

Course Credit Guidelines

Guidelines for Assigning Credit to Courses

The primary standard for establishing course credit at Northeastern University is the semester/quarter hour, or Carnegie Unit, the standard used by the federal government. One hour of credit is awarded for a lecture/seminar class meeting 50 minutes each week during a 15-week semester or 12-week quarter and also requiring a minimum of two hours of outside preparation each week by the student. An hour of contact time in the rest of the document is based on this 50-minute session.

- 2 semester/quarter hours (100 minutes per week of instruction plus 4–6 hours homework, or equivalent)
- 3 semester/quarter hours (150 minutes per week of instruction plus 6–9 hours homework, or equivalent)
- 4 semester/quarter hours (200 minutes per week of instruction plus 8–12 hours homework, or equivalent)

The Office of the University Registrar (<https://registrar.northeastern.edu/>) maintains the official record for all courses. In the event of error in any publication, the academic record will reflect the correct semester/quarter hours applicable to any degree requirement.

On occasion, course titles change, while the course number remains the same. Despite such title changes, the course is still considered to be the same course. Students who have taken the course under the old title and then take the course again under the new title are considered to have repeated the course.

NOTE ABOUT HOMEWORK AND STUDENT PREPARATION FOR CLASS

The credit hour assumes a set proportion of two hours of student preparation or homework for every hour spent in class. Northeastern wishes to emphasize that the federal government has established this as the minimum amount of work expected, and assigning more work does not in itself justify an increase in the credit value of the course. We also wish to note that there is great variation in the amount of time each student will need to devote to each course or to a specific form of study (e.g., reading, writing, completing problem sets), and, therefore, it is not possible to enforce any exact accounting of student work outside of class.

CREDIT ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

Northeastern uses the Carnegie Unit to determine class meeting time requirements. The actual amount of academic work that goes into a single credit hour is calculated as follows:

- One lecture (taught) or seminar (discussion) credit hour represents one hour per week (50 minutes) of scheduled class/seminar time and two hours of student preparation time.
- One laboratory or studio credit hour represents one hour per week of lecture or discussion time plus one to two hours per week of scheduled supervised or independent work, or a total of three hours in the lab or studio.

DEFINED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

- Traditional: meets fully on ground in a physical location with instructor present
- Hybrid: meets majority on ground in a physical location with instructor present with some online instructional component
- Live cast: meets fully on ground in a physical location with the instructor in a different location teaching synchronously and supported by an instructional assistant in the physical location
- Online: meets fully online

FULL-TIME AND HALF-TIME EXPERIENCES

Academic experiences integral to curriculum and requiring registration (but not credit bearing) have the following required hours of participation:

- Full-time experiences: 32–40 hours per week in a semester for a minimum of 11 weeks or 55 days, or in a quarter for 9 weeks or 45 days
- Half-time experiences: 16–31.99 hours per week in a semester for a minimum of 11 weeks or 55 days, or in a quarter for 9 weeks or 45 days (to achieve full-time status, graduate students must take 3 or more academic credits and undergraduate students must take 4 or more academic credits)
- Summer 1 or Summer 2 semester: minimum of 5 weeks or 25 workdays
- Summer quarter: 6 weeks or 30 workdays

International students must confer with the Office of Global Services to determine CPT requirements as appropriate.