

Credit Hour Definitions

Definition of a Credit Hour

South University operates on a quarter system, with each quarter having approximately 10 to 12 weeks. Course credit is awarded on the basis of the number of hours spent in lecture and/or lab situations. One quarter credit hour is equivalent to at least 10 hours of lecture/didactic or guided research, 20 hours of lab work, 30 hours of internship/externship or clinical practicum, or a combination of these equivalencies.

Course offerings are equivalent in course hours whether offered in a 5.0, 5.5, 10 or 11 week format and regardless of modality.

**Some programs may require additional instruction engagement/contact hours above the thresholds established in this policy.*

Credit Hour and Outside Class Expectations

South University operates on a quarter system with each quarter having approximately 10 to 12 weeks.

Students can expect ten (10) hours of instructional engagement for every one quarter credit hour of a course. Instructional engagement activities include lectures, presentations, discussions, group-work, and other activities that would normally occur during class time. Instructional engagement activities may occur in a face-to-face meeting or in the e-classroom.

In addition to instructional engagement, students can expect to complete at least twenty (20) hours of outside work for every one quarter credit hour of a course. Outside work includes preparing for and completing readings and assignments. Such outside work also includes, but is not limited to, all research associated with completing assignments, work with others to complete a group project, participation in tutorials, labs, simulations, and other electronic activities that are not a part of the instructional engagement, as well as any activities related to preparation for instructional engagement.

Other academic work leading to the awarding of credit hours requires at least an equivalent amount of work as listed in the paragraph above and shall be applied to other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, guided research, and studio work. For example, one quarter credit hour is also equivalent to at least 20 hours of lab work, 30 hours of internship/externship, clinical practicum, or a combination of the equivalencies.

**Some programs may require additional instruction engagement/contact hours above the thresholds established in this policy.*

South University offers three modalities of instruction as defined below:

Fully-Online: instructional engagement is achieved via technology through a learning management system and other technology tools.

Campus/On-site Courses: All instructional engagement is delivered face-to-face.

Blended (Hybrid): Instructional engagement is delivered via a combination of online activities (e-classroom) and face to face interaction with online activities replacing no more than 50% of the face-to-face instructional

engagement activity. (In accelerated programs, online activities may constitute a higher percentage.) Blended courses must be approved through a specific application process and are initiated by campus based faculty or academic administration. Online course content in blended classes, including assignments, is determined by the College/School, and is consistent in all blended course shells. Instructors may add additional content to the classroom shell, not to exceed 20% of the total.

Academic Colleges/ Schools are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy

Credit Hour Conversions

Semester credit hours are converted to quarter credit hours by multiplying the number of semester credits by 3 and then dividing the result by 2. For example, a 3 semester credit hour course equals a 4.5 quarter credit hour course (3 semester hours multiplied by 3, with the result divided by 2) while a 2 semester credit hour course equals a 3 quarter credit hour course (2 semester hours multiplied by 3, with the result divided by 2). Credits will be rounded up or down as appropriate (i.e., 2.0 to 2.49 will be rounded down to 2 credit hours, 2.50 to 2.99 will be rounded up to 3 credit hours).

Grade Level Classification

Campus-based Programs

Students are classified according to the number of credit hours earned toward completion of the program. Students with fewer than 36 credits are considered freshmen; with as many as 37 but fewer than 90, a sophomore; with as many as 91 but fewer than 126, a junior; and with 127 or more, a senior, as illustrated in the following table:

Freshman: 0-36 hrs.
Sophomore: 37-90 hrs.
Junior: 91-126 hrs.
Senior: 127+ hrs.

Online Programs

Undergraduate students are classified according to the number of credit hours earned toward completion of the program. Students with fewer than 36 credits are considered freshmen; with as many as 36 but fewer than 72, a sophomore; with as many as 73 but fewer than 108, a junior; and with 109 or more, a senior, as illustrated in the following table:

Freshman: 0-36 credits
Sophomore: 37-72 credits
Junior: 73-108 credits
Senior: 109+ credits