hour, for the 14-week semester. Half-semester courses are normally offered in the first seven or last seven weeks of the semester. Second-half-of-semester courses must include a final exam or equivalent during the final exam period (14th week), but may not schedule meetings or exams during the pre-examination period (reading days). Partial-semester courses meeting outside these designated parts of term require approval from the CAP curriculum subcommittee and/or associate dean of the faculty, and are responsible for meeting requirements for in-class (instructional) and out-of-class hours.

Additional information on course time commitment is provided below. The academically engaged time requirements listed below represent the **minimum** required to meet the college standard. For purposes of this standard, fifty (50) minutes counts as one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction.

This information should be used by departments and programs for curriculum/syllabus development and course scheduling. Courses deviating significantly from these requirements require special approval from the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP).

Full-Semester (14-Week) Course Credit-Hour Chart: Lectures, Colloquia, Seminars, Etc.

See note above regarding laboratory and performance/studio requirements.

Course Credits	In-Class Hours/Week	<i>In-Class Minutes/Week</i>	Out-of-Class Hours/Week	Total Hours/Week	In-Class Hours/Sem	Total Academically Engaged Hours
4	3	150	9	12	42	168
3	3	150	6	9	42	126
2	2	100	4	6	28	84
1	1	50	2	3	14	42

Half-Semester (7-Week) Course Credit-Hour Chart: Lectures, Colloquia, Seminars, Etc.

See note above regarding laboratory and performance/studio requirements.

Course Credits	In-Class Hours/Week	<i>In-Class Minutes/Week</i>	Out-of-Class Hours/Week	Total Hours/Week	Total In-Class Hours/Sem	Total Academically Engaged Hours
2	4	200	8	12	28	84
1	2	100	4	6	14	42

Interterm (3-Week) Course Credit-Hour Chart: Lectures, Colloquia, Seminars, Etc.

Courses scheduled less than the full three weeks must meet the minimums below within their abbreviated term length. See note above regarding laboratory and performance/studio requirements.

Course Credits	In-Class Hours/Week	<i>In-Class Minutes</i>	Out-of-Class Hours/Week	Total Hours/Week	Total In-Class Hours/Term	Total Academically Engaged Hours
4	14	700	42	56	42	168
3	14	700	28	42	42	126
2	10	500	18	28	30	84
1	5	250	9	14	15	42

Federal Definition of the Credit Hour (34 CFR 600.2, effective July 1, 2011). 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 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 item 1 above 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.