

**The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Graduate Council Meeting
Minutes**

**Friday / April 19, 2024
2:00 p.m. in SSB 201**

Members Present: Mike Anderson, COE*
Maria Pour, COE
Keith Hollingsworth, COE
Nicholas Loyd, COE
Wafa Hakim-Orman, COB*
Milton Shen, COB
Jodi Price, CAHS*
Dylan Baun, CAHS
Lisa Vangsness, CAHS
Joe Conway, CAHS
Lingze Duan, COS*
Tanya Sysoeva, COS
Nilsa Black-Meade, CON
Lenora Smith, CON
Tracy Lakin, CON
Paul Whitehead, CoED
Hamsa Mahafza, CoED
Jon Hakkila, Chair*
David Moore, Library*
Amy Smith, Registrar*

Members Absent: Xiaotong Li, COB (Proxy: Milton Shen)
Larry Carey, COS
Ming Sun, COS (No Proxy)
Louise O’Keefe, CON*
Jeremy Elliott, CoED*
Suzanne Simpson, OIREA*

Guests: Alyssum Reno-Smith, CoED
Peter Veres, COS
Dongsheng Wu, COS
Jerome Baudry, COS
Paul Wolf, COS
Misty McFadden, OIREA
Susan Knight, Graduate School
Simone Frazier, Graduate School
Michelle Massey, Graduate School

**Non-Voting Member*

1. Roll Call

A record of attendance was recorded as noted above.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion was made by Dr. Hamza Mahafza to approve the Graduate Council meeting agenda. Motion was seconded by Dr. Dylan Baun. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 8, 2024

Motion was made by Dr. Paul Whitehead to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 8, 2024. Motion was seconded by Dr. Keith Hollingsworth. Motion carried.

4. Announcement(s)

a. Recent Graduate School Event(s)

i. Graduate Poster Session Competition – April 1, 2-5pm, SSB 112

- a. 1st Place Winner: Derek Koehl (CAHS)
- b. 2nd Place Winner: Unmanna Dewanjee (COE)
- c. 3rd Place Winner: Prakash Chaudhary (COS)

Dr. Hakkila announced the winners of the recent Graduate Poster Session Competition as outlined above. He thanked all faculty and staff who supported the event with their attendance and interaction with the presenters.

b. Zero-Credit 699/799 Registration Clarification (see attached document)

The zero-credit course option was designed to assist with the financial burden placed on students who completed all of the requirements of their theses/dissertations/DNP papers, after the published deadlines but prior to commencement (including submission but excluding copyediting). Simone Frazier explained that, recently, it has seemed that this option has been widely used as a workaround to simply avoid the published deadlines; in order to more closely manage the use of this option, students must now email the Dean of the Graduate School to request permission to use this option and, further, to explain the reason for their request. A Kuali form for this purpose is being developed, but until it is ready, students may simply send their request and explanation to the Dean of the Graduate School via email.

c. 10-Year Timeline Policy Revision (see attached document)

Michelle Massey restated the policies below as well as proposed revisions to each of the policies:

Master's Current Policy: *The degree must be earned within 10 years or by the end of the 30th semester. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. The time clock starts when the first course is taken (including transfer credit).*

Master's Proposed Policy: *The master's degree is expected to be earned within six to 10 years or by the end of the 24th to 30th semesters. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. All coursework, including previously approved transfer coursework, applied toward the student's program of study, may not be more than 10 years old from the semester in which the final degree audit is conducted. A student's degree audit will be conducted based on the admitted catalog year of the student. Coursework is valid for 10 years. A one-time appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School by the 30th semester if the degree is not completed within 10 years. The appeal must be supported by the appropriate program. A copy of the appeal must be included in the student's final degree audit.*

Ph.D. Current Policy: *The doctoral degree must be earned within 10 years (or by the end of the 30th consecutive semester, where consecutive semesters are Fall, Spring, and Summer). The clock starts when the Graduate program's first credits are completed (if credits are transferred in, then the clock starts on the date the student is accepted into the program). All requirements must be completed no more than five years (or 15 consecutive semesters) after the student has passed the qualifying examination. Failure to meet this time requirement requires the student to take and pass another qualifying examination and (if required by the program) another implementation review.*

Ph.D. Proposed Policy: *The doctoral degree is expected to be earned within six to 10 years or by the end of the 24th to 30th semesters. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Any coursework that the student intends to apply to their Ph.D. program of study that is more than 10 years old at the time of the student's admission to the program, must be revalidated by the department. Once courses have been revalidated, the timeline until course expiration resets.*

All coursework, including previously approved transfer coursework, and any coursework that has been revalidated and applied toward the student's program of study, may not be more than 10 years old from the semester in which the final degree audit is conducted. A student's degree audit will be conducted based on the admitted catalog year of the student. Coursework is valid for 10 years. A one-time appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School by the 30th semester if the degree is not completed within 10 years. The appeal must be supported by the appropriate program.

All requirements must be completed no more than five years (or 15 consecutive semesters) after the student has passed the Qualifying Exam. Failure to meet this time requirement requires the student to submit an extension appeal to the Graduate School by the end of the 15th semester after the student has passed the Qualifying Exam. Approval of this appeal may require the student to take and pass another qualifying examination and/or complete additional requirements. A copy of the appeal must be included in the student's final degree audit.

Dr. Hakkila added that these proposed policy revisions are meant to begin the discussion about potential improvements that will be fair to both students and faculty. There was also discussion that the issue is not only about the validation of coursework but also a matter of students remembering what they were taught after 10 years had passed. Finally, it was mentioned that any research done 10 years prior would have probably already been published by someone else.

5. Curricular Items

- a. CAHS: HY 527 – Age of American Revolution (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- b. CAHS: HY 545 – Comparative Military Policy & Strategy (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- c. CAHS: HY 586 – Communism & Legacy in Russia & Eastern Europe (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- d. CAHS: HY 590 – Research Seminar in History (*cancel cross listing*) – **Approved**
- e. CAHS: HY 645 – Readings in American Military History (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- f. CAHS: PY 611 – Statistics for Exp Methods (*reduce hrs from 4 to 3; removing lab*) – **Approved**
- g. CAHS: PY 710 – Machine Learning for Social/Behavioral Research (*add pre-req*) – **Approved**
- h. CAHS: PY 711 – Computational Psychology (*add pre-req*) – **Approved**
- i. CAHS: PY 713 – Quantitative Statistical Methods (*add pre-req*) – **Approved**
- j. CAHS: PY 714 – Multivariate Statistics (*add pre-req*) – **Approved**
- k. CAHS: PY 715 – R for Data Science (*add pre-req*) – **Approved**
- l. COB: MACC ACC – Master of Accountancy (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- m. COE: ISE 628 – Requirements Engineering (*new course*) – **Conditionally approved with confirmation of pre-requisites**
- n. COE: MAE 568 – Elements of Spacecraft Design (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- o. COS: BYS 591 – Special Topics in Neurobiology – **Approved**
- p. COS: MA 571 – Introduction to Cryptography (*cross-listed with MA 471*) – **Conditionally approved with revisions to ensure percentages match among standalone MA 471 syllabus and combined MA 571/MA 471 syllabus**
- q. COS: MA 577 – Coding Theory (*cross-listed with MA 477*) – **Conditionally approved with revisions to ensure percentages match among standalone MA 477 syllabus and combined MA 577/MA 477 syllabus**
- r. COS: SPA 742 – Multi-Messenger Astrophysics – **Approved**

6. Graduate Faculty Nominations – For Membership Consideration

- a. COE: Burwell, Deanna (MS – Chemical Engineering) – **Approved**
- b. CAHS: Staton, Jennifer (MA – Linguistics & English Language Teaching) – **Approved**
- c. CAHS: Bollinger, Laurel (PhD – English) – **Approved**
- d. COS: Robin, Arif Hasan Khan (PhD – Plant Science) – **Approved**
- e. CON: Pickney, Elizabeth (DHA / Doctorate of Health Administration) – **Approved**
- f. COS: Adcock, Lawana (PhD – Plant Cell & Molecular Biology) – **Approved**

7. Conditional Admission Policy (see attached document)

Michelle Massey commented that this policy revision was proposed at the last Graduate Council meeting, but before being ready for a vote, we realized that we needed to better understand what the conditional admission policy is regarding international students, since we were unclear as to whether international students should be admitted conditionally or unconditionally. We have since verified that international students can only be admitted unconditionally, in that they must meet the admission requirements of having a bachelor's degree, a 3.000 GPA, and meet the language requirements.

She continued by saying that the language for both conditional and unconditional admission needed to be revised to clarify that, when students are admitted unconditionally, they may meet the admissions requirements, but departments may also want to place extra requirements on them in terms of a pre-requisite(s). Conditional admission is only for domestic applicants; the revised policy clarifies language concerning students who are going to be conditionally admitted, especially in terms of getting through the first 12 hours of their program and maintaining a minimum of a B. Also, we were previously interpreting the policy to mean that students must maintain a 3.000 throughout their first 12 hours, but what we propose in this revision is that, to be unconditionally admitted, students must reach a 3.000 at the completion of 12 hours. If students are conditionally admitted, they must reach a 3.000 as well as complete any other conditions, such as pre-requisites, that departments place on their students.

Dr. Hakkila summarized by stating the biggest change to the policy is the removal of the monitoring aspect, which turned out to be somewhat complicated for programs to do anyway; revise it to resemble the probation policy; and consider the difference between students who need to make up certain coursework and those who meet all the requirements but have additional requirements that they should fulfill to make them successful.

A motion was made by Dr. Hakkila to approve the revisions to the policy. Motion carried; revised policy approved.

8. JUMP Guidelines (see attached document)

Dr. Hakkila began the discussion by stating the new JUMP Proposal was prepared with input from Graduate Council, JUMP Committee, Undergraduate Scholastic Affairs Committee, Dean's Council, and three meetings involving Academic Affairs. He also mentioned that, since this is a policy, a vote by Graduate Council is not required, but he wanted to share the finalized program document to demonstrate that all of the Graduate Council input was considered as well as all input collected from each of the groups mentioned previously.

He continued with a reminder of why the revisions to JUMP are important, namely, (1) to meet the SACSCOC standards outlined in Standard 9.2, page 79, of the SACSCOC, 2020 Edition, Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, as follows:

“Another common situation is to allow students to begin graduate work before completing the undergraduate degree, then “double-counting” some of the graduate work to award both a baccalaureate and a master’s degree upon completion of the work. For exceptional students, a limited amount of this activity could easily be academically justified. However, if the combined coursework falls far short of 150 total semester hours, or if any student can take part in the program regardless of academic merit, it calls into question the integrity of the undergraduate degree and/or the rigor of the graduate degree. These circumstances require an appropriate justification under this standard. Institutions and reviewers must use their professional judgment in such cases.”

and, (2) to ensure that we actually perform the procedures that we attest to performing, such as program tracking and monitoring.

Dr. Hakkila proceeded to comment that, after the last discussion in Graduate Council, there was general agreement by almost everyone, that the 75th percentile would be reflected as a 3.750 GPA or higher. However, we still needed to ensure that we could justify what “exceptional” means, that we are consistent across the University, and that making this classification must be relatively easy. He also stated that, as felt by many constituents, trying to allow for a variation in GPA proved to be a moving target and became fairly complicated, so that concept was removed. Instead, an acceptable GPA that was considered “exceptional” was selected.

Dr. Hakkila said that, next, to demonstrate to our accreditor that we are allowing “exceptional” students into the program, a comparison was performed among several universities in the Southeast United States regarding their definitions of exceptionality, including determining minimum GPA and monitoring that GPA, student classification for entry into the program, number of credit hours, and double counting courses.

He then asked for comments to which Dr. Dylan Baun replied that he is fine with the revised proposal if “and seminar” is removed from the following bullet that appears in the document:

- *“Thesis ~~and seminar~~ courses cannot count as JUMP courses.”*

9. For the Good of the Order

- *Dr. Jodi Price extended a thank you to Dr. Joe Conway for representing the CAHS on Graduate Council, as well as to other Graduate Council members who, with the completion of the April 19th meeting, would be rotating off. Dr. Hakkila followed by thanking all Graduate Council members and other attendees for their participation during the last year.*
- *Dr. Hamsa Mahafza encouraged Graduate Council members to help with advertising (and participate if possible) the “Teach 2 Include 2024 Conference” to be held Thursday, June 13, 2024, on the campus of UAH (see attached flyer).*
- *Regarding the topic of AI, Dr. Hakkila announced that, this summer, two committees will be formed, the first of which will begin creating curriculum in which UAH can compete with AI, and another that will focus on how to deal with AI in the classroom when not making it part of the curriculum. If interested in the latter committee, Graduate Council members should contact Dr. Hakkila. Dr. Jodi Price announced that the CAHS will soon offer a course in AI for their students, who seem to be really excited about it.*
- *Dr. Lingze Duan asked about the changes in procedures for the GRA offer letter, namely, the timeline and the fact that the changes are affecting NASA grants and have significantly increased the workload for COS faculty. Dr. Hakkila responded that the timeline will be changed again as the process continues to be refined, and that the changes are largely being directed by the UAH Contracts & Grants (C&G) unit. Dr. Hakkila also explained that there are two main units involved in the revisions, namely: (1) C&G, because they wanted*

to implement a process that ran parallel to the GTA process but it turned out that the GTA process involves only state money, and, (2) the Graduate School, because they were needed to help C&G formulate the process and workflow via the Kualu platform. Dr. Hakkila said, in general, the timelines were set by the institution, including HR and other departments. Dr. Hakkila and Dr. Duan decided to continue this discussion outside of Graduate Council. Dr. Jodi Price also highlighted a problem with the timeline regarding the ending date for the GA assignments; Dr. Hakkila to send Dr. Price an email that has been drafted to assist with this matter.

- *Dr. Orman stated the need to clarify the interpretation of the last bullet of the JUMP Proposal:*

“Students who do not complete their coursework within the defined time period or who do not meet any other pre-specified JUMP admissions criteria will have to apply to the graduate program through the normal admissions process. The JUMP graduate courses taken as an undergraduate will not count towards the graduate degree.”

She understood this bullet to mean that, with the exception of not completing the JUMP requirements within six years at which time a course will become invalid, there is no other scenario that would result in a student being eliminated from JUMP. Dr. Hakkila said he would think about this to ensure it is correct. (After Meeting Note: Dr. Hakkila determined that, in general, Dr. Orman’s understanding is correct; however, it is important to note that programs may have other specified criteria, in addition to the standard criteria outlined in the JUMP Proposal, to be met.)

10. Reminder: Next Graduate Council Meeting – August 2024 (new meeting scheduled TBD)

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

/srk

Zero-Credit Policy Clarification

From [the UAH Catalog, Degree Requirements, Masters](#)

Late Submission

Students who miss the published deadlines but submit all required documents to the Graduate School by the end of the current semester will not graduate in the current semester; instead they will fall under the thesis deadlines of the subsequent semester. These students **may** qualify for a 0-credit-hour option the subsequent semester if the 0-credit-hour option is offered by their departments. Students may only take the 0-credit-hour option once and must consult with their Committee Chairs in order to register for the 0-credit-hour option. **In order to register for the 0-credit-hour option, students must request advance approval from the Graduate Dean by emailing their request and an explanation of the extenuating circumstances to GradDean@uah.edu.** All copyediting in ProQuest must be completed by ~~the Registrar's deadline at least one week prior to the published graduation date~~ **noon on the last day of final exams** in the semester during which the student plans to graduate.

From [the UAH Catalog, Degree Requirements, General Doctoral](#)

Late Submission

Students who miss the published dissertation/DNP project deadlines but submit all required documents to the Graduate School by the end of the current semester will not graduate in the current semester; instead they will fall under the dissertation/DNP project deadlines of the subsequent semester. These students **may** qualify for a 0-credit-hour option the subsequent semester if the 0-credit-hour option is offered by their departments. Students may only take the 0-credit-hour option once and must consult with their Committee Chairs in order to register for the 0-credit-hour option. **In order to register for the 0-credit-hour option, students must request advance approval from the Graduate Dean by emailing their request and an explanation of the extenuating circumstances to GradDean@uah.edu.** All copyediting in ProQuest must be completed ~~the Registrar's deadline at least one week prior to the published graduation date~~ **by noon on the last day of final exams** in the semester during which the student plans to graduate.

Revision to the Graduate Time-to-Degree-Completion Policy

Master's Current Policy

The degree must be earned within 10 years or by the end of the 30th semester. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. The time clock starts when the first course is taken (including transfer credit).

Master's Revision

The master's degree is expected to be earned within six to 10 years or by the end of the 24th to 30th semesters. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. All coursework, including previously approved transfer coursework, applied toward the student's program of study, may not be more than 10 years old from the semester in which the final degree audit is conducted. A student's degree audit will be conducted based on the admitted catalog year of the student. Coursework is valid for 10 years. A one-time appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School by the 30th semester if the degree is not completed within 10 years. The appeal must be supported by the appropriate program. A copy of the appeal must be included in the student's final degree audit.

Ph.D. Current Policy

The doctoral degree must be earned within 10 years (or by the end of the 30th consecutive semester, where consecutive semesters are Fall, Spring, and Summer). The clock starts when the graduate program's first credits are completed (if credits are transferred in, then the clock starts on the date the student is accepted into the program). All requirements must be completed no more than five years (or 15 consecutive semesters) after the student has passed the qualifying examination. Failure to meet this time requirement requires the student to take and pass another qualifying examination and (if required by the program) another implementation review.

Ph.D. Revision

The doctoral degree is expected to be earned within six to 10 years or by the end of the 24th to 30th semesters. There are three semesters a year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Any coursework that the student intends to apply to their Ph.D. program of study that is more than 10 years old at the time of the student's admission to the program, must be revalidated by the department. Once courses have been revalidated, the timeline until course expiration resets.

All coursework, including previously approved transfer coursework, and any coursework that has been revalidated and applied toward the student's program of study, may not be more than 10 years old from the semester in which the final degree audit is conducted. A student's degree audit will be conducted based on the admitted catalog year of the student. Coursework is valid for 10 years. A one-time appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School by the 30th semester

if the degree is not completed within 10 years. The appeal must be supported by the appropriate program.

All requirements must be completed no more than five years (or 15 consecutive semesters) after the student has passed the Qualifying Exam. Failure to meet this time requirement requires the student to submit an extension appeal to the Graduate School by the end of the 15th semester after the student has passed the Qualifying Exam. Approval of this appeal may require the student to take and pass another qualifying examination and/or complete additional requirements. A copy of the appeal must be included in the student's final degree audit.

Graduate Council Meeting
Graduate School Policy Review
April 19, 2024

Revision to the Graduate Conditional and Unconditional Admission Policy

The Graduate School proposes that in order to revise the Graduate Conditional Admission policy, the Graduate Unconditional Admission policy must be revised as well.

Unconditional Admission

To qualify for unconditional admission to the UAH Graduate School, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree, or equivalent, from an approved institution and have a minimum grade-point average of a 3.000 on their undergraduate record. Individual academic programs may have higher GPA requirements for unconditional admission. Although there is no university-level admission test score requirement (e.g., GRE, GMAT or MAT), individual academic programs may require a minimum admissions test score for unconditional admission. View more information about individual program test score requirements on the Graduate Admissions Test Score Requirements [webpage](#).

Meeting the above unconditional admission requirements does not automatically ensure a student acceptance to an academic program. Applicants should consult their academic program for specific additional admission requirements. **Departments may require applicants to fulfill specific coursework or pre-requisite requirements for full acceptance into the academic program.**

International applicants should also visit the International Student [catalog page](#) to review additional requirements.

Conditional Admission

The Graduate School may conditionally admit **domestic** applicants who do not satisfy all of the requirements for unconditional admission, but who do show reasonable potential for doing graduate work. Conditional admission requires the approval of the chair of the department in which the applicant plans to pursue an advanced degree. **International students do not qualify for conditional admission per the current immigration standards set by USCIS.**

Conditionally admitted students **must make** an overall grade average of B (3.000) or better for **the first 12 hours of attempted coursework. Students must also complete any other conditions for coursework or other pre-requisites as requested by the department.** The student will then assume the status of an unconditionally admitted student. Otherwise, the student is dismissed from the Graduate School. Under exceptional cases, a student may be readmitted upon a justified recommendation of the faculty in the student's major department and approval of the Graduate Dean.

JUMP PROPOSAL – Revised 04 17 2024

UAH's JUMP program (Joint Undergraduate Master's Program) encourages exceptional undergraduate students to continue their education into UAH master's degree programs. By entering JUMP as undergraduates, students will have shorter total degree completion times and will reduce their costs of obtaining master's degrees.

Definitions:

JUMP Pathway. An approved combination of undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

JUMP Course. A course taken after admission to a JUMP pathway that counts towards both the undergraduate and graduate degrees in the pathway.

JUMP Launch Advisor. The person who certifies that a JUMP course count toward the undergraduate degree in the JUMP pathway.

JUMP Landing Advisor. The person who certifies that a JUMP course counts toward the graduate degree in the JUMP pathway.

Admission to JUMP:

- UAH undergraduates qualify for JUMP once they have earned 75 or more undergraduate hours. Typically, this means that a student applies to the JUMP program in the semester in which they are earning their 75th undergraduate hour.
- Successful JUMP applicants must meet the GPA requirements in a defined JUMP Pathway.
 - Most Pathways require a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.50 (including all transfer coursework).
 - For the RN-BSN Nursing JUMP programs, which have more than 150 combined bachelor's-master's credit hours, the minimum GPA (determined from the 75th percentile GPA of students admitted to the RN-BSN program) is 3.30.

Completing the undergraduate portion of the JUMP Pathway:

- JUMP Pathways allow students to double-count as many as 12* graduate credit hours (based on pathway requirements) to both their undergraduate and graduate programs.
*Some Pathways allow fewer than 12 credit hours.
- JUMP courses must be approved by both the student's JUMP Launch Advisor and JUMP Landing Advisor as part of the JUMP Application approval process. Changes may be submitted prior to graduation via an approved JUMP Course Change form that is also approved by both JUMP Advisors before the new course(s) is taken.
- Thesis and seminar courses cannot count as JUMP courses.

- Students must earn a grade of B or higher in a JUMP course in order for it to earn graduate credit.
- Students are considered to be undergraduate students until they have completed the double-counted courses and earn their bachelor's degree.
- JUMP students are not allowed to hold assistantships, graduate scholarships, or graduate fellowships until their undergraduate degrees have been completed.

Completing the graduate portion of the JUMP pathway:

- All coursework must be completed within six years of taking the first JUMP course.
- Students are admitted into their pathway graduate program upon earning their bachelor's degree, successfully completing their JUMP courses, and signing a letter accepting their status as a graduate student. This letter is sent to them by UAH Graduate Admissions when they have completed all undergraduate requirements.
- Graduate programs may require additional application materials
- Students who do not complete their coursework within the defined time period or who do not meet any other pre-specified JUMP admissions criteria will have to apply to the graduate program through the normal admissions process. The JUMP graduate courses taken as an undergraduate will not count towards the graduate degree.

Academic JUMP program and pathway requirements may be more stringent than what is described here.

University	credits for program entry	minimum GPA	transfer	double-counted	max program hours	GPA monitored?	does thesis count?	other
East Tennessee State	75	3.25	1 year at ETSU	12	not specified	yes	?	grad admission not guaranteed. student sets target graduation dates for both programs on entry
Alabama	90	3.75 or 75%		12	not specified	yes	no	
Mississippi	90	3		15*	150	no	?	
Virginia Tech	90	3.3		12	not specified	?	no	Admissions materials required: GPA, career objectives statement, qualifications (cv, portfolio, and/or reference letters)
UAB	60	3.5	24 credits at UAB	12	not specified	no	?	
Auburn	Honors students with 45	3.4		9/30, 12/36	related to double	yes	?	regular graduate admission grad admission not guaranteed. GRE and transcripts.
Old Dominion	90	3.3		12	not specified	?	?	
South Carolina	90	3.4		12	not specified	yes	no	regular graduate admission grad admission not guaranteed, although no application is needed
Clemson	90	3.4		8-9	12 allowed by 150 min	yes	no	
South Alabama	90	3	30 credits at USA	12*	150	no	?	

Juniors and Seniors		cumulative GPA									
Combined all Colleges		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.75	3.74	3.73	3.68	3.68	3.64	3.66	3.70	75%	
50%		3.40	3.38	3.36	3.32	3.32	3.27	3.30	3.34	50%	
25%		3.00	2.99	2.97	2.92	2.93	2.88	2.88	2.94	25%	
Art, Humanities, & SS		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.75	3.74	3.74	3.74	3.74	3.73	3.74	3.74	75%	
50%		3.37	3.41	3.43	3.37	3.37	3.32	3.37	3.38	50%	
25%		3.00	3.02	3.04	2.92	2.97	2.89	2.95	2.97	25%	
Business		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.64	3.67	3.62	3.58	3.55	3.52	3.53	3.59	75%	
50%		3.29	3.30	3.29	3.25	3.21	3.19	3.17	3.24	50%	
25%		2.92	2.94	2.86	2.83	2.84	2.81	2.76	2.85	25%	
Education		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.72	3.77	3.72	3.77	3.74	3.70	3.73	3.74	75%	
50%		3.36	3.44	3.36	3.44	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.42	50%	
25%		3.01	3.04	3.01	3.04	3.07	3.07	2.99	3.03	25%	
Engineering		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.75	3.72	3.70	3.61	3.70	3.60	3.64	3.67	75%	
50%		3.40	3.34	3.32	3.26	3.32	3.22	3.25	3.30	50%	
25%		3.03	2.96	2.94	2.89	2.94	2.79	2.83	2.91	25%	
Nursing		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.60	3.63	3.75	3.70	3.71	3.77	3.85	3.72	75%	
50%		3.19	3.28	3.28	3.29	3.34	3.35	3.44	3.31	50%	
25%		2.79	2.87	2.92	2.91	2.95	3.00	3.01	2.92	25%	
Science		202101	202109	202201	202209	202301	202309	202401	distributional average		
75%		3.84	3.83	3.84	3.79	3.76	3.68	3.69	3.78	75%	
50%		3.56	3.54	3.56	3.46	3.43	3.35	3.34	3.46	50%	
25%		3.18	3.10	3.18	3.04	3.04	2.98	2.97	3.07	25%	



RESOURCE MANUAL

for The Principles of Accreditation:
Foundations for Quality Enhancement



Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges

2020 Edition

9.2

The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.

(Program length) [CR]

Rationale and Notes

This Core Requirement reflects the generally accepted means of determining academic credit required for degrees in higher education. The requirement uses as its basis the semester credit hour or its equivalency. In instances where an institution relies on other means of determining “academic credit” other than semester hours, it must demonstrate that its approach adheres to generally accepted practices described by this Core Requirement. In addition, an institution needs to justify any degrees that include fewer than the required number of hours. See Standard 10.7 (*Policies for awarding credit*) in this *Manual* for more details on the definition of a semester credit hour.

In the case of graduate programs, the expectation is that the first graduate degree (usually the master’s) requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours. Higher degrees should contain progressively more hours. If that is not the case, then an appropriate justification should be provided.

This standard applies to all programs, including competency-based programs, whether the program is based on the credit hour or not. Common examples are medical programs, where credit hours are not always utilized, and direct assessment programs, where a set of specific competencies are demonstrated rather than the student earning credit hours. In these cases, the institution should provide an appropriate justification that establishes an equivalency of outcomes consistent with the standard. See SACSCOC policy [Direct Assessment Competency Based Educational Programs](#).

Another area in which appropriate justification is often required is combined programs, where students earn multiple degrees while progressing through a program, either at the same level or at different levels. Such combination programs often involve degrees earned from different institutions (dual degrees) or two degrees earned from the same institution (combination degrees). In these types of degrees, some of the same course credit hours are essentially “double-counted” by different institutions or within the same institution. When these programs involve transfer of credit articulation across institutions, care should be taken that the institution follows its own policies and procedures for transfer of credit [see Standard 10.8 (Evaluating and awarding academic credit)], but generally articulated transfer of credit programs pose few problems under this current standard.

For combination degrees offered by a single institution, excessive “double-counting” of credits can affect the integrity of the degrees offered. As an example, consider an institution that offers two distinct master’s degrees that require 30 semester credit hours each (the minimum allowed under this standard). If the institution allows a student to earn both degrees by taking 42 total semester credit hours (double-counting six three-semester credit hour courses as applying to each degree), then the institution may face a high burden of proof in justifying this arrangement from an academic perspective. A reasonable reviewer might view this acceptable as a second major under the same degree, but have difficulty accepting that degrees were earned in separate fields.

Another common situation is to allow students to begin graduate work before completing the undergraduate degree, then “double-counting” some of the graduate work to award both a baccalaureate and a master’s degree upon completion of the work. For exceptional students, a limited amount of this activity could easily be academically justified. However, if the combined coursework falls far short of 150 total semester hours, or if any student can take part in the program regardless of academic merit, it calls into question the integrity of the undergraduate degree and/or the rigor of the graduate degree. These circumstances require an appropriate justification under this standard. Institutions and reviewers must use their professional judgment in such cases.

NOTES

Institutional credits for coursework that is not at the collegiate level (e.g., developmental courses) do not count as part of the total credit hours needed to earn a degree.

The issue of “double-counting” discussed above does not apply to the application of hours from an associate of arts or associate of science degree to a baccalaureate degree, as these associate degrees are explicitly designed for transfer of credit into the next degree; that design is not the case for the combination degrees discussed above.

Questions to Consider

- If using the semester credit hour as the common measure of course completion, does each degree program meet this standard? If not, is there an appropriate justification?
- What are the institution’s policies and procedures related to the establishment of new programs and do they include reference to minimum length for programs at each level?
- If an academic unit other than semester hours is used, what is the unit equivalency to semester credit hours and how does the institution make this determination?
- Are there some programs at the institution that do not rely on the semester credit hour even if most programs do (e.g., medical schools, direct assessment competency-based programs, hybrid programs)?
- How does the institution determine appropriate program length in the case of combination programs and dual degree programs?
- How is program length established and monitored?
- How does the institution justify degrees that include fewer than the required number of hours?

Sample Documentation

- Institutional publications describing approved degree program requirements at all levels (associate, baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, graduate, and professional) that include the number of credit hours required for each degree.
- Policy statements outlining minimum degree requirements.
- If the institution's primary measure is not a semester credit hour, a description of any alternative approach deemed equivalent to a semester credit hour and an explanation of how it determines program length.
- If a few special programs do not rely on the semester credit hour, a description of how those programs determine equivalency (e.g., medical schools, direct assessment competency-based programs, hybrid programs).
- Justification of the length of a degree that includes fewer than the required number of hours.
- Justification of the length of combined programs that contain fewer than the required number of unduplicated combined hours.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: [*Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards*](#)
[*Credit Hours*](#)
[*Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs*](#)
[*Quality and Integrity of Educational Credentials*](#)
[*Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*](#) (*change from clock to credit hours*)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 9.7 (*Program requirements*)

Standard 10.7 (*Policies for awarding credit*)

Standard 10.8 (*Evaluating and awarding academic credit*)

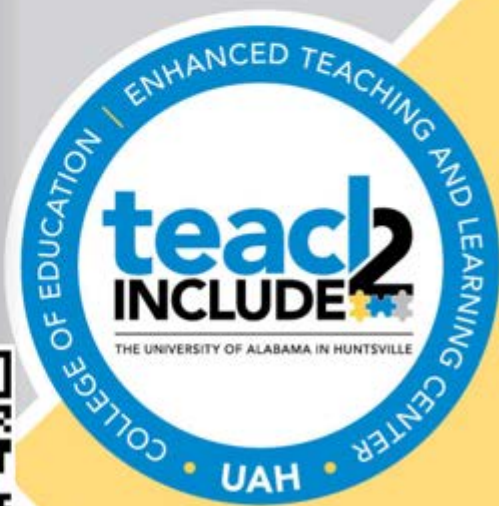


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