



SACS Home

Committees

Compliance Table

Quality Enhancement Plan

Supporting Document Index

- Alphabetical
- By Standard

Focused Report

Federal Requirement 4.4

Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs (Program length)

Judgment: Compliant

Response:

Columbia

The University system awards standard semester hour credits for course completion, and follows SACS program length guidelines of:

at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level.

Academic Policy ACAF 2.00 lists the formal awards that are made by the University and the minimum credit hours required for each level:

- a. Associate's Degrees: Require a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond high school. May only be awarded by two-year campuses.
- b. Bachelor's Degrees: Require a minimum of 120 credit hours beyond high school. May only be awarded by four-year campuses.
- c. Master's Degrees: Require a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree.
- d. Specialist Degrees: Require a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours beyond the master's degree.
- e. Doctoral Degrees: Require a minimum of three years of graduate study and a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours (with a maximum of 12 hours of dissertation preparation) beyond the baccalaureate, or a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours (with a maximum of 12 hours of dissertation preparation) beyond the master's degree.
- f. First Professional Degrees in Law, Medicine, and Pharmacy: Typically require three or four years beyond the bachelor's degree or beyond pre-professional coursework.
- h. Academic Certificates
 - i. Undergraduate Certificates: Typically require 15 to 18 credit hours beyond high school.
 - ii. Graduate Certificates: Typically require 18 graduate credit hours either post-baccalaureate or post-master's. Post-baccalaureate certificates require the bachelor's degree for admission, and post-master's certificates require the master's degree.
- i. Dual, Joint and Other Collaborative Degree Programs
 - i. Dual Degrees: Typically require all or most of the requirements for two distinct academic degree programs, and two degrees are awarded.
 - ii. Joint Degrees: Typically require all or most of the requirements of two distinct academic degree programs administered by two or more of the University's colleges or schools, or by two or more universities, and a single degree is awarded.
 - iii. Other Collaborative Degrees: Programs governed by specific agreements typically involving an articulated transfer of credit from one institution to another for the award of a single or multiple degrees. May also include bridge programs that require non-credit study prior to course work for academic credit.

In addition, the approval process for program creation or revision, as described in ACAF 2.00 and at the [Program Development](#) website, requires program length to be approved by the Faculty Senate or the Graduate Council, the Provost, the President, and the Board of Trustees. In addition, Academic Affairs of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education must approve new programs and program changes, including program length.

The University also relies on [program accreditation and external program review](#) to ensure that the length of all programs is sufficient to provide for mastery of all aspects of the subject matter.

[The Program Credit Hours Spreadsheet](#) lists the number of hours required for all majors, the number of credit hours in the major for all undergraduate programs, and links to each program description in the Bulletins. All



SEARCH

USC THIS SITE

Bulletin program descriptions are required to include the total credit hours required to satisfy program requirements.

Lancaster

The requirement for the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Science in Business, and Associate in Science in Criminal Justice degrees at USC Lancaster is sixty (60) semester hours of credit. This is based on a normal full load of 15 credit hours per semester for four semesters (two academic years) and is consistent with associate degree programs at most American colleges and universities. It is also based on the idea that most baccalaureate degrees at the University of South Carolina require 120 semester hours of credit and therefore the associate degree comprises one-half of the bachelor degree requirements. Revisions and new program proposals are designed to fit this limit.

The requirement for the **Associate in Science in Technical Nursing** degree is sixty-eight (68) semester hours of credit. This is based on a normal full load of 12-17 hours per semester for four regular semesters and eight hours during the summer sessions between the freshman and sophomore years. Program length for this degree is determined by requirements of the **South Carolina Board of Nursing** (which fully approves the cooperative program) and the **National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission** (NLNAC), through which the program is accredited.

All USC **degree curricula** are available online and in the USCL **Academic Bulletin**. The curricula for the cooperative nursing degree may also be found on pp. 116ff. of the **York Technical College Student Handbook and Catalog 2009**.

Salkehatchie

As specified in the **USC Salkehatchie Bulletin**, the requirement for an associate's degree is 60 credit hours. This is based on a normal full load of 15 hours per semester for four semesters (two academic years) and is consistent with associate's programs at most two-year institutions in the United States.

Sumter

As specified in the **USC Sumter Bulletin**, the requirement for an associate's degree is 60 credit hours. This is based on a normal full load of 15 hours per semester for four semesters (two academic years) and is consistent with associate's programs at most two-year institutions in the United States.

Union

USC Union has an established **mission** of offering the first two years of a liberal arts university education through the awarding of the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees. The **degree requirements** established in the Academic Bulletin set a program length of 60 semester hours credit for both degrees offered, which is approximately half of the credits necessary for most baccalaureate degrees offered at USC Columbia.

Supporting Documents:

Creation and Revision of Academic Programs Policy	http://www.sc.edu/policies/acaf200.pdf
Program development Website	http://www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog/
External Program Review Spreadsheet	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/ProgAccredRev.pdf
Program Credit Hours Spreadsheet	http://ipr.sc.edu/xls/ProgHrsChart.xlsx
USCL Degree Curricula	http://usclancaster.sc.edu/admissions/degrees.htm
USCL Associate Degree Nursing Program	http://usclancaster.sc.edu/academics/curric/ASnurs.html
South Carolina Board of Nursing	http://www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/NURSING/
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission	http://www.nlnac.org/home.htm
Academic Programs, USCL <i>Academic Bulletin</i>	http://bulletin.usclancaster.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=2365
York Technical College <i>Student Handbook & Catalog 2009</i>	http://www.yorktech.com/catalog_2009_final.pdf
Salkehatchie Bulletin	http://bulletin.uscsalkehatchie.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=2359
Sumter Bulletin	http://bulletin.uscsumter.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=2346
Union Mission Statement	http://ipr.sc.edu/mission/union_ms.htm
Union Bulletin	http://bulletin.uscunion.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=2336

[RETURN TO TOP](#)

[USC LINKS:](#)

[DIRECTORY](#)

[MAP](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[VIP](#)

[SITE INFORMATION](#)

[Columbia, SC 29208](#) • [Phone](#) • [Email](#)

© University of South Carolina Board of Trustees