Course Credit and Grade Point Averages

Course Credit

Each course at the University is assigned a specific number of credits. For example, History (HST) 101 is a three-credit course, and Mathematics (MTH) 111 is a four-credit course. In most cases, credits assigned to a particular course are determined according to the number of hours per week that the class meets; credits may also be defined by the number of hours that the class meets per semester. During the course of the semester, a credit hour is equivalent to

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15 hours of classroom contact, plus appropriate outside preparation (30 hours); OR

30 hours of supervised laboratory work, plus appropriate outside preparation; OR

45 hours of internship or clinical experience; OR

a combination of the foregoing.

Length of Semester:

- 14 weeks of classes, excluding final examination periods and vacations.

Credit hour:

- 1 credit hour = 50 minutes of lecture or recitation per week (along with two hours of out of class activities) or 2 or more hours of laboratory per week throughout the semester.

Laboratory: Courses with a focus on experimental/experiential learning where in the student performs substantive work in a laboratory or studio setting. The minimum contact time per credit is 1680 minutes or 2 hours per week for the length of a regular semester.

Independent study/research: Courses offered as directed studies with approval and supervision of faculty member. Student(s) meet periodically as agreed upon during the duration of the course. Semester hour credit awarded must be comparable in scope, content, academic rigor and student study time as courses offered in lecture format.

Internships, practicum, clinical, field/cooperative experience, externships: Courses developed for experiential and hands-on learning involving off-site placement. Employers work collaboratively with the appropriate university staff or faculty to develop outcomes, learning experiences, and expectations in order for students to meet credit level requirements. Such credit is awarded at the rate of 45 hours per credit.

Accelerated Courses: Courses offered in sessions less than a traditional 15 week semester. These courses offer the same semester credit hours as traditional semester-length classes. Within the shortened time frame, accelerated courses must meet the minimum contact hour requirements of the lecture format. In the event that courses do not meet the expected contact hour requirements, credit can be awarded for equivalent instructional activities, which can include but are not limited to online videos, online discussions or chats, quizzes and/or exams, article summaries, case analyses, online group activities, etc.

Online: Courses offered entirely online without regard to face-to-face meetings. Students are expected to be academically engaged with comparable learning outcomes of a standard lecture course with alternate delivery methods. Contact time is satisfied through several means, which can include but is not limited to the following: a) web-based synchronous meetings using tele- and/or video-conferencing software at times scheduled in advance by the faculty member; b) academic engagement through interactive tutorials, video lectures, online chats, group discussions moderated by faculty, virtual study/group projects, engaging with class peers and computer tutorials graded and reviewed by faculty.

Hybrid: Courses offered in a blended format with one or more required face-to-face class sessions and with one or more required online sessions. These courses offer the same semester credit hours as traditional semester-length classes. Hybrid courses may also be in an accelerated format with the course length spanning less than the traditional semester. Contact time may be satisfied through several means, which can include but is not limited to the following, web-based synchronous meetings using tele- and/ or video-conferencing software at times scheduled in advance by the faculty member, academic engagement through interactive tutorials, video lectures, online chats, group discussions moderated by faculty, virtual study/group projects, engaging with class peers, and computer tutorials graded and reviewed by faculty. Low residency courses and programs also fall into this category.

Graduation Requirements by Level

Requirements for Bachelor’s Degree:
Course Credit and Grade Point Averages

• All General Academic Requirements must be fulfilled.
• Minimum of 120 earned graduation credit hours.
• A cumulative average of not less than 2.00, based on the total number of credits attempted at Wilkes University.
• All other items as stated in the undergraduate bulletin: http://wilkes.edu/bulletin/current/undergraduate/introduction/academic-req-reg/grad-req.aspx

Requirements for graduate level degree (master’s or doctoral):

• All General Academic Requirements must be fulfilled.
• Minimum of 30 earned graduation credit hours, depending upon the program. Some programs require more.
• A cumulative average of not less than 3.00, based on the total number of credits attempted at Wilkes University. Some programs may require a higher GPA.
• All other items as stated in the graduate bulletin: http://wilkes.edu/bulletin/current/graduate/introduction/academic-information/degree-requirements.aspx and within the appropriate program section.

Grade Point Averages

The grade point average (GPA) is calculated according to a formula by which the total number of quality points (qp) earned is divided by the total number of credit hours attempted. Quality points are calculated by multiplying the course credit by the grade earned in the course. Below is an example illustrating the method used to compute grade point averages:

Credit Hours Quality Points Credit Hours
Course Attempted Grade Passed
COM 101 3.0 x 4.00 = 12.0 3.0
FR 101 3.0 x 3.00 = 9.0 3.0
HST 101 3.0 x 1.50 = 4.5 3.0
MUS 101 3.0 x 2.50 = 7.5 3.0
PSY 101 3.0 x 0.00 = 0.0 0.0
15.0 / 33.0 12.0 12.0
Total credit hours attempted 15.0
Total credit hours passed 12.0
Total quality points earned 33.0
GPA (33qp/15 hrs. attempted) 2.20

Note that the student has accumulated 12 credits toward graduation. The "0.00" grade in Psychology (PSY) means that the student must repeat that course in order to earn credit for the course. Students may repeat a course in which a grade of 1.5 or lower is earned; if the course is completed a second time with a higher grade, the higher grade, if earned at Wilkes, will be "included"; that is, the higher grade will be used to calculate the grade point average, and the lower grade will be "excluded." The student may repeat the course at Wilkes University or at another accredited institution.

IMPORTANT: Grades from courses transferred to Wilkes University are not included in the calculation of grade point averages at Wilkes. If a course is repeated and successfully completed at an accredited institution other than Wilkes University, the credit for that course may transfer to Wilkes in fulfillment of graduation requirements; the course grade earned at another institution, however, will not transfer, and the "0.0" earned at Wilkes will remain in effect for the calculation of the student’s GPA. Grades earned at another institution will not be included as factors in the calculation of a student's grade point average, even in the event that the course credit is transferred to Wilkes. In order to exclude a low grade (1.5. or 1.0) or a failing grade (0.0) and substitute a higher earned grade to be used in the calculation of the grade point average, the student must repeat and successfully complete the course at Wilkes University.

Degree seeking students enrolled at Wilkes University who wish to take or repeat courses at another accredited institution must complete a “Request for Transfer of Credit” form and submit this form to the University Registrar for approval before enrolling in the course. “Request for Transfer of Credit” forms are available at the Registrar's Office.

Grade point averages are cumulative; the work of each semester is added to the total. In order to graduate from Wilkes University, a student must have achieved, at the end of the senior year, a minimum overall grade point average of 2.00 and a minimum major field grade point average (mfa) of 2.00.
NOTE: Some degree programs including, but not limited to, Nursing and Education, require grade point averages and major field averages of greater than 2.00. See the grade point average requirements for specific degree programs described in this bulletin, and consult with your academic advisor concerning grade point average requirements for your specific degree program.