

- Written procedure regarding the protection of privacy of the student enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses or programs.
 - Details on where and how that information is published.
- Written procedure addressing the notification of projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.
 - Details on where and how that information is published.
- Process for ensuring ongoing verification, including persons responsible for implementation.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: [Advertising and Student Recruitment](#)
[Distance and Correspondence Education](#)

Part (b) of this standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:
[Developing Policy and Procedures Documents](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

None noted.

10.7 The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.

(Policies for awarding credit)

Rationale and Notes

Good educational practices in higher education assume that institutions adopt sound and generally acceptable policies and procedures for determining what a credit unit means for graduate and undergraduate coursework, taking into account the amount and level of credit for courses. Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the common currency of academic credit to support a wide range of activities, including the transfer of students from one institution to another. For several decades, the federal government has relied on credits as a measure of student academic engagement as a basis of awarding financial aid. Because of the significance of awarding credit for coursework or

experiences, an institution is obligated to ensure that credit hours awarded for courses and programs conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

The most common means of making these determinations is through academic committees, usually a curriculum committee with approval by the academic administration. While the standard is not prescriptive as to organizational structure, there is a clear expectation that these decisions are made by appropriately qualified persons.

Policies related to determining amount and level of credit should go beyond the expectation that courses are taught in traditional “seat time” fashion. Institutions offer credits for laboratory classes, studios, internships, professional practicums, independent studies, activities courses, and web-based instruction, to mention just a few of the alternatives. Nontraditional course work may vary in format but is equivalent in expected learning outcomes. If the institution uses some measure of credit other than the semester credit hour, either institution-wide or within specific programs (e.g., direct assessment competency-based programs), the institution provides an explanation of equivalency. When undergraduate and graduate courses are offered through nontraditional delivery, the institution awards credit compatible with sound academic practice in the field. A sound academic practice typically involves faculty participation in the evaluation of credit. The institution gives attention to principles developed by nationally recognized organizations, such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, when developing the type of credit and the amount of credit awarded.

NOTE

This standard presumes the institution’s credit hour policies include an acceptable definition of credit hours consistent with the SACSCOC policy on [Credit Hours](#).

Questions to Consider

- What is the institution’s definition of a credit hour, or its equivalent? Is this definition consistent with commonly accepted practices in higher education?
- What are the institution’s policies related to assigning amount and level of credit for undergraduate and graduate courses?
- Are these policies and procedures published in an accessible manner?
- What is the institution’s course numbering and naming system?
- If the institution awards credit for courses delivered in format other than semester credit hours, how does the institution ensure that the process for determining the amount of credit is equivalent to the credit earned in the same or similar courses delivered in other formats?
- What are the policies that determine the level and amount of credit awarded for undergraduate and graduate coursework delivered through distance learning technology?
- What is the oversight structure for course approval?
- What is the role of faculty in reviewing academic credit awarded?
- Do those persons responsible for course approval have appropriate academic qualifications?

- In developing policies related to the amount and level of credit awarded, how does the institution use the standards of professional organizations or the practices of peer institutions?
- Are practices under this standard consistent with the institution’s own credit hour policies and with the SACSCOC policy on [Credit Hours](#)?

Sample Documentation

- The institution’s policy for determining credit hours awarded, including the definition of a credit hour used by the institution.
- Policies and procedures for decisions related to the amount and level of credit for courses.
- Details as to where these policies and procedures are published.
- Evidence that the institution consistently applies its policies and procedures in awarding credit for courses and programs.
- Minutes, check sheets, and other documents showing the approval process for the level and amount of credit for courses (not blank forms).
- Descriptions of processes and criteria used to award credit for courses and programs that are not “traditional.”
- List of responsibilities and of membership of the institution’s curriculum committee or its equivalent, with evidence concerning academic qualifications of membership.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: [Credit Hours](#)
 [Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs](#)
 [Distance and Correspondence Education](#)

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications.
 See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:
 [Developing Policy and Procedures Documents](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 14.5 *(Policy compliance)*