



Policy on Credits and Degrees

Definition of Credit Hour

In accordance with federal policy, Elms College defines a credit hour as an amount of work represented in the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates:

(1) One hour (50 minute period) 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 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) 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. Laboratories, internships, clinicals and practica vary by program in terms of the number of hours required, but in general are 2-3 hours/week per credit.

For courses with non-traditional formats, e.g. accelerated, Weekend, online or hybrid/blended, students are required to spend the equivalent amount of total time per credit hour as spent in traditional courses. However, the mix of time spent in direct instruction and time spent on assignments and other work, per week, will vary.

Degrees

Undergraduate degrees:

An undergraduate associate degree (A.A., A.S.), normally represents the equivalent of two academic years of full-time study (and requiring a minimum of 60 semester credits) or its equivalent in depth and quality of experience. An undergraduate baccalaureate degree (B.A., B.S.) normally represents about four academic years (and requiring a minimum of 120 semester credits) of college study.

Graduate Degrees:

A first graduate degree (Master's-level, including M.A., M.S.), represents at least one year of post-baccalaureate study (requiring a minimum of 30 semester credits). Professional and specialty degrees (M.B.A., M.S.N., M.Ed., M.A.T.), normally require two or more years of full-time study. Extensive undergraduate preparation in the field may reduce the length of study to one year. Graduate degrees include a significant component of coursework in addition to any supervised research or practice.

November 15, 2011: Approved by the President's Cabinet