

# Course Credit Definition Committee

Update and Proposed Changes  
to Definitions and Guidelines

*Revised 3/21/14 per sense of the Committee*

# Agenda

- Feedback received thus far on proposed definitions and guidelines (see slides 4, 5)
- For discussion:
  - Proposed changes to definitions and guidelines based on above (see slides 6, 7)
  - Proposed guidelines for online and blended courses (see attached document from Dean *ad interim* Tanya Zlateva)
- Summary of reviews under way and timeline (see slide 8)

# Take-away's from 3/19 meeting

- Retain original language for 1:1 and 1:2 credit assignment guidelines.
- Include reference to “new learning” in definition for contact hour. (see slides 6, 7)
- Make explicit reference to online and blended learning in definitions and guidelines. (see slides 6, 7)
- Provide examples and templates for how courses could be modified to meet current guidelines. (Committee to provide.)
- Address need for course development and conversion resources, both one-time and sustaining, in report to Provost. (Committee to discuss report at next meeting.)
- Convene committee again to review all feedback and consider online/blended rubrics.

# Feedback on Current Proposal

## Working Definitions: Faculty and Contact Hour

- Faculty: Who gets counted as providing faculty contact?
  - Persons hired or appointed by Boston University to deliver or supervise instruction in a credit-bearing course. [NOTE: this definition of faculty applies only in the assignment of credit to courses]
  - **Feedback: Desire for more clarity/discussion of how graduate students, proctors (online), and the like factor into faculty contact for credit. For example, does a 50-minute required discussion session mediated by a graduate TA count for credit?**
- Contact: What sorts of faculty contact may be assigned credit?
  - One-to-many synchronous or asynchronous instruction with the expectation for interaction between students and faculty. One-on-one direct supervision of practica, externships and internships, clinical placements, studios, research, or scholarship.
  - **Feedback: Concern about how we measure and account for rigor of contact outside traditional classroom contact, e.g., discussion sessions, required attendance at course-related activities or events.**
- Scheduled contact hour:
  - One weekly scheduled hour (50 minutes) or equivalent of faculty contact , as defined above, taking place in a Boston University-approved room, facility, or site, or taking place via an approved electronic platform.
  - **Feedback: Is scheduled contact the most appropriate, forward-looking measure?**

# Feedback on Current Proposal

## Guidelines

1 credit per 1 scheduled contact hour of lecture, recitation, or other required, scheduled interaction between faculty and students.

1 credit per 2 scheduled contact hours of a lecture-affiliated laboratory.

*For each of the above guidelines, we assume a minimum of 2 hours of independent student work per credit hour.*

***Feedback: “Contact hour” is too limiting and oftentimes does not relate to how instruction is delivered. Is there another measure that better describes current practices and anticipates future practices?***

1 credit per 3 hours per week of student effort in independent or directed study.

1 credit per 5 hours per week of student effort in practica, internships, externships, and clinical placements.

**Certain courses**, e.g., directed studies, internships, intensive seminars and lectures, laboratories, and studio classes, **may consider intensity of engagement with the faculty and subject matter, as well as student responsibility for learning outcomes, in the assignment of credit to courses.** For the purpose of assigning credit, **measures of effort and academic achievement include, but are not limited to, time spent in the classroom, lab, studio, or on independent research as articulated in course syllabi and program requirements.**

# Proposed Changes

## Working Definitions: Faculty and Contact Hour

- Faculty: Who gets counted as providing faculty contact?
  - Persons hired or appointed by Boston University to deliver or supervise instruction in a credit-bearing course or *graduate teaching assistants assigned and supervised by BU faculty*.
- Contact: What sorts of faculty contact may be assigned credit?
  - One-to-many synchronous or asynchronous, *e.g., online*, instruction with the expectation for interaction between students and faculty *in which new learning occurs*. One-on-one direct supervision of practica, externships and internships, clinical placements, studios, research, or scholarship. *Non-participation in credit-bearing activities puts students at risk for achieving learning outcomes*.
- Scheduled contact hour:
  - One weekly *required* hour (minimum of 50 minutes) or equivalent of faculty contact, as defined above.
  - *In many cases, scheduled contact hours are equivalent to classroom seat time; however, other forms of engagement, such as participation in online forums or course-related activities, may be counted as “scheduled contact” wholly or in combination with classroom-based instruction for the purposes of assigning credit. All such scheduled contact must be specified in course syllabi and contribute to achievement of student learning outcomes.*

# Proposed Changes Guidelines

Principal change: move from “contact hour” to “student effort” as the unit of measure for all credit assignment guidelines

1 credit per 1 scheduled contact hour per week for courses that include lectures, recitations, or other required, scheduled interaction between faculty and students.

1 credit per 2 scheduled contact hours per week for lecture-affiliated laboratory courses.

*For each of the above guidelines, we assume a minimum of 2 hours of independent student work per credit hour per week.*

1 credit per 3 hours of student effort per week in independent or directed study.

1 credit per 5 hours of student effort per week in practica, internships, externships, and clinical placements.

*Certain courses*, e.g., directed studies, internships, intensive seminars and lectures, laboratories, and studio classes, *may consider intensity of engagement with the faculty and subject matter, as well as student responsibility for learning outcomes, in the assignment of credit to courses.* For the purpose of assigning credit, measures of effort and academic achievement include, but are not limited to, time spent in the classroom, lab, studio, or on independent research as articulated in course syllabi and program requirements.

# Reviews Under Way & Timeline

Individual meetings with deans (CAS, SMG, ENG, SMG, COM) focused on undergraduate courses

Group meeting with SED, SSW, STH, SPH, SAR to begin review of graduate-specific concerns, such as practica and field placements

Meeting with MET Dean to discuss rubric for part-time, online, and blended courses

## Timeline:

- Feedback from reviews due by April 1
- Draft policy ready by April 15
- Review with Council of Deans April 16
- Review with Faculty Council TBD
- First reading at University Council meeting in May
- Revise and present for final reading at University Council meeting in October



# Background

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# Questions for Reviewers:

## Is the proposed framework viable?

- ? Does it provide sufficient guidance to make rational, reasonable assignments? Where does it fall short?
- ? Does it offer opportunities for curriculum and course innovation?
- ? Where will the proposed framework be implemented easily, and where will it create difficulty?
- ? Are there potential financial or staffing implications associated with implementing the proposed framework?

EXAMPLES FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY				Current Course Information				
School/College	SUBJECT	COURSE	TITLE	Credits	LECTURE MIN PER WEEK	DISC MIN PER WEEK	LAB MIN PER WEEK	TOTAL MIN PER WEEK
CAS	WR	100	Methodology & Measurement	4	180	0	0	180
LAW	JD	JD801	Administrative Law	4	220	0	0	220
LAW	JD	JD944	Law and Religion (S)	3	120	0	0	120
CGS	HU		Traditions in the Human	4	60	120		180
SAR	OT	586	Professional Service Mar	4	180	0	0	180

Course Assessment  
Template

EXAMPLES FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY				Future Course Information				
				Select one of the following options:				
School/College	SUBJECT	COURSE	TITLE	Proposed Credits, consistent with guidelines	Add Scheduled Contact Time	Decrease Assigned Credits	Justify existing credits and contact time	Rationale
CAS	WR	100	Methodology & Measurement	4	X			Add required BuX information literacy module to existing course
LAW	JD	JD801	Administrative Law	4			X	Meets guidelines with no adjustment.
LAW	JD	JD944	Law and Religion (S)	3			x	Students will do substantial research outside of class and have concentrated out of class contact with faculty member in preparation of research paper.
CGS	HU		Traditions in the Human	4	X			Add required film screenings. Students attend one full-length film every other week. The films are introduced by faculty members and become the focus of discussion for at least one class meeting.
SAR	OT	586	Professional Service Mar	4	X			Add more content on health care policies and reimbursement to the existing course.

# Goals of the Course Credit Definition Project

- Evaluate current credit assignment practices at BU in context of recent Federal guidance and practices at peer universities.
- Propose credit assignment guidelines that comply with Federal guidance, accommodate and anticipate changes in pedagogy, and “... ensure that our standards reflect BU’s status as a leading private research university in the 21st century.”
- Develop a University policy on credit assignment by July 1, 2014.

# Course Credit Definition Committee Members

- John Straub (CAS) co-chair
- Laurie Pohl (ENSA) co-chair
- Lynne Allen (CFA)
- Jack Beermann (LAW)
- Tobe Berkovitz (COM)
- John Caradonna (CAS)
- Janelle Heineke (SMG)
- Karen Jacobs (SAR)
- Gregg McDaniel (ENG)
- Anita Patterson (CAS)
- Jay Samons (CAS)
- Stan Sclaroff (CAS)
- Adam Sweeting (CGS)\*
- Tanya Zlateva (MET)
- Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, *ex officio*

\*Also a member of Faculty Council Executive Committee

# Federal Definition of Credit Hour

## 2009 HEOA Final Regulations, 34 CFR §600.24

“[o]ne hour 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 trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or an equivalent amount of work, established by the institution, for other academic activities including `laboratory work, internships, *practica*, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.’ ”

# Course Credit Definition Committee Charge

From Provost Morrison:

“As you may be aware, the 2009 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) for the first time established a federal definition of a “credit hour,” with which all institutions of higher education that receive Title IV funding must comply.

Although current practice at Boston University complies with this new definition, this substantial change in federal guidelines is cause for us to reexamine our credit-awarding practices and ensure that our standards reflect BU’s status as a leading private research university in the 21st century...

Accordingly, I am convening a University-wide committee to review our current practices and to recommend an alternative that complies with federal regulations, defines “credit” and “contact hour” in such a way that we award one credit for one contact hour, and ensures continued faculty oversight of the curriculum...

A review shows that two-thirds of courses offered at BU award four credits for the equivalent of three contact hours per week (4:3)... We need to reevaluate this practice in light of current expectations of the faculty and the increasing intellectual capabilities of our students.”