

Academic Governing Council Decision Report

Course Format and Credit Hour: Policy 7.13

April 10, 2025

Purpose

The GRCC Course Format and Credit Hour Policy: 7.13 establishes guidelines and standards for GRCC courses. The number of course formats were created specifically to address the diversity of student learning and the dynamic learning environments of our courses. Our course types also offer a diversity of options for student needs including the successful transfer of courses for program, general education, and elective credit while offering students additional learning opportunities through our developmental course type.

Decision

On April 8, 2025, the AGC membership voted to approve the revised Policy 7.13: Course Format and Credit Hour as part of a regularly scheduled review. The revised policy statement follows:

A. Courses are the way in which the curricular content and experiences are delivered. Course formats are purposefully defined in the context of the goals and expectations of students and their learning. Course learning outcomes must be met regardless of delivery modality and/or location. A credit hour gives value to an amount of work in the course. The credit hour is determined by the amount of contact required based on course format for the equivalent of 840 minutes. Course formats require out of class student learning at a minimum of two hours per one credit hour. Unless specified below, students will only receive credit for the same course one time. GRCC provides an extensive array of courses with varying purposes for students, including the following types:

- 1. General Education: Meets the specific criteria for a GRCC Distribution Requirement, designated by the requirement it fulfills.*
- 2. Program Requirement: Meets the learning needs of students in a specific GRCC program.*
- 3. Elective: Expands learning opportunities for degree seeking students. May or may not be required for students in a specific GRCC program.*
- 4. Community Interest: For non-degree seeking students based on an expressed interest or need.*
- 5. Continuing Education: Meets the specific requirements of a profession for continuing education credit.*
- 6. Developmental: Prepares a student for college readiness.*

B. Courses are offered in a variety of formats, each with a minimum requirement for contact hours. Exceptions to these requirements may only be made if congruent with accreditation standards. The formats, definitions, and contact hour requirements are as follows:

- 1. Lecture: A course in which content is primarily delivered through presentations of facts, principles, context, or interpretation. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:1*
- 2. Laboratory: A course which is focused on the implementation of an instructional strategy particular to a discipline and allows students to interact directly with natural phenomena, materials, or models, work*

with existing data, or engage in data collection. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio –1:1 (min.) (may vary depending upon course learning outcomes and/or should align with transfer partner institutions)

3. Lecture/Lab: A course which integrates both lecture and lab formats. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – Must meet Lecture and Laboratory Ratios

4. Seminar: A course which focuses on a specific area of enrichment and/or curricular interest and need that is not regularly offered by a department. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:1

5. Clinical: A course that is part of an academic program and allows students to be supervised by a GRCC instructor while applying methods and principles of a clinical discipline, and which takes place in a clinical setting, including practice labs, hospitals, or other agencies. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:3 (min.) (may vary depending upon course learning outcomes, and/or should align with transfer partner institutions)

6. Music Ensembles: A course in which the primary purpose is to prepare and offer opportunities for students to perform instrumental or vocal music as a group. Students may repeat a single Music Ensemble course for credit a maximum of 4 times. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:2-3

7. Studio: A course involving the demonstration and application of design and theory in a defined physical setting (i.e., studio) and which is characterized by significant one-on-one student/instructor interaction. Students explore and experiment under the guidance of an instructor. Students may repeat Music Studio courses for credit a maximum of 4 times. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:1-2

8. Fieldwork: A course, supervised by a professional, which allows students to practice and apply their learning or investigation in the field. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:1-4

9. Independent Study: A learning experience in which the student and instructor agree upon a topic of study, learning outcomes, and 2 number of credits that are awarded for the work. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:1 (min.)

10. Internship: A course which provides students an opportunity to engage in the practical application of prior learning in a supervised, professional experience, paid or unpaid, guided by learning outcomes, that build on and enhance previous coursework. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:4-6

11. Physical Activity: A course devoted to participation in or the performance of some form of physical activity. Knowledge associated with the proper performance of the activity is also presented. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:2

12. Practicum: A course that provides site-based field experiences, supervised by a professional in the field, in which students observe, participate, and apply academically acquired knowledge identified in course learning outcomes. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:3 (min.) (may vary depending upon course learning outcomes and/or should align with transfer partner institutions)

13. Tutorial: A course that provides individualized instruction in a particular subject matter. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:2

14. Applied Music: Private lessons on all instruments and voice. Students may repeat Applied Music courses for credit when the topic is different a maximum of 4 times. Credit to Contact Hour Ratio – 1:1

Sponsors

Co-Chairs: Vikki Cooper, Professor, English and Michael Miller, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Instructional Support and Institutional Planning (ISIP)

Committee Members: Deb DeWent, Director of Curriculum Management, ISIP; Lakisha Beck, Registrar, Student Records; Lisa Radak, Dean, School of Health Sciences; Brandon Berg, Assistant Professor, Physical Sciences; Julie Lackshiede, Program Director, Radiologic Technology; Ben Allen-Smith, Assistant Professor, Automotive; Keri Hadfield, Assistant Professor, Education; and John Doneth, Dept. Head, Manufacturing.

Rationale/ Supporting Data

The committee updated the policy as follows:

- The language for each definition was simplified.
- “Offering designed” was removed from each definition.
- The transferability for developmental courses is no longer addressed in the policy.

The committee reviewing this policy:

- Sought and included input from AGC members at three meetings.
- Responded to any input from departments, programs, and individual faculty members.
- The committee reviewed course formats at 2 Michigan Community Colleges.

Implications for Action

Policy 7.13 Course Format and Credit Hour was last approved in February 2022 by AGC. This current revision has minor language changes but not differences in content or intent. Procedures and processes are well established and are carried out by Curriculum Support. Other than updating the Policy Document, other procedural changes are not apparent.

Date of Decision by AGC

Date passed by AGC: April 8, 2025

- Yes: 44
- Abstain: 1
- Yes proxy: 6
- No: 0
- No proxy: 0

Section to be Completed by the Provost

Evaluation Plan

The Course Forman and Credit Hour Policy will be evaluated according to the next scheduled review of the policy. This evaluation and review will include feedback from GRCC faculty members and College stakeholders as well as benchmarking from peer institutions.

Next scheduled review of policy: Academic Year 2027-28

Response from Provost

I received this AGC Decision Report on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. I approve of the revised policy statement recommended by the AGC as outlined above. I am charging the Instructional Support and Institutional Planning Office, led by the Director of Curriculum and Assessment, to coordinate implementation of this policy revision. This will include updating the policy document, reviewing the procedures, and, if necessary, making updates to the procedures according to the implications for action outlined above. This will be followed by an update to the Academic and Student Affairs Council once the policy document has been reviewed and updated. Additional steps of implementation will include working with the Provost's Office to update the policy document on the appropriate GRCC webpage and a communication plan about the updated policy document. Full implementation of this revised policy statement should be accomplished no later than the start of the next Academic Year in August 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shelia Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shelia" being more prominent than the last name "Jones".

May 9, 2025