



## NDU INSTRUCTION 5760.01B

### COURSE CURRICULUM AND CREDIT HOUR APPROVAL

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**Originating Component:** Office of Academic Affairs

**Effective:** October 3, 2016

**Releasability:** Cleared for public release. Available on the Internet from the NDU Intranet Website at <https://portal.ndu.edu/Pages/Home.aspx>.

**Approved by:** Dr. John W. Yaeger, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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**Purpose:** This policy establishes the process for the review and the approval of courses at the National Defense University (NDU). Further, the National Defense University recognizes that in order to be an accredited, degree-granting institution, it must ensure that its programs and courses are of appropriate content, rigor and length and provide evidence of student learning. The University follows standards set by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and complies with applicable Federal policies, regulations, and requirements.

Further, this instruction seeks to create an orderly process for creating, maintaining, managing, registering, and recording all NDU credit-bearing courses.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION .....                        | 3  |
| 1.1. Applicability. ....   | 3  |
| 1.2. Policy. ....  | 3  |
| 1.3. Context.....  | 3  |
| 1.4. Update on Credit Hour Assignment.....                           | 3  |
| SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES .....                                    | 4  |
| 2.1. Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs .....            | 4  |
| 2.2. Deputy Provost.....   | 4  |
| 2.3. Components .....  | 4  |
| SECTION 3: PROCEDURES .....  | 5  |
| 3.1. New Course Approval Process .....                               | 5  |
| 3.2. Credit Hours.....   | 5  |
| a. Awarding Credit Hours.....  | 5  |
| b. Credit Hour Approval.....   | 5  |
| 3.3. Posting Credit Hours.....                                       | 6  |
| a. Lecture and Seminar Hours.....                                    | 6  |
| b. Other Academic Activities.....                                    | 7  |
| 3.4. Courses Which Do Not Award Credit hours VIA NDU Transcript..... | 7  |
| GLOSSARY .....   | 8  |
| G.1. ACRONYMS. ....  | 8  |
| REFERENCES .....   | 9  |
| APPENDIX A.....  | 10 |

## SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

**1.1. APPLICABILITY.** This instruction applies to all credit bearing courses taught at the National Defense University (NDU).

**1.2. POLICY.** All credit bearing activities (laboratory work, internships, practica, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours) are reviewed through the Office of Academic Affairs (Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment and NDU Registrar), and approved by the Provost for inclusion in the University's programs, offerings, and catalog.

**1.3. CONTEXT.** The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) issued a revised "Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations" update for 2016. This revision supersedes the credit hour sections of MSCHE guidelines on Degrees and Credits, dated June 26, 2009. This revision also supersedes the NDU Credit Hour Policy dated July 18, 2013 and the NDU-AA Instruction 5.74: Course Approval Policy dated July 8, 2005. This instruction is effective upon signature of the Provost.

**1.4. UPDATE ON CREDIT HOUR ASSIGNMENT.** The U.S. Department of Education has defined "credit hour" as: "...an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

- a. One hour (50 to 60 minute class, lecture, or recitation) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work (preparation) each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester; or 45 hours
- b. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practice, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

## SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

**2.1. PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (PROVOST).** The Provost:

- a. Is responsible for annually reviewing and approving all curricula.
- b. Meets with component representatives to review and approve courses.

**2.2. DEPUTY PROVOST (DP).** The DP will:

- a. Convene (as required) informal meetings with component members to resolve issues with electives, concentrations, and programmed courses. Issues may include the existence of multiple or similar elective courses, rigor, or an appropriate number of credit hours.
- b. Work with the Registrar and the Director of Institutional Research to resolve any issues before final approval by the Provost.
- c. Work with the Registrar to confirm degree plans and related data to include course title, course number, credit hours, and course description.
- d. Conduct a review of course request documents in advance of the Provost to ensure adherence to this policy.

**2.3. COMPONENTS.** Components will:

- a. Conduct separate, internal curriculum reviews based on the MSCHE guidelines and the requirements put forth in this instruction.
- b. Annually (or when necessary), present degree plans and any new course curricula to the Provost for approval.
- c. Annually (or when necessary), provide degree plans to include core, elective, programmed, and concentration course data to the DP before presenting to the Provost.

## SECTION 3: PROCEDURES

### 3.1. NEW COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS.

a. All new or significantly modified courses must be approved for inclusion in the University's online catalog and for the award of credit on official university transcripts. Courses change for a variety of reasons: updated to remain current and relevant, internally as a result of student assessment data and student and faculty surveys, and externally through changes to the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) and other higher headquarters directives. This instruction outlines procedures for courses which are awarded official credit on an NDU transcript.

b. Course quality is evaluated through a peer review process. The review is conducted within components using the guidelines in 3.2. (below).

c. When courses are offered across components, the review committee should include faculty members from all represented components. The committee generally makes a recommendation to the academic dean; who in turn, recommends approval to the commandant or chancellor. The Provost, upon the component's recommendation, will approve courses for entry on official transcripts and inclusion in the University Catalog. The Registrar will award an appropriate course number, annotate the credits, and maintain historical records of approved courses.

d. Components may submit new or modified courses for approval to the Provost at any time throughout the year; however, approval should be granted before significant component resources have been expended to support the new course. Additionally, components should seek course approval at approximately **4 months prior** to the start of each course or next academic year. The Provost's office will approve courses no later than 6 weeks prior to the start of the academic year.

### 3.2. CREDIT HOURS.

a. **Awarding Credit Hours.** The Provost is responsible for ensuring all courses offered by the institution meet standards of appropriate content, rigor, and length and provide evidence of student learning. The Provost will make the final determination of credit-bearing or non-credit bearing status for courses offered at the institution. All courses must comply with the Federal definition for a credit hour incorporated in the MSCHE Policy.

b. **Credit Hour Approval.** Components seeking approval for new or significantly modified credit-bearing courses or curricula, must provide specific details regarding course offerings to

the DP prior to meeting with the Provost. The course approval request must include the content, length, outcomes, how student learning will be assessed, and time distribution for the course. To request approval to award hours or to modify a course, components should provide documentation that details the following information:

- (1) Course syllabus including:
  - (a) Course content appropriate to the course level (e.g. graduate level).
  - (b) Course credit hours appropriate to the course length and type of contact hours.
  - (c) Course requirements (for example, papers, projects, exams) appropriate to the course level.
  - (d) Expected course outcomes.
  - (f) Faculty assessment method (description with rubric if available).

(2) Time distributions: A breakdown of the instructional time, other in-class time, and the expected out-of-class time required for successful completion of the course.

- (3) NDU courses fall under one of the following categories:
  - (a) Core.
  - (b) Elective.
  - (c) Professional Development.

**3.3. POSTING CREDIT HOURS.** The Office of Academic Affairs (AA), specifically the Registrar, is responsible for recording credit hours on NDU transcripts. Components should apply a “reasonable standard” for determining the appropriate number of credit hours for non-traditional courses. **The credit hour calculation tool at Appendix A, or the automated version located at the following link can be used (if desired):**

[https://ndu1.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/portal/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B0ED485CB-BC78-430A-AB28-B6915546196C%7D&file=NDUI%205760.01B%20Credit%20Hour%20Calculation%20Tool.xlsx](https://ndu1.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/portal/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B0ED485CB-BC78-430A-AB28-B6915546196C%7D&file=NDUI%205760.01B%20Credit%20Hour%20Calculation%20Tool.xlsx)

a. **Lecture and Seminar Hours.** As previously stated, one academic credit hour equals 15 hours of “direct faculty instruction” or classroom time and approximately 2 hours “out of class” or preparation time. Therefore one credit hour equals 15 hours in the classroom plus 30 hours of preparation time or “outside of class” time, for a total of 45 hours. When posting credit hours, if a course is at or less than 7.5 hours from reaching the next full credit hour, Components should round to the next highest credit hour as opposed to using half-credits. If below 7.5 hours fro

reaching the next full credit hour, components should consider adding or reducing course time or round up to the nearest whole number.

**b. Other Academic Activities.** For contact hours outside of traditional lecture or seminar formats, consider the examples below to compute credit hours.

(1) Credit hours for Field or Industry Studies' should equal the sum of all contact hours divided by 15. Contact hours should include lectures, speeches, laboratories, experiential learning, discussions, tours, demonstrations, etc.

(2) Independent or Guided Research should be based on the amount of preparation and research time committed to the project along with any sessions held between the student and the faculty member(s). Preparation hours can be counted as research time so that every 45 hours spent equates to one credit hour (45:1).

(3) Contact hours for laboratory, exercises, or other academic activities can be calculated using the following ratio: 2 laboratory or exercise hours equals one hour of contact time (2:1).

### **3.4. COURSES WHICH DO NOT AWARD CREDIT HOURS VIA NDU TRANSCRIPT.**

Courses not appearing on the transcript do not require certification by the Provost; however, components must maintain course review records and pass this information to the Registrar to be recorded and included in the University catalog.

## **GLOSSARY**

### **G.1. ACRONYMS.**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| MSCHE | Middle States Commission on Higher Education   |
| NDU   | National Defense University                    |
| OPMEP | Officer Professional Military Education Policy |

## **REFERENCES**

Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations: Implementation for 2016. Middle States Commission on Higher Education Press, Philadelphia, 2016.  
34 CFR §600.2, §602.24 and §668.8)

## APPENDIX A

### NDU CREDIT HOUR WORKSHEET

According to NDU's definition of a credit hour, a total of 45 hours equals one credit hour (15 contact hours plus 30 preparation hours). The following worksheet is intended to assist in determining the appropriate number of credit hours to assign with new or modified courses.

Use the middle column for data entry as described on each row, leaving rows blank where that activity is not included in the course. Add the learning hours and the resulting credit hour assignment in the right hand column.

| Instructional Activity  | Data Entry Column | Calculated Learning Hours |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Contact hours</b><br>(face-to-face classroom or synchronous online meeting time) |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours per week</i>   |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter number of weeks</i>  |                   |                           |
| TOTAL Contact hours (calculated field)  |                   |                           |
| <b>Out of Class Activities (course totals)</b>                                      |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours for attending lecture series</i>                                     |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter pages of course readings (20 pages/hr)</i>                                 |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter pages of formal writing assigned (1 page/hr)</i>                           |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter pages of informal writing assigned (2 pages/hr)</i>                        |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours required for research (estimated)</i>                                |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours required to prepare for presentations (estimated)</i>                |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter length (in hours) of films / videos assigned</i>                           |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter number of field trip/travel days (9 hrs per day)</i>                       |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours for studying/reviewing (2 hrs/classroom hr)</i>                      |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours for teamwork/projects (if applicable)</i>                            |                   |                           |
| <i>Enter hours for take-home exams (designated or estimated)</i>                    |                   |                           |
| <i>Other (please describe and enter total hours)</i>                                |                   |                           |
| _____   |                   |                           |
| <b>TOTAL Learning Hours</b>   |                   |                           |
| <b>Credit Hours Assigned</b>  |                   |                           |

NDU CREDIT HOUR WORKSHEET