

University of Louisville
Policy for the University Academic Calendar and Awarding of Course Credit
Revised per SACS Credit Hour Policy – Effective January 2, 2012

The University of Louisville’s uniform standards for establishing the institutional academic calendar and determining the amount of credit awarded for all courses are designed to meet or exceed federal regulations and regional accreditation¹ requirements. Academic units with external accreditation requirements have the flexibility to make policy adjustments based on best practices in that discipline with the approval of the University Provost.

Academic Calendar

To address the needs of its diverse student body, the University of Louisville (UofL) has established an academic calendar policy based on a standard of 14 weeks (fall/spring terms). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has defined a credit hour in a standard approved in June 2011:

“Not less than 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...”

By the permissive last clause of this standard, the university’s current calendar structure will align with SACS guidelines provided that: (1) valid, assessable course learning outcomes are established for each course and stated in the syllabi of each course section, as documented in the syllabus collection also now mandated by SACS; (2) the calendar and credit hour requirements are clearly stated in the university catalog and other information resources; and (3) expectations for out-of-class instructional activities are clearly indicated in course descriptions and syllabi. Department chairs and deans continue to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing these requirements for the courses and sections in their units.

The university will operate on a year-round calendar based on the following schedule of standard terms and their length: **Fall** – 70 meeting days

Spring – 70 meeting days

Summer terms (I, II, III, and 10 week) must provide sufficient instructional days to provide the required contact hours. If there is a final exam, it must be given on the added final exam day.

Summer I – 15 meeting days + Final Exam day (if giving a final)

Summer II – 25 meeting days + Final Exam day (if giving a final)

Summer III – 25 meeting days + Final Exam day (if giving a final)

Ten week term – 50 meeting days + Final Exam day (if giving a final)

¹ <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Credit%20Hours.pdf>

Course Credit

All courses at the University of Louisville follow uniform standards for determining the amount of credit awarded. The initial credit hour recommendation is made by the faculty in the discipline in order to ensure consistency with the University of Louisville policy and the norms of the discipline.

A one credit hour of lecture, discussion, or seminar requires at least 50 contact minutes per week during a regular semester (as allowed by SACS and consistent with the federal recognition of the Carnegie Unit definition). Courses offered entirely or partially through distance education or other alternate methods must offer opportunities for a comparable amount of contact with the instructor. During shorter terms, the number of hours per week increases, but the total number of contact hours per course remains the same. In some cases, additional contact hours may be required to meet the expectations of a given field and/or the needs of a course (e.g., laboratory sections, activity courses). The only courses for which less instructor contact is acceptable are courses in which there is a focus on independent learning, including internships, independent studies, directed readings, and various culminating experiences. However, even in these cases, there is an instructor assigned to the course and there is expected to be regular contact between the instructor and each student.

In addition, each course syllabus must indicate an expectation of two-and-one-half hours of out-of-classroom activity per week for each hour of credit.

This new policy on the academic calendar and awarding of credits should be circulated widely by each academic unit. All university, unit and department level policies should be adapted to reflect this policy statement, January 2, 2012.

Approved:

Shirley Willihnganz, Executive Vice President and University Provost

Date: 12/13/11