

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Academic and Student Affairs**  
**Consent**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6 – B (3)**  
**DATE: July 31 – August 2, 2023**

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**SUBJECT**

**Revised BOR Policy 2:32 – Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours (Second Reading)**

**CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

[BOR Policy 2:32](#) – Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

The Board of Regents system academic staff, working with a large group of stakeholders, have attempted to revise BOR Policy 2:32 – Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours as presented in Attachment I.

As outlined in BOR item 8-A from the June 2023 BOR meeting, the process of evaluating the academic calendars included stakeholders from academic leadership, student leadership, registrar, financial aid, and accounts receivable representation. Through the cross-functional, cross-institutional representation, additional outreach by those members included faculty, students (including Student Federation), and athletics. Regents and staff received feedback informally from faculty officers at institutional-specific faculty forums.

In addition, feedback was received from the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) and the Student Affairs Council (SAC) with respect to the academic calendar policy needs. Lastly, a discussion was also held with the Council of Presidents and Superintendents (COPS) on the academic calendars outlined in BOR item 6-B(1).

With all the feedback on functional and operational needs as well as policy implications, the proposed changes that assign credit and correlate to the academic calendar are reflected in Attachment I include the following:

1. Aligned the structure of the policy to include the more current formatting.
2. Addition of the Definitions section.
3. Addition of the Policy Statements.
4. Addition of the Credit Hour Accepted Standards section with updated language.
5. Addition of the Awarding of Credit section with updated language.

(Continued)

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**DRAFT MOTION 20230731\_6-B(3):**

I move to approve the second and final reading of the proposed revisions to BOR Policy 2:32 – Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours, as presented.

### **IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION**

This policy revision enhances and provides more clarity on federal rules and regulations as compared to the current policy. The revised policy development included several stakeholders to ensure that the policy supports the institutions' functional, operational, and policy and governance needs as it connects to the academic calendar.

Most importantly, the definition section was created to further inform students about why and how the academic calendar was developed. In addition, the reference of the code of federal regulations and the accreditation documentation can be found in the policy allowing additional research of the stakeholders and transparency of the policy.

Board academic staff supports the recommended revisions to BOR Policy 2:32 – Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours. No additional changes have been made since the first reading of the proposed revisions at the June 2023 BOR meeting.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I – Revised BOR Policy 2:32 – Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours

# SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

## Policy Manual

**SUBJECT:** Definition and Assignment of Credit Hours

**NUMBER:** 2:32

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### A. PURPOSE

This policy defines credit hours and the methodology used in the assignment of credit hours by the Regental Institutions. This policy is designed to ensure compliance with both federal regulations and the accrediting institution requirements. Federal law will supersede this policy where federal law differs.

~~Credit hours are used by the South Dakota public institutions to calculate, record, and interpret the number of earned credits that students accumulate as they fulfill requirements for degrees, certificates, and other similar academic qualifications. While this unit was developed and continues to be used to measure student work, it must be recognized that this time-on-task based definition is underpinned by the more important concept of student academic learning. Credit hours are assigned for subject mastery demonstrated by a typical student engaged in study for a designated amount of time. Stating this most broadly, credit hours are awarded when a student demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and proficiencies at a level and in a form that meets or exceeds that expected of a typical student after studying for this specified amount of time.~~

### B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Contact Hour:** Defined as a measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. The Board of Regents requires that for every credit hour, one (1) hour of contact shall be assigned to a course (e.g., a typical three (3) credit hour course, fifteen (15) weeks = forty-five (45) contact hours).

2. **Credit Hour**<sup>1</sup>: Under Federal Law, defined as

- a. One (1) hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen (15) weeks for one (1) semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- b. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) 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.

3. **Delivery Method:** Defined as the mode for which a course has been configured to deliver the course content (e.g., Face-to-Face, Online Asynchronous, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 34, Part 600.2

- 4. Institution Accreditation:** Holding accreditation from one (1) of the following regional accrediting bodies, unless otherwise specified: Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).
- 5. Instructional Method:** Defined as a methodology used to present course content which arranges student learning toward desired course outcomes (e.g., Lecture, Discussion, Lab, etc.).
- 6. Regental Institution:** Defined as one of the six (6) public universities: Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, South Dakota State University, and the University of South Dakota.

### **C. POLICY STATEMENTS**

1. A credit hour is a unit by which an institution measures its coursework. Federal Law<sup>2</sup> permits an institution to determine the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to consider a variety of delivery methods, instructional methods, measurements of student work, educational experience, outside classroom activity/preparation, disciplines, and degree levels. The credit hour value for a course is determined primarily by the amount of time, the intensity of the educational experience, and the amount of outside preparation required by the student.
2. BOR Policy 2:6 shall provide governance on the required calendar ensuring instructional time is established to meet credit hour and contact hour requirements.
3. Credit hours are used to convey thea length of a program of study (BOR Policy 2:23).

### **D. CREDIT HOUR ACCEPTED STANDARDS**

The following are generally accepted standards in higher education as it relates to credit hour requirements<sup>3,4</sup>. In general, an equivalent of forty-five (45) hours of work by a typical student is required for each credit hour.

1. At least fifteen (15) contact hours of recitation, lecture, discussion, seminar, or similar experience, as well as a minimum of thirty (30) hours of student homework is required for each credit hour;
2. Laboratory courses with few outside requirements require a minimum of forty-five (45) contact hours for each credit hour;
3. Laboratory courses with moderate out-of-class preparation require a minimum of thirty (30) contact hours for each credit hour;

<sup>2</sup> [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Title 34, Part 600.2](#)

<sup>3</sup> [HLC Policy on Assignment of Credits](#)

<sup>4</sup> [HLC Assumed Practices](#)

4. Studio courses must involve at least thirty (30) contact hours and at least fifteen (15) hours of homework for each credit hour;
5. Internships/practica/field experiences must require a minimum of forty-five (45) clock hours of work for each credit hour;
6. Music instruction and specialized types of music performance offerings must conform to the requirement for accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Music;
7. Workshops must involve a minimum of forty-five (45) hours for each credit hour, including a minimum of fifteen (15) contact hours, with the balance of the requirement completed as students fulfill related assignments; and
8. Credit hours for courses delivered using online (distance), hybrid, and other nontraditional modes are assigned based on competencies or learning outcomes that are acquired through coursework and are equivalent to those of students in a traditional classroom setting.

#### **E. AWARDING OF CREDIT**

Each Regental institution must demonstrate that credit hours assigned to the course and awarded to each successful completer are appropriate for the course and for the program. Most commonly, this is demonstrated by documenting that students completing the course have acquired equivalent levels of knowledge, skills, or competencies to those acquired by students in comparable programs of study. Each Regental institution shall have a practice documented to review and audit courses ensuring they meet the institution's accreditor standards.

**FORMS / APPENDICES:**

None

**SOURCE:**

BOR June 2011; BOR August 2023.