

RELAY / GSE

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

As an institution of higher education based in New York State, Relay's credit hour policies comply with both the federal definition and New York State's definition of the credit hour. The federal credit hour has been defined as "one 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..." This definition is based on the Carnegie Unit, a long-time understanding of reciprocity between institutions of higher education.

With respect to instructional time, Relay's program design—integrating in-person and online instruction—means that the institution's students do not experience instructional "breaks" in the same manner as that of students in traditional, fully in-person classroom settings. Rather, instructional break time is at the student's discretion, and the institution therefore excludes break time from its instructional computations. Reviewing class schedules and course catalogues of typical institutions of higher education (IHE) illustrates that an hour of scheduled instruction usually translates to 50 minutes of actual instructional time. Therefore, at a typical IHE, a semester-long, three-credit course meets for 2.5 hours each week (i.e., 50 instructional minutes per credit hour x 3 credit hours = 150 instructional minutes = 2.5 instructional hours). As the federal credit hour definition expects a course to span roughly fifteen weeks, this yields roughly 37.5 total instructional hours for a three-credit course (i.e., 2.5 instructional hours per week x 15 weeks = 37.5 instructional hours for the overall course). Given 37.5 total instructional hours for a three-credit course, this results in 12.5 total instructional hours per credit (i.e., $37.5 / 3 = 12.5$).

New York State adopts a similar definition for instructional time, and offers a more prescriptive definition for supplementary assignments than does the federal definition. Pursuant to [Title 8, Chapter II Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education, Part 50.1 Definitions](#), a semester hour is defined as "a credit, point, or other unit granted for the satisfactory completion of a course which requires at least 15 hours (of 50 minutes each) of instruction and at least 30 hours of supplementary assignments..." At Relay, these supplementary assignments comprise the time that a student spends preparing, practicing, and applying techniques and practices learned from Relay coursework, in addition to assignments and assessments.

Finally, the institution's credit hour policies are compliant not only with respect to instructional time, but also with respect to out-of-class student work time. Therefore, for each credit awarded by the institution, Relay expects a student to have satisfactorily completed 12.5 hours of instructional time and at least 30 hours of associated, supplementary, out-of-class assignments.