

**Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee**

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**Response to Charge S- 2101**

**November 19, 2021**

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| **Charge Number** | S-2101 |
| **Title** | **Review of University Policy 10.2.4 - Units of Credit** |
| **Description** |  |

*Proposed Charge: Determine the current viability of University Policy 10.2.4 - Units of Credit and propose changes as appropriate to make the definition consistent with its use in current practice. Respond by November 2021.*

**Background:**

ASRAC has sought to identify and understand the determination of a unit of credit in relation to units of time at Rutgers University. We drew upon our student, faculty and staff experiences on our committee and credit hour policies codified in the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 9A and by Middle States Commission on Higher Education (implementing U.S. Department of Education policy.) ASRAC reviewed the following link has the language about the definition of a credit from the state - <https://sasoue.rutgers.edu/docman-docs/policies/857-new-standards-of-rigor/file>.

**Discussion/Considerations:**

ASRAC committee members reviewed and analyzed the detailed report outlined by the U.S. Department of education along with the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 9A. The Rutgers University Registrar confirmed the language used on the back of transcripts is consistent with the definition as stated below.

As stipulated by NJ Administrative Code Title 9A

(a) "Semester credit hour" means 150 minutes of academic work each week for 15 weeks in one semester, which is typically accomplished by 50 minutes of face-to-face class activity each week complemented by at least 100 minutes each week of laboratory or outside assignments (or the equivalent thereof for semesters of different length) but may also be accomplished through an equivalent amount of academic work as established by an institution, which may include additional class time, laboratory work, internships, practical studio work, and other forms of academic work.

(b) A semester credit hour shall not be counted on an hour-for-hour basis for library, independent-study, laboratory, or physical education activities. A semester credit hour is not required to be counted on an hour-for-hour basis for distance learning or blended (or hybrid) learning.

(c) Credit courses offered by a college in conjunction with or under contract with a noncollegiate organization shall meet the same requirements the college applies to its own courses with respect to quality, course content, class attendance and participation, student evaluation, etc. The standards presented at N.J.A.C. 9A:1-6.3, dealing with off-campus sites at which credit courses are offered by a college in conjunction with or under contract with a noncollegiate organization, shall apply to such courses offered at the principal campus. (e) The rigor of all college credit-bearing courses shall be substantially the same, regardless of the type of educational delivery mode, as demonstrated by the institution through various forms of evidence. Such evidence shall include, but not be limited to, at least two of the following: syllabi, documented faculty interaction with students, learning outcomes, documented units of curricular material, and other documentation which objectively demonstrates the amount of time and/or the level of rigor necessary to complete the coursework.

The unit of credit used in registration at Rutgers is based in part upon a measure of time, with **1 credit equal to one class hour a week through a 15-week semester.** When determining how many credit hours to take, it’s also important to consider the amount of studying required outside of class. The old-school rule is that a student should study two hours a week, outside of class, for each credit hour enrolled. For a student taking 15 credit hours, this indicates they should spend 30 hours studying, or a total of 45 hours per week focusing on class and studies. The maximum number of credits that Rutgers University allows per semester is 19 credits. This is to ensure that you have appropriate time to study, prioritize, and still have a life outside of class and studying.

Given a typical 15 week semester, we can expect that the student will be in class for 12 hours per week (180 contact hours / 15 weeks).

**Recommendations:**

1. **Insert definition of a one credit unit hour in course syllabus**

Faculty are encouraged to add a few sentences in their syllabi explaining realistic expectation of course work in units of time, remembering to include the tasks students are expected to accomplish outside of class and anticipated time it will take them

**Thus, ASRAC recommends inserting an expectation of time expenditure per unit of credit in course syllabus.**

1. **Rutgers Transcripts have unit of credit with expected time posted.**

Units of credit **reflect the time invested in each course**. Typically, one unit is the equivalent of what a student would learn in one academic semester (or 15 weeks). This is posted on each Rutgers transcript.

**Thus, ASRAC recommends linking the definition of a unit of credit with specific units on minutes with course outline and syllabus. This will provide students with an expectation of the students registered in the unit’s courses.**

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