Policy on Assignment of Credit

Policy Overview

The purpose of this policy is to define and clarify the manner in which Southwestern College (SWC or College) assigns credit/quarter units to all of its accredited learning activities, including graduate courses, graduate seminars, certificate program classes, workshops, etc.

Scope and Applicability

This policy describes the process and the criteria for providing oversight for the correct assignment of credit/quarter units for all graduate courses, seminars, workshops, etc. whether on-ground or online, in all accredited degree and certificate programs, and for all courses, whether required or elective. The purpose of this policy is to establish clarity, consistency, and conformity with national standards on the assignment of credit.

Policy Statement

Credit will be assigned in a consistent manner across all academic programs and in all delivery methods (on-ground for in-person classes; online for distance education, whether the distance method of course delivery is synchronous or asynchronous).

Credit or quarter units will be assigned according to the definitions given below.

Each quarter unit is the equivalent of thirty hours of required learning activity per quarter.

All required learning activities must be explicitly stated in the course syllabus.

The class Attendance Policy, which requires attendance for all scheduled classes, is used to count for seat-time when seat-time is used toward meeting learning activity total hours. For example, a three quarter unit class will generally meet for three hours per week. A course that awards 4.5 quarter units might be scheduled to meet four hours per week and the additional five hours of seat-time may be scheduled with one weekend intensive of five hours requiring attendance.

The class meeting schedule is established in the Quarterly Course Schedule and is published on the course syllabus indicating times and dates for all scheduled class meetings.

Definitions

a) The Academic Year (AY) at SWC is defined according to a year-round academic schedule of four ten-week quarters with 2-3 week breaks in between each quarter. The AY begins in late September and ends the following year in late August or early September.
b) As the AY is divided into four quarters of equal length, a credit hour is therefore referred to as a quarter unit, to conform with national norms.
c) A quarter unit at SWC is defined as thirty hours of learning activity per quarter. This has typically been divided into one hour (60 minutes) of seat time plus two hours on required learning

activities out-of-class per week for a total of three hours per week or thirty hours per quarter for each quarter unit awarded.

    i) For example, CNAT 500-3 Multicultural Awareness is 1.5 quarter units. The syllabus indicates course requirements will fulfill the equivalent of 45 hours of student work over the ten week quarter. This is divided between 15 hours of required attendance or seat-time and 30 hours of required reading, viewing, writing and discussion spread across the ten week quarter beginning with required reading and viewing prior to the first class meeting and ending with a final paper due in the final class meeting.

d) Seat-time is defined as scheduled class time requiring student attendance, whether in a face-to-face meeting for an on-ground class or in an online class via zoom.

e) Learning activity is defined as all required assignments stated as requirements in the course syllabus. Learning activity includes a wide range of educational strategies, including but not limited to: team projects, solo projects, reading, viewing, experiential activities, writing, reflection, research, artmaking, documenting, preparing for in-class demonstrations and/or presentations, attending labs, practicum and internship activity, hands-on training, participating in online discussion boards and other online strategies for engagement, attending in-person or zoom classes, participating in activities and discussions during class periods (seat time), etc.

Process Details

I.   The Role of Academic Council

    I. Any new or significantly revised course must be reviewed and approved by the Academic Council (AC). AC has oversight responsibility to approve the following: course title, course number, the amount of credit/quarter unit awarded, the course description, and the course learning outcomes. New syllabi may also present required reading, assignments, and the percentage of credit awarded for each assignment. AC also determines which of its members will serve as the Course Leader for every course.

    II. Academic Council also has responsibility for the syllabus template, including the structure for the course outline, and all other details pertaining to the inclusion or exclusion of content in the syllabus template. The syllabus template is standardized and is used for all courses in all degree and certificate programs. Any changes/updates to the content or design of the syllabus template require prior AC approval.

    III. The members of Academic Council are responsible for the creation and final approval of the quarterly course schedule to assure in-class meeting times and required zoom sessions for synchronous classes fulfill the expectations for assignment of quarter units per the Policy on Assignment of Credit.

    IV. Academic Council has oversight of all academic policies and procedures, including the Attendance Policy referenced above, the Policy on Assignment of Credit, etc. AC may revise its policies according to assessment activities that result in ongoing and continuous improvement.

II.   The Role of the Course Leader

    I. Once a course has been approved by AC, the Course Leader is responsible for the further development and refinement of the course syllabus. Course Leaders are also members of the Academic Council. Course Leaders may work in collaboration with or have oversight of syllabus development with adjunct, part-time or full-time faculty. The

Course Leader holds ultimate responsibility to approve the course syllabus prior to publication.

II. The final syllabus each quarter must include all required reading, viewing, out-of-class experiential activities, assignments, and the percentage of credit awarded for each requirement.

III. The course syllabus and the course outline are completed and published prior to student registration.

IV. Through student learning outcomes assessment and continuous improvement, Course Leaders are expected to update course syllabi on a regular and ongoing basis to incorporate new material, reading, viewing, in-class and out-of-class experiential activities and assignments.

V. The Course Leader assures that the required assignments, out-of-class activities, including required reading, viewing, and experiential learning fulfill the expected number of hours required for out-of-class work per the Policy on Assignment of Credit.

VI. The Course Leader as an active partner in the Course Scheduling process assures that the required seat-time is fulfilled whether through required class meeting times or zoom sessions for online synchronous courses per the Policy on Assignment of Credit.

III.   Creation of the Quarterly Course Schedule

I. The creation of the quarterly course schedule is overseen by the Executive Vice President in close collaboration with the Dean of the College and the Course Scheduling Team (CST). The CST consists of Course Leaders and the Academic Advisor/Director of Student & Career Services who brings information on potential conflicts for the various student cohorts. The final schedule is reviewed and approved by the Academic Council prior to publication.

II. Course Leaders are responsible to select which faculty will teach which course each quarter. They coordinate class meeting times with these faculty as well as with the Course Scheduling Team. Considerations include: adherence to the Policy on Assignment of Credit and avoiding class conflicts for students.

IV.   Statement of Accountability/Responsibility

The Dean of the College serves as the Chief Academic Officer and has ultimate responsibility for implementation of the Policy on Assignment of Credit. The Dean chairs the Academic Council. The Dean has oversight responsibility for Course Leaders and the syllabus development process. The Dean supervises academic program chairs and academic program directors. Alongside the chairs and directors, the Dean oversees all faculty. The Dean also supervises the registrar and works very closely with the Director of Distance Education. Together they work on the quarterly process for syllabus revision, approval, publication, and implementation.