



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

To: Rocky Mountain College Faculty  
From Provost's Office  
Re: Credit Hour Equivalents  
Date: 2/14/17

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below the Rocky Mountain College policy on credit-hour equivalency. I would like to thank the Curriculum Committee for their work in reviewing this matter and offering their recommendation.

Federal regulations describe the following:

“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 outside-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks;
- 2) Or 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.”

As required by Section 600.24 from the D.O.E., the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities will evaluate as part of the *Resources and Capacity* evaluation the extent to which the institution meets the federal definition by reviewing:

- 1) The adoption of a policy on credit hour for all courses and programs at the institution;
- 2) The processes the institution employs to review periodically the application of its policy on credit hour across the institution to assure that credit hour assignments are accurate and reliable; and
- 3) Any variations in the assignment of credit hours to assure that these variations conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.



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## Rocky Mountain College Credit Hour Equivalencies

The credit hour equivalencies below are based on the minimum standards of the Carnegie Unit and are intended to meet the federal requirements and the obligation to “conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.” Each of the equivalents below assumes an appropriate amount of student preparation time outside of the classroom as per the federal definition provided above.

- **Lecture Credit:** For a regular 15-week semester, **one** lecture/discussion credit hour represents a minimum of 50 minutes per week of scheduled in-class instructional time.
- **Laboratory/Group Studio Credit:** For a regular 15-week semester, **one** laboratory/group studio credit hour represents a minimum of 2 hours per week of scheduled supervised laboratory or studio work.
- **Independent Studio/Practice Credit:** For a regular 15-week semester, **one** studio credit hour represents a minimum of 3 hours per week of supervised and/or independent practice.
- **Field Study/Experiential Learning:** Field study is instruction that is usually based at a location away from RMC. This refers to experiential learning or research that often involves at least some period of overnight stay or extended work with local communities. **One** credit hour is defined as a minimum of 45 hours of supervised work in the field each semester.

The RMC policy conforms to federal regulatory requirements, and where federal guidelines offer institutional flexibility, it is based on commonly accepted practices of higher education. These general practices are reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education in its document providing guidelines for international students: “Structure of the U.S. Education System: Credit Systems” (link below). Also informing this policy is “Dear Colleague Letter GEN 11-06” (link below).

Sources:

USNEI: International Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Education

(<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/credits.doc>)

34 CFR 668.10: Code of Federal Regulations Title 34, Volume 3, Chapter VI, Part 668, Section 668.10, revised as of July 1, 2008

([http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr\\_2008/julqtr/34cfr668.10.htm](http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2008/julqtr/34cfr668.10.htm))

34 CFR 668.8: Code of Federal Regulations Title 34, Volume 3, Chapter VI, Part 668, Section 668.8, revised as of July 1, 2008

([http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr\\_2008/julqtr/34cfr668.8.htm](http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2008/julqtr/34cfr668.8.htm))



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DCL ID: GEN 11-06 Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010

(<https://ifap.ed.gov/dpletters/GEN1106.html>)

NWCCU Policy on Credit Hour

(<http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Policy%20on%20Credit%20Hour%20November%202012.pdf>)