This operating instruction documents policies and procedures for determining credit hours awarded for all courses offered at the Graduate School of Engineering and Management. U.S. Department of Education regulations require accredited institutions of higher education to define "credit hour". The Higher Learning Commission also requires institutions to develop policies and procedures for assignment of credit hours to courses and other types of academic work consistent with the institution's definition and commonly accepted practices. The Graduate School of Engineering and Management has adopted the Federal definition of a credit hour.


2. **Policy.** A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates not less than—

   2.1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately ten weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

   2.2. An equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph 2.1. for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, special or independent study,

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1 A class hour in the Graduate School is 50 minutes.
accelerated/compressed courses formats, distance learning courses, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

3. Application of Credit Hour Policy.

3.1. This credit hour policy applies to all courses at all levels that award academic credit (i.e. any course that appears on an official transcript issued by AFIT, Graduate School of Engineering and Management) regardless of the mode of delivery including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. Academic departments and faculty are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

3.2. For graduate work, the faculty may determine the appropriate mix of class time and outside effort in order for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the course. Faculty are required, however, to produce sufficient supporting evidence to demonstrate a course meets the requirements set forth in paragraph 2 and, therefore, deserves the stated credit hours for the purposes of internal or regional accreditation audits.

4. Process for Determining and Approving Credit Hour Requests. The following procedures are defined to assure institutional reliability and accuracy of assignment of credit hours across all credit bearing activities.

4.1. Responsibilities: The Curriculum or Program Committees in each academic department and the Graduate School’s Academic Standards Committee are responsible for reviewing and approving credit hours of all courses based on the policy in paragraph 2 and its application in paragraph 3. They must verify that the instruction and student workload for the course as documented in the supporting evidence meets the credit hour standard. The verification of credit hours is made when a new course or a revision to an existing course is proposed. The submitted syllabus is examined for contact time as well as for assignment descriptions and learning outcome assessment mechanisms.

4.2. Procedures for determining the assignment of credit hours to courses:

a. In the process of developing a new course or revising an existing course based on a change in credit hours, faculty will propose the appropriate assignment of credit hours to a course on the “Request for New Course” or “Request for Course Change” form, respectively. Credit hours for Special Studies courses shall be annotated and justified on the "Special Studies Request" form.

b. Faculty must provide sufficient evidence and detail in syllabi or supplemental course materials to establish that the minimum amount of work expected of students is consistent with the assignment of credit hours to the course. This substantiating information shall be attached to the appropriate request forms noted in paragraph 4.2.a.

c. The proposed assignment of credit hours for new and revised courses must be reviewed and approved at least one quarter prior to the new or revised course being offered with the
proposed change(s). (This does not apply to Special Studies courses which are treated in paragraph 4.2.d.) The requests will be routed through the following offices/committees for review and approval prior to receipt and action by the Registrar’s Office:

1. Department Curriculum Committee;
2. Department Head;
3. Academic Standards Committee; and
4. Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

d. The proposed assignment of credit hours for Special Studies courses must be reviewed and approved by the head of the department, verifying adherence to this policy. Requests must be submitted on a Special Studies Request Form and received by the Registrar’s Office no later than one week prior to the first day of classes for quarter during in which the Special Studies course will be offered.

e. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will consult with departmental faculty when the assignment of credit is inconsistent with this policy.

f. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will provide final verification of the assignment of credit hours and will be responsible for the interpretation of policies and procedures pertaining to the assignment of credit hours to a course or other types of academic work.

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