

# Kentucky Wesleyan College

## Policy & Procedure Manual

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### **Credit Hour & Semester Length Policy**

**Approval:** Board of Trustees

**Policy Type:** College

**Policy Owner:** Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Vice President of Academic Affairs

#### **Revision History**

**Approval Date:** May 10, 2013s, Feb. 5, 2016, June 2021

**Modified:** Jan. 15, 2016, Feb. 19, 2021

**Next Review:** Jan. 2023

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### **1. Purpose**

Kentucky Wesleyan College has policies and procedures for determining that the credit hours awarded for courses and programs conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to Commission policy. This is true for courses in both the traditional face-to-face and distance delivery formats, as well as courses that cover the traditional 15 week semester or intensive semesters such as summer sessions. The College ensures ongoing comparability between the delivery formats and the credit hours awarded in them.

### **2. Scope**

2.1. This policy applies to awarding academic credit for all work accomplished at KWC.

### **3. Policy**

#### **3.1. DEFINITION OF TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE AND SYNCHRONOUS CREDIT HOUR**

3.1.1. In accordance with commonly accepted practices in higher education and the Commission policy, Kentucky Wesleyan defines a credit hour as “the unit of measuring education credit usually based on the number of contact hours per week throughout a term”. The number of contact hours for traditional face-to-face courses that meet synchronously with an instructor and other students is defined by the number of hours spent in the classroom approximately one hour of instructional time and a minimum of two hours out of class student work per semester.

- 3.1.2. There are several types of courses that do not follow the traditional lecture model. For example, most academic programs offer internships and/or practica. Most internships and/or practica are for three-credit hours where the student (typically a junior or senior) completes 120-150 hours of field work, meets the supervising faculty member on a regular basis, and keeps a journal and/or writes a paper about the experience.
- 3.1.3. Most academic majors offer independent studies for highly motivated juniors and seniors. The student is expected to average 9-10 hours a week researching, meeting with the supervising instructor, and completing course requirements.
- 3.1.4. Science laboratories follow commonly accepted practices and meet two or three-hours per week for every one hour of credit. For one-credit hour of applied music, the student receives 30 minutes of face-to-face instruction and is expected to practice three hours per week.

### 3.2. DEFINITION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND ASYNCHRONOUS CREDIT HOUR

- 3.2.1. Contact hours for asynchronous distance education learning environments are more difficult to quantify. Therefore, the definition of contact hours in asynchronous distance education learning environments at Kentucky Wesleyan College is derived from commonly accepted higher education distance education practices, including maintaining identical student learning outcomes and comparable assessments, assuring comparable time-on-task/contact hours for distance and traditional face-to-face courses, and awarding participation credit for completion of assignments only in the distance format.
- 3.2.2. Course syllabi for asynchronous distance education courses at Kentucky Wesleyan contain the same learning outcomes as synchronous, traditional face-to-face based courses. The Associate Dean of the College and Director of Online Education ensures the comparability of course content and measured assessments before classes go active. The total time on task for the distance course should be equivalent to the number of contact hours expected in a synchronous traditional face-to-face course.

### 3.3. SEMESTER/TERMLENGTH

- 3.3.1. The length of the semester, during the traditional academic year at Kentucky Wesleyan College follows the Academic Calendar Federal Policy for institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs, and thus is approximately 15 weeks long for traditional, synchronous classes during fall and spring semesters.
  - 3.3.2. During summer sessions, which are seven weeks long, students may take two courses (maximum of seven credit hours) each summer session. These courses provide a full semester's worth of instruction in this 28 day time period. Each course meets 2 hours per day, e.g., 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. If the course is four credit hours, e.g., PHYS 111, it meets 9:00-11:00 Monday – Thursday and 11:30-2:00 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, as this course includes a laboratory component.
  - 3.3.3. The distance program also is organized around the Academic Calendar Federal Policy, and thus each semester is 15 weeks long. However, each semester consists of two seven week terms. A full-time online degree student would take a total of four courses for the semester with a maximum of two courses per seven-week term.
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