

Wartburg College Credit Hour Policy

Federal Definition of a Credit Hour

Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), 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. (Federal Register Volume 75, Oct. 2010, p. 66946)*

Credit Hour at Wartburg

Wartburg College operates on a 4-4-1 calendar, with approximately 14 weeks plus an exam week in the fall and winter terms and four weeks in the May term. The standard load for full-time students is 4.0 course credits fall term, 4.0 course credits winter term, and 1.0 course credit May term. The unit of academic credit is the course credit. (See equivalencies with semester hours below.) Standard meeting times for one-credit courses are three days per week with 65-minute classes; two days per week with 100-minute classes; and once per week with 180-minute classes. For example, a typical course might meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 65 minutes each day or meet Tuesday and Thursday for 100 minutes each day. Standard one-credit May term courses meet 180 minutes each day for 19 days. Half-credit courses are offered during two seven-week sessions (i.e., half a semester) or meet for half the standard time for a full semester.

Note that a typical Monday-Wednesday-Friday 1.0 credit course meets for 65 minutes over a minimum of 38 class days in a semester with a two-hour final exam period. This amounts to 2590 minutes of direct instruction time, or 51.8 Carnegie hours.

Wartburg offers one summer term for approximately 10 weeks, which includes two consecutive five-week sessions, one online six-week session, and a full 10-week session. Courses offered in this condensed format require the same total direct instruction and out-of-class time as equivalent courses offered during a standard term.

To qualify for graduation from Wartburg, students must earn 36 course credits, including four May Term course credits. Equivalencies between course credits and semester hours are as follows:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ course credit = 1 semester hour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ course credit = 2 semester hours;
- 1 course credit = $3\frac{1}{2}$ semester hours.

A few courses that meet at least five hours per week are designated as having credit equivalent to four semester hours. The Registrar's Office maintains a list of those courses.

The following table outlines the recommended minimum time required for full, half, and quarter course credit courses, organized by course format. Note that the direct instruction time for one semester hour is based on a 50-minute Carnegie hour over 15 weeks for a total of 750 minutes or 12.5 hours.

	0.25 CC (1 SH)	0.25 CC (1 SH)	0.5 CC (2 SH)	0.5 CC (2 SH)	1.0 CC (3.5 SH)	1.0 CC (3.5 SH)
Course Delivery Format	Direct Instruction Time	Out-of-Class Time	Direct Instruction Time	Out-of-Class Time	Direct Instruction Time	Out-of-Class Time
Traditional Face-to-Face Courses	12.5 hours	25 hours	25 hours	50 hours	43.75 hours	87.5 hours
Online or Hybrid Courses Direct instruction time includes synchronous or asynchronous instruction delivered through the use of technology and/or face-to-face instruction.	12.5 hours	25 hours	25 hours	50 hours	43.75 hours	87.5 hours
Field Experiences, Practica, Research, Internships, or Student Teaching Some experiences may require more direct instruction and/or supervised work.	37.5 hours		75 hours		131.25 hours	
Independent or Arranged Study Courses Individualized study may require more self-directed work.	37.5 hours		75 hours		131.25 hours	
Travel Courses	12.5 hours	25 hours	25 hours	50 hours	43.75 hours	87.5 hours

This credit hour policy applies to all courses that award academic credit at the undergraduate, graduate, or professional level. The Educational Policies Committee (EPC) reviews and approves new courses. Compliance with the credit hour policy is evaluated in their review and approval of all courses. The determination of credit hours is made when a new course or a revision to an existing course is proposed. The submitted syllabus is examined for contact time, as well as for learning outcomes, assignments, and evaluation of student learning. EPC reviews proposed academic calendars for compliance with this policy. Periodic compliance review will be carried out by the Dean of Faculty Office and reported to EPC.

While developing this policy, the EPC consulted credit hour policies at Willamette University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Eastern Illinois University.