



Pima County Community College District Administrative Procedure

<i>AP Title:</i>	Definition of a Credit Hour — ON HOLD Pending further review
<i>AP Number:</i>	AP 3.25.07
<i>Adoption Date:</i>	5/8/24
<i>Schedule for Review & Update:</i>	Every three years
<i>Review Date(s):</i>	
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<i>Sponsoring Unit/Department:</i>	Office of the Provost
<i>Policy Title(s) & No(s).</i>	Educational Offerings, BP 3.25
<i>Legal Reference:</i>	34 CFR 600.2, 602.24
<i>Cross Reference:</i>	

TRANSITION INTRODUCTION

The College is in the process of finalizing and implementing revised standards for defining a “credit hour.” The provisions that follow reflect the current version. The College recognizes that further revision of this AP is likely. The College expects that the language will be finalized during the Spring 2025 semester and that all curricular documents for PCC classes, programs, and procedures related to this AP will be fully aligned with the final version of the AP for the Fall 2025 semester. When the final version of this AP is posted, this “Transition Introduction” section will be deleted.

SECTION 1: Credit Hour Definition

- 1.1 For all Pima Community College (“College”) courses and programs with academic credit, a credit hour is defined as the amount of work represented in the desired learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. This amount of work is equivalent to that which would reasonably be achieved by a new learner as follows:

1. In not less than fifteen (50-minute) hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of thirty hours of out-of-class student work during the term of the course, or
 2. At least an equivalent amount of work for other activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward the award of credit hours.
- 1.2. Summer, shorter block, distance education, credit workforce, and dual-enrollment courses have equivalent expectations and, in the case of in-person instruction, the same time requirements. In cases where no required seat time exists, the equivalent amount of work as documented by student achievement, use of equivalent syllabi, textbooks, and learning objectives.
- 1.3 All courses, regardless of modality (*e.g.*, face-to-face, virtual, online, hybrid [blended], dual-enrollment, or directed study), must adhere to the credit hour standard as established. Any course offered in less than a full Fall or Spring semester must be equivalent in both direct faculty contact hours and out-of-class effort expected of students (approximately two hours for every hour in class) as a full semester-length course.
- 1.4 For learning experiences outside of the formal classroom (*e.g.*, homework, co-op placement, clinical, apprenticeship, field trips, asynchronous online), hours are regular 60-minute hours.

SECTION 2: Specific Information Related to Course/Delivery Types

- 2.1 Lecture – Sessions where the faculty member has prime responsibility for learning activities during meeting times and students are expected to work outside of class on assignments.
- A minimum of 15 (50-minute) hours [750 contact minutes] of direct instruction is required along with the expectation of 30 hours of outside of class time for one credit hour.
- 2.2 Studio Instruction – Instruction is given to the student to increase knowledge and skills with some outside of class application.
- A minimum of 30 (50-minute) hours [1500 contact minutes] of direct instruction and demonstration is required along with the expectation of 15 hours of outside of class time for one credit hour.

- 2.3 Laboratory Instruction/Clinical Practice – Involves structured and coordinated demonstration by an instructor with immediate student application.

A minimum of 45 (50-minute) hours [2250 contact minutes] of direct instruction, demonstration and practice is required for one credit hour.

- 2.4 Field Trips – Involve coordinated outside of class experiences by an instructor.

A minimum of 45 hours of experience is required for one credit hour.

- 2.5 Private Instruction/Independent Study – Involves regular individual contact with faculty directing intensive outside student experiences.

A minimum of 4 (50-minute) hours [200 contact minutes] of one-on-one interaction with the faculty member and a minimum of 41 hours of outside of class time is required for one credit hour.

- 2.6 Cooperative Education, Practicums, and Internships – Development of job skills by providing the student with employment that is directly related to, and coordinated with, the educational program. Student activity in work experience is planned and coordinated by a college representative, and the employer is responsible for the control and supervision of the student on the job.

A minimum of 160 hours of work-based experience is required for one credit hour.

- 2.7 Pre-College Level Material – In an effort to accelerate student learning some courses may include pre-college level material. Instructional time and outside of class work on this material is not included in credit hour calculations.

- 2.8 Mixed Types – Some courses or sections may involve multiple types. In these cases credit hours are determined by summing the hours associated with each included type.

SECTION 3: Verification of Credits and Contact Hours

During the process of course creation or modification, the Academic Deans will provide rationale for the particular credit hours for a course based on the definition. This rationale may include why additional time beyond the minimum is necessary to achieve the amount of learning required due to operational constraints or the level of the students generally entering the course.

Utilizing the Academic Calendar, the Academic Deans shall oversee validation of the contact hours for courses in their discipline prior to the publication of the semester's course schedule.

The Provost's Office may select some or all courses for verification of the correct number of contact hours. Any inconsistencies will be reported to the responsible Academic Dean for immediate review and correction, as necessary.