Federal Definition

"... 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 not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week ... ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or

2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition 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.

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Key Elements

- Institutionally established
- An amount of work
- Represented in intended learning outcomes
- Verified by evidence of student achievement
- Equivalency that reasonably approximates 1:2 ratio in to out-of-class
- 50-minute hour acceptable
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

✧ Adopt and apply policy on credit hour consistent with federal definition

✧ Implement process for assuring "reliability and accuracy" of assignment of credit hours across all credit bearing activities

✧ Incorporate credit hour review into comprehensive self study requirements

Review variations in assignment of credit to assure conformance with "commonly accepted practice" in higher education.
WASC Responsibilities

- Evaluation committees will adopt policy and procedure for review of institutional documentation and review processes.

- Demonstrate that a review of credit hours is reflected in institutional self-studies and comprehensive team reports.

- Determine that credit hour assignments “conform to commonly accepted practice in higher education.”

- May use sampling of course credit hour assignments.

- Require corrections of deficiencies.

- Promptly notifies the Secretary of Education if systemic noncompliance is found, or significant noncompliance with one or more programs.
IMPLEMENTATION BY INSTITUTIONS

✧ Assure that credit hour policy is current, applies to all credit bearing activities, and is consistent with 600.2

✧ Demonstrate that internal processes exist to assure reliability and accuracy of credit assignments, such as:
  ✧ New course/program approval processes
  ✧ Program review processes
  ✧ Ongoing syllabi review processes
  ✧ Communications to deans, department chairs, program directors and faculty about credit hour criteria
SAMPLING PROCESS

✧ WASC review and sampling process is likely to include:
✧ Review of institutional polices and credit hour oversight processes (conducted off-site, if appropriate)
✧ Sampling of a small number of course syllabi, if possible, a sample size of 20-30 courses to determine if further review is needed
✧ Special attention given to credit assignments in accelerated and online courses