

H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) utilizes a system that is aligned with the Carnegie Unit definition of a semester credit/semester hour, as the College generally holds one semester unit of credit at the College as being equal to a minimum of three hours of work per week. Broken down, those three hours per week equal a credit/semester hour, which is comprised of 50 minutes of contact and instructional time, plus at least two hours of outside of the classroom preparatory work. Two credits/semester hours are therefore equivalent to 100 minutes of contact and instructional time, plus four hours of out of class preparatory time, etc. In some cases, there are two 80-minute in-class sessions per week for 3 credit courses during the 16 weeks of instruction and 1 week of final examinations in Fall and Spring semesters.

A key factor in verifying that the College's credit hour policies and procedures are applied consistently is assuring full adherence to clearly-delineated processes for developing and approving new courses. Departments seeking approval for a new course must complete a course content summary which includes the number of credits awarded and other details about the course. This course content summary is presented to the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) who will then comprehensively review the course for content, rigor, assessment schema, parity with other tertiary level institutions, purpose and the appropriate credit hours based on content and amount of work, both in-class and out-of-class preparation.

Once discussions and deliberations are completed and the committee is adequately satisfied that the course can be passed, it is then approved by majority vote. Once approved, it is then sent to the President's Cabinet via the Vice President for approval. The President's Cabinet gives final written approval before the course can be offered. The College's academic course scheduler will only add courses to the College schedule that have followed this rigorous approval process.

Substantive changes to existing courses, including changes to credit or contact hours, follow this same approval process as above. An increase in credit hours requires a rationale for such, including comparable courses at other tertiary institutions and additional contact hours and out-of-class time spent on assignments etc.

To ensure that each section of a course meets the required minimum of instructional minutes regardless of the length of term, the following information is used to determine calculation:

1. Semester begin and end dates
2. Scheduled meeting days
3. Section begin and end time
4. Exclusion dates

This process is applied consistently across all College sites.

The Vice President for Academics is ultimately responsible for the development and updating of all academic-oriented policies. The College's policy development (new policy), and policy update/maintenance (of existing policies) processes involves heads of departments, directors of various academic and research departments, deans, vice president, Student Development Council, Cabinet, Academic Committee of the Board of Governors, and the Board of Governors. The Determination of Credit Hours Policy has passed through the Student Development Council and Cabinet with amendments, and must now go through the Academic Committee of the Board of Governors, and the Board of Governors.