The University of Southern Mississippi  
Credit Hour Policy  
(Approved by Graduate Council and Academic Council, 2014)

Preface
1. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has established the following federal requirement to be included in the Principles of Accreditation:

The institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that conform to commonly accepted practice in higher education and Commission policy. (See Commission policy “Credit Hours.”) (Federal Requirement 4.9)

This federal requirement addresses the U.S. Department of Education expectation that recognized accrediting commissions require an institution to have a policy that outlines how an institution defines and awards credit hours for courses and programs. The institutional policy should be consistent not only with “commonly accepted practice,” but also the following definition of a credit hour:

**Federal Definition of the Credit Hour.** For purposes of the application of this policy and in accord with federal regulations, 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

1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week 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 outlined in item 1 above 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. (See [http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Credit%20Hours.pdf](http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Credit%20Hours.pdf))

2. The University of Southern Mississippi applies the policy of the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) in the definition of a standard credit hour:

506  COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Course requirements shall include at a minimum the following.

- The Board required minimum of 2,250 minutes per three semester hour course, which may include final exam time.
- The number of weeks must meet Federal financial aid requirements.


IHL Policies and Bylaws (as amended through May 19, 2011), page 79
3. The current *Guidelines to Proposals to the Academic and Graduate Councils* addresses credit hours as follows:
   Semester credit hours are based on contact hours.
   • One credit hour = 12.5 hours (750 minutes) in the classroom
   • Three credit hour = 37.5 hours (2,250 minutes) of face-to-face contact with the student, which may include exam time.
   • Laboratory contact minutes are at least twice those of lecture courses per credit hour.
   • Activity Course contact minutes are at least twice those of lecture courses per credit hour.
   • A one-semester hour of lab is at least 25 hours in most departments.

**Credit Hour Policy**

1. Credit hour expectations are outlined in the attached table *USM Course Credit Hour Guidelines.*
2. Guidelines are to be modified by a joint committee of the Academic and Graduate Councils
3. Course proposal forms are to address Credit Hour Guidelines. All course modification proposals are to address Credit Hours regardless of the type of proposal.
4. A joint committee of the Academic and Graduate Councils will develop a review procedure to ensure that existing courses comply with the Federal Requirement 4.9 and are correctly coded in the system.
USM Course Credit Hour Guidelines (Provisional)
by IHL Mode of Instruction Code

(3) Unless otherwise specified, any other secondary mode of instruction assumed to be face-to-face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Instruction</th>
<th>Type/Location of Delivery (1)</th>
<th>Primary Mode of Delivery/Contact with Instructor of Record (2)</th>
<th>Secondary Mode of Delivery (3) - Optional</th>
<th>USM Credit Hour Guidelines*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CF</strong></td>
<td>(C) Lecture (Students receive structured units of information and accompanying material through direct contact with the instructor; typically considered the traditional classroom)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CI</strong></td>
<td>(C) Lecture</td>
<td>(I) Interactive Video Usually entails co-listed CF section at initiating site</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CO</strong></td>
<td>(C) Lecture</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CX</strong></td>
<td>(C) Lecture</td>
<td>(X) Other distance learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EF</strong></td>
<td>(E) Seminar (Students study a particular subject and do individualized original research under the guidance of an instructor and exchange results by informal lectures and discussions)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EI</strong></td>
<td>(E) Seminar</td>
<td>(I) Interactive Video Usually entails a co-listed EF section at initiating site</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EO</strong></td>
<td>(E) Seminar</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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USM Credit Hour Policy
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<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>(D) Dissertation (Students study a particular subject and do individualized original research under the guidance of an instructor and work toward completing a scholarly research document)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>(D) Dissertation</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>(D) Dissertation</td>
<td>(E) E-mail</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>(D) Dissertation</td>
<td>(T) Telephonic</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>(F) Field Supervision of Student Teaching (Short-term work experience requiring students in the education discipline to teach under the direct supervision of persons experienced in the teaching profession)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>(F) Field Supervision of Student Teaching</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FX</td>
<td>(F) Field Supervision of Student Teaching</td>
<td>(X) Other distance learning</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF</td>
<td>(H) Clinical Instruction (Short-term work experience, usually related to a student’s major field, that is supervised by persons experienced in the discipline and focuses on the practical application of concepts and principles; typically associated with biological, physical, health, and other sciences such as biology, chemistry, anatomy, psychology, athletic training, audiology, kinesiotherapy, nursing, medical laboratory science, etc.)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>H) Clinical Instruction</td>
<td>(9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>H) Clinical Instruction</td>
<td>(E) E-mail</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>H) Clinical Instruction</td>
<td>(T) Telephonic</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td>(I) Individual Directed Study (Academic work chosen or designed by the individual student with the approval of the department concerned, under an instructor’s supervision, and usually undertaken outside the classroom structure; typically one-on-one interaction)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>(I) Individual Directed Study</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>(I) Individual Directed Study</td>
<td>(E) E-mail</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>(I) Individual Directed Study</td>
<td>(T) Telephonic</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>Laboratory contact minutes are at least twice those of lecture courses. A one-semester hour of lab is therefore at least 25 hours in most departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>(I) Individual Directed Study</td>
<td>(X) Other distance learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF</td>
<td>(L) Laboratory (Students study in a classroom setting conducive to the practical application of concepts and principles; typically associated with biological, physical, health, and other sciences such as biology, chemistry, anatomy, psychology, athletic training, audiology, kinesiotherapy, nursing, medical laboratory science, etc.)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PF</td>
<td>(P) Practicum (Short-term work experience, usually related to a student’s major field, that is supervised by persons experienced in the discipline that consists of study and/or practical experience)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>(P) Practicum</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>(P) Practicum</td>
<td>(E) E-mail</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>(P) Practicum</td>
<td>(T) Telephonic</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>(S) Studio (Students study in a classroom setting conducive to the practical application of visual and performing arts such as art, music, dance, etc.)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF</td>
<td>(T) Thesis (Students study a particular subject and do individualized original research under the guidance of an instructor and work toward completing a scholarly research document)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO</td>
<td>(T) Thesis</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>(T) Thesis</td>
<td>(E) E-mail</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>(T) Thesis</td>
<td>(T) Telephonic</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1F</td>
<td>(1) Internship (Short-term work experience, usually related to a student’s major field, that is supervised by persons experienced in the discipline that consists of study and/or practical experience)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1O</td>
<td>(1) Internship</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web (9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>(1) Internship</td>
<td>(E) E-mail</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>An equivalent amount of work as required for traditional face-to-face courses as established by the institution and justified by the department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Less Commonly Offered Course Formats**

<p>| AF                    | (A) Study Out-of-State (course instruction or academic work that takes place in a U.S. state other than Mississippi) | (F) Face-to-Face                                           | (5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web      | Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department. |
| AI                    | (A) Study Out-of-State (course instruction or academic work that takes place in a U.S. state other than Mississippi) | (I) Interactive Video                                     | (5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web      | Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department. |</p>
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<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>(A) Study Out-of-State (course instruction or academic work that takes place in a U.S. state other than Mississippi)</td>
<td>(O) 100% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>(9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>(B) Study Out-of-Country (Course instruction or academic work that takes place in a country other than the United States)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>(B) Study Out-of-State (course instruction or academic work that takes place in a U.S. state other than Mississippi)</td>
<td>(I) Interactive Video</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BO</td>
<td>(B) Study Out-of-State (course instruction or academic work that takes place in a U.S. state other than Mississippi)</td>
<td>(9) 51-99% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF</td>
<td>(J) Joint Lecture/Laboratory (Students receive structured units of information and accompanying material through direct contact with the instructor as well as receive supplemental instruction in a classroom setting conducive to the practical application of relevant principles and concepts)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td>Minimally one 50-minute class meeting per week in a 15-week session, to include the exam period, or an equivalent time per semester, with the expectation of a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., 8W1 session) or as justified by department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MV</td>
<td>(M) Correspondence (Students receive structured units of information and accompanying material completely through the mail; different from distance learning)</td>
<td>(V) Video Tape</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not offered at USM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>(P) Print-based</td>
<td>(P) Print-based</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not offered at USM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>(1) Internship</td>
<td>(T) Telephonic</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YF</td>
<td>(Y) Activity (Students study in a classroom and specialized setting conducive to the practical application of knowledge and skills needed for physical activity.)</td>
<td>(F) Face-to-Face</td>
<td>(5) 1-50% Online, Internet, or Web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Guidelines determined by a joint committee of the Academic and Graduate Councils

**Method of Delivery (2)**
- **F** = Face-to-Face: students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by face-to-face contact with the instructor
- **V** = Video Tape: students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of video tape
- **T** = Telephonic: students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of telephone or voice mail
- **E** = E-mail: students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of E-mail

**USM Credit Hour Policy**
O = Online, Internet, or Web students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by Web-based using online, Internet, or web-based methods

(9) and (5) are USM generated and assume use of university-approved learning management system

P = Print-based students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by print-based material delivered through postal mail or facsimile transmissions (typically correspondence)

R = CD-ROM students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of compact disc

C = Television or Cable students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of television or cable television

S = Satellite students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by (Digital, Analog, Direct) means of satellite

I = Interactive Video students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of real-time interactive video

Y = Computer-Aided Instruction students receive a majority of course instruction and structured units of information by means of computer either locally or by specialized network

X = Other Distance Learning course instruction by other means of distance learning