

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

All courses offered by Peirce College for credit adhere to federal and state regulations on the assignment of a credit hour.

Credit Hour Definition

U.S. Department of Education:

The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34: Education, Part 600. Institutional eligibility under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. Subpart A-General §600.2 states the following:

Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), 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 for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount 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.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE):

The Pennsylvania Code, 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 31, §31.21-31.22 states the following:

A semester credit hour represents a unit of curricular material that normally can be taught in a minimum of 14 hours of classroom instruction, plus appropriate outside preparation or the equivalent as determined by the faculty

Peirce College:

Given the federal definition of credit hour, a three credit course represents the equivalent of 45 hours of direct faculty instruction and 90 hours of out of class student work. Direct faculty instruction is instruction led by faculty teaching the course. Out of class student work is all work a student completes on his or her own, which includes preparatory work for class.

Course formats

At Peirce College the academic year is separated into fall, spring, and summer semesters. The College offers traditional courses that are 15 weeks, accelerated courses that are seven weeks, and intensive course that are three weeks in length. The College offers the following delivery methods:

- On campus – all classes meet face-to-face.
- Online – all content is delivered online asynchronously. There are no required face-to-face meetings.
- Peirce FIT – all content is delivered online asynchronously and on campus (face-to-face). In this course delivery format, students choose week to week to attend class on campus or online.

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R. Toliver-Roberts, Provost

- Peirce Online Intensive – all content is delivered online asynchronously for three weeks. There are no required face-to-face meetings.

Undergraduate and Graduate credits are assigned as follows:

Course Format	Credit Awarded	Calculation	
		Direct Faculty Instruction	Out of Class Student Work
On Campus (15 week course)	3 credits	3 hours per week (total 45 hours for 3 credits)	6 hours per week (total 90 hours for 3 credits)
On Campus (seven week course)	3 credits	6.5 hours per week (total 45 hours for 3 credits)	13 hours per week (90 hours for 3 credits)
Online (seven week course)	3 credits	6.5 hours per week (total 45 hours for 3 credits)	13 hours per week (90 hours for 3 credits)
Peirce FIT (seven week course)	3 credits	6.5 hours per week (total 45 hours for 3 credits)	13 hours per week (90 hours for 3 credits)
Peirce Online Intensive (three week course)	3 credits	15 hours per week (total 45 hours for 3 credits)	30 hours per week (90 hours for 3 credits)
Peirce Weekend Intensive (one week course)	1 credit	20 hours per week	25 hours per week

Traditional 15 week courses, on campus and Peirce FIT formats, meet the definition of a credit as stated in the regulations. Weekly direct faculty instruction hours are calculated by dividing 45 hours of instruction by the number of weeks in the course.

Modes of Instruction

All online and Peirce FIT courses align with PDE parameters as noted in PA Code §31.21:

According to PDE clarification, equivalent content should:

- related directly to the objectives of the course/program
- measurable for grading purposes
- have the direct oversight or supervision of the faculty member teaching the course
- in some form be equivalent of an activity conducted in the classroom

PDE states that equivalent content may not be:

- homework assignments
- focused on “time spent,” that is, the amount of time the student spends accomplishing the task

To that end, Peirce College has determined that equivalency content may not be any type of student work that is produced without faculty guidance. That is, homework, independent research and writing for a final project without ongoing instructor oversight or feedback, and any type of coursework that is not directly overseen by the instructor are not equivalent content.

The Instructional Design Specialist provides a variety of professional development workshops and individual consultation opportunities for faculty to assist in the design, development, and effective utilization of appropriate instructional options and activities.

An array of instructional or student engagement activities can be utilized to achieve the equivalent of 45 hours of direct faculty instruction and 90 hours of out of class student work. Choosing a particular learning activity or combination of activities is the responsibility of the lead instructor (faculty course coordinator) responsible for developing the course in terms of achieving the stated goals, objectives, and outcomes of the course, demonstrating an awareness of the various learning styles and experiences of the students, and in determining equivalency to a semester of credit.

Faculty have identified a list of instruction modes that may be used within all seven and three week courses to ensure direct faculty instruction equals 45 hours and out of class student work equals 90 hours.

Direct Faculty Instruction Activities		
Course Component-Direct Instruction	Description	Estimated Rate of Equivalency (General Guideline)
Blogs and Reflective Journals	Instructor led opportunity for students to apply learned concepts or for reflection on learning experiences; to be shared with instructor and/or classmates for thoughtful analysis, feedback and assessment.	Instructor led feedback, analysis & assessment leading to 1 private posting = ½ hour instruction. Instructor led feedback, analysis & assessment leading to 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates' postings) = 1 hour instruction
Case Study	Instructor feedback, discussion sessions, group analysis and presentation of results on case studies and problem solving scenarios relative to course goals and objectives and utilizing higher order analytical skills.	Instructor led utilization of case study material (feedback/discussion/group analysis/presentation = 1 hour utilization = 1 hour instruction
Chat rooms	Chat rooms for class or group projects that provide opportunities for collaborative learning and that have specific expectations for participation and feedback.	1 hour chat = 1 hour instruction
Consultation / Meeting / Conference	Can include phone meetings, in person or other multimedia communication, one-on-one contact between the student and instructor for individual learning, as appropriate to course objectives, that have specific expectations for participation and feedback.	1 hour session = 1 hour instruction
Exam	Opportunity for instructor to assess students' subject knowledge and provide feedback on students' progress through tests provided in person in live classroom setting or online.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction

Field Trip	Field trips or tours (including virtual tours), as appropriate to course objectives, in which students may participate as an individual or group in analyzing an activity and prepare a paper or presentation to share with instructor and class.	Instructor led – 1 hour tour = 1 hour instruction (Student(s) alone without instructor or facilitator) - 1 hour tour plus reflection paper = 1 hour instruction
Group activity writing and discussion	Faculty directed group activity including writing. Can count each week as an occurrence.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Group project	Instructor mediated culminating activity with specific learning objectives; students collaborate via e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face contact to research, analyze, synthesize, and prepare project with instructor receiving periodic updates and providing guidance to group.	1 hour per week for duration of project
Guided project	Instructor mediated culminating individual project with specific learning objectives; student and facilitator collaborate via email, chat, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face to research, analyze, synthesize and prepare project with instructor receiving periodic updates and providing guidance and feedback.	1 hour per week for duration of project
Lab Assignments, Lab Simulators, Web-based Labs	Lab assignment planned with a pedagogical purpose. Simulated computer environment is an opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience. Simulator offers guided feedback and review.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Lecture (on-line, live synchronous/asynchronous)	Faculty delivered synchronous or asynchronous presentation and instruction related to course objectives.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Library & Internet Research	Library and internet based research in which instructor interacts with and directs students to locate certain information or resources and relates them to course objectives and present them to class in a designated manner, in the process of research (including bibliographic instruction, discussion of appropriate research materials and information literacy, citation of journal or statistical entries, the ethical use of information, etc.), any related group activities (online chats, online course postings, online discussions, etc.) as well as the presentation and instructor's feedback and analysis of the research presented.	Instructor directed research leading to 1 five page project = 1 hour instruction
Librarian and Instructor Facilitated Online Tutorial	Instructor and Librarian facilitated tutorial via thread/chat where students can do actual research online and check in live with the instructor and librarian.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Multimedia	Faculty directed use of social media, DVD/CDs, video, podcasts, VOD casts, music etc. and related instructional assignments.	Instructor led utilization of material (viewing, discussion and application) - 1 hour utilization = 1 hour instruction
Online Writing Workshop	Student led and instructor moderated thread that encourages students to discuss their writing success and challenges with one another	1 hour = 1 hour instruction

Orientation to technology	Faculty directed review of technology related to course objectives.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Presentation	Faculty directed viewing of film or filmed speaker or live speaker event related to course objectives.	(Viewing, discussion and application) - 1 hour utilization = 1 hour instruction
Quizzes/Problems	Opportunity for instructor to assess students' subject knowledge and provide feedback on students' progress through quizzes provided in person in live classroom setting or online.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Self or Peer Assessment of work	Planned facilitated and monitored with a pedagogical purpose.	1 hour = 1 hour instruction
Threaded Discussion	Online discussions structured to provide guided or instructor-mediated threaded discussion with specified timeframes and expectations for participation.	Instructor guided discussion resulting in 1 posting (requires reading all postings) = ½ hour instruction Instructor guided discussion resulting in 1 posting (requires reading all postings and reply to a minimum of 5) = 1 hour instruction

Out-of-Class Student Work Activities		
Course Component	Description	Estimated Average Hours Per Occurrence
Assignment	Examples: math problems, questions at the end of the chapter in the text, application of a lesson or worksheet.	1 hour
Multimedia	Assigned use of social media, DVD/CDs, video, podcasts, VOD casts, music etc.	1 hour
Paper/Essays	Papers and essays using APA formatting Number of occurrences = Number of pages.	2.5 hours
Portfolios	Compilation of student artifacts	3 hour
Presentation	Preparation of already researched topic, includes creating multimedia for the presentation	1.5 hours
Reading	Any type of assigned reading such as textbooks or journal. Number of occurrences = Number of pages.	¼ hour
Reflective Writing	Any type of student written reflection such as a reflection journal. Number of occurrences = Number of pages	¼ hour
Research	Finding, reviewing and reading for presentation or paper.	2 hours
Tutorials	Online or otherwise available multimedia lesson.	1 hour or based on actual duration of tutorial when possible.

Process for Determining and Monitoring Amount and Level of Credits

Credit hour compliance is determined by the faculty course coordinators. Annually, the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (QA) identifies a selection of courses to undergo Quality Matters and Credit Hour Equivalency (CHE) review. QA ensures all course coordinators complete the Matrix of Instructional Activities, which totals 45 hours of direct faculty instruction and 90 hours of out of class student work. Faculty Chairs give the final approval on all QA reviews. In conjunction with student learning outcomes assessment, the matrix is reviewed by the course coordinator as changes are made to courses. The Faculty Chair alerts Institutional Research that approved matrices are ready for archiving in the academic advancement share folder.