

COURSE LOAD CREDIT

Guidelines for Awarding Credit in the School of the Arts

The following guidance indicates how the University Credit Hour Policy is applied to the more commonly used credit situations in the School of the Arts. This includes the standard 15-week format, 7 or 10-week format, non-classroom based learning experiences, and online course delivery experiences. The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) guidelines for awarding credit are used as a basis for this document.

Standard 16-Week (15 week semester/1 week final exams)

- **Lecture/Seminar Classes:** A unit of credit equates to three hours of student work per week (1 hour in-class or direct instruction plus a minimum of 2 hours of out-of-class). Total term (or semester) hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16.
- **Studio Classes:** A unit of credit equates to 6 hours of student work per week (2 hours in-class or direct instruction plus a minimum of 4 hours of out-of-class). Total term (or semester) hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16.
- **Laboratory/Experiential Classes:** A unit of credit equates to 4 hours of student work per week (1-3 hours in-class or direct instruction in a laboratory/experiential setting plus a minimum of 1-3 hours of out-of-class). The range allows for discipline and student level differentiation. Instructors of record for a course are encouraged to state the expected out-of-class student work in their course syllabus.
- **Ensemble/Production Classes:** A unit of credit equates to 6 hours of student work per week (3-6 hours in-class or direct instruction plus a minimum of 1 hour of out-of-class). Total term (or semester) hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16 but may happen in irregular scheduling. 0 Credit may be awarded for Ensemble or Production Classes beyond degree requirements.
- **Applied (Private) Studio:** A unit of credit equates to a minimum of 3 hours of student practice per week, plus the necessary individual instruction. 1 credit receives a 30-minute private lesson, 2 credits receive a 45-minute private lesson, and 3 credits receive an hour private lesson. All applied students also participate in weekly performance seminars; students studying a secondary area are encouraged, but not required, to attend seminars for that area. Total term (or semester) hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 16.

Courses Meeting Fewer than 15 weeks

The credit hours awarded for a given course or academic experience must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of 3 hours combined direct instruction and student work per credit hour for a 15-week term.

EXAMPLE. A 3-credit course should require the equivalent of 9 hours of combined direct instruction and student work per week for the equivalent of a 15-week term. At Samford University, we define the “course hour” as equal to 50 minutes, which would give a baseline of 112.5 total hours for the course example. These hours may consist of a variety of course activities including: face-to-face course meetings, time to read course materials/texts, virtual course meetings, experiential learning activities such as service learning projects or research with faculty, and synthesis/reflection time.

Independent Study and Experiential Learning Courses

Credit hours applicable for a given course or academic experience must be reasonably equivalent to the standard of 3 hours combined direct instruction and student work per week, per credit hour for a 15-week term. Specific independent study and experiential guidelines and forms are provided at the school/college from which the course is being taken. Guidelines at the college/school may include the number of independent studies (or credits) and experiential learning opportunities permitted per student for a single degree, required student GPA, and which course numbers are assigned as independent study.