Title: #V-10. Credit Hour to Contact Hour Ratio

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I. Purpose

WVU Parkersburg's credit hour to contact hour ratio policy outlines the relationship between the amount of time a student spends in class (contact hours) and the number of credit hours assigned to a course. This policy is essential for ensuring consistency in how academic credits are awarded and for aligning the college's offerings with federal[1], state, and accreditation requirements.

II. Definition of Terms

- **Credit Hour:** The measure used to reflect the amount of time expected for student learning. Typically, one credit hour represents 50-60 minutes of classroom instruction per week over a standard semester (often 15-16 weeks).
- **Contact Hour:** The actual time spent under direct instruction, such as classroom time, lab time, or studio time. This typically involves face-to-face interaction with an instructor.

III. Standard Credit to Contact Hour Ratios

- **Lecture Courses**: These typically have a 1:1 ratio.
  - Example: A 3-credit hour course meets for three 50-minute sessions per week for 15 weeks, equaling 37.5 contact hours.
- **Laboratory Courses**: These usually have a higher contact-to-credit hour ratio because of the hands-on nature of the instruction. A common ratio is 2:1 or 3:1, meaning two to three contact hours per week for each credit hour of instruction.
  - Example: A 1 credit hour science lab might meet for 2 or 3 contact hours each week, depending on the nature of the lab.
- **Field Experience/Clinical/Internship Courses**: These courses might have even higher contact-to-credit hour ratios.
  - Example: A nursing clinical might require 4-6 contact hours for each credit hour earned.

IV. Distance or Online Learning

- For online or hybrid courses, the learning outcomes and the total workload (combining instruction time, reading assignments, etc.) must be equivalent to those of traditional in-person courses, even if there are fewer physical contact hours.

[1]Code of Federal Regulation Title 34, Section 600.2: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart-A/section-600.2

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