Credit Hour Definition and Course Types

Student Credit Hour Definition (from the University Senate Meeting (May 7, 2012):

“The University of Kentucky is required by the U.S. Department of Education and our accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, to define for the institution how credit is awarded for its curriculum. The responsibility for curriculum lies with the faculty, and so it is required that the University Senate determine how such credit is to be awarded.

The Senate’s Admissions and Academic Standards Committee has proposed the following definitions of a credit hour for different types of instruction, to be codified in the Senate Rules. They used, in part, the “Carnegie Unit” as a guide to determine how much contact time and other effort should be used to determine the equivalent of one credit hour. Drawing on the traditional lecture or discussion, in a traditional 3 hour course, they determined that the current traditional definition is c. 800 minutes per credit hour (15-16 weeks x 3 x 50 minutes/ 3 = 750-800 minutes). Using c. 800 minutes, as the marker, they then requested information from colleges about how other meeting patterns should be measured, based upon workload, discipline, and in some cases standards of accrediting agencies.

The 800 minute marker, while cumbersome, allows instructors to measure contact hours and other effort for sessions of different lengths of time other than traditional semesters.

The result is divided here into direct contact with the instructor, with notes on how that direct contact expresses itself. “Other effort” is comprised of courses such as internships, studio, clinical hours, and clerkships. The explanation gives more information about the source of the assigned hours.”

Equivalency Grid (page 3):

http://www.uky.edu/Faculty/Senate/files/Forms/Credit%20hour%20grid%20proposal_May%20TO%20US.pdf

Course Numbering

An extensive explanation of course numbers (“Course Numbering System”) can be found in the UK Bulletin directly preceding Course Descriptions.

Variable Credit

A variable credit course is one in which a range of credit hours is allowable. Often these courses involve independent study, research projects, special topics, and/or experiential learning. Some will require prior authorization from the instructor or
department. Prerequisites and limitations on these courses are listed in the Course Catalog and the Bulletin.

While registering for the course, students must choose the number of credit hours to be taken. Initially, students will type in the course information into myUK and will subsequently receive an “error” message to “Verify Results”. This message prompts the student to choose the number of credit hours in a highlighted drop-down box. If the number of credit hours is not altered, the student will be registered for the default number of hours associated with that course.

**Distance Learning**

Distance Learning courses are those in which students do not meet in a traditional “in person” format. To find Distance Learning courses, look for courses with section numbers beginning with “2” (e.g. 201, 202, etc.), complete a search in the course catalog and click on the “Include only Distance Learning offerings” button, or look at a full list of offerings on the Distance Learning website ([www.uky.edu/DistanceLearning](http://www.uky.edu/DistanceLearning)).

Keep in mind that “Distance Learning” is not synonymous with “online” as there are a variety of course patterns available: Internet, Internet w/ weekly class meetings, ITV (Interactive Television), Internet w/ weekly Adobe Connect meetings, etc. The course catalog indicates the medium by which the course material is delivered.

According to the Distance Learning website, “Online courses utilize a number of internet technologies such as learning management systems, email, discussion boards, streaming video, wikis, interactive video, and web-conferencing. Online courses can be completely asynchronous (no ‘real-time’ interaction) or can have synchronous components (some real-time interaction).”

The Distance Learning website also provides resources to help students determine if they have the aptitude and technology to succeed in an online course.

**Temporary Titles**

Courses offered as “pilot” courses are designated with a temporary title. Most departments have a designated course prefix and number with which an experimental course is offered. Arts & Sciences pilot courses are listed under the category “A&S”. Newly approved UK Core courses are offered with “UKC” prefixes. The course catalog will indicate that the title is temporary and if the course is repeatable under that title. Announcements about new courses are often disseminated through the Advising Network listserv.
**Special Topics/Subtitled Courses**

Some courses are offered topically or with various subtitles in order to address specialized or timely subjects. The course catalog for a given semester will indicate the specific subtitle of the course and whether or not the course is repeatable under a different subtitle. For example, ENG 401: Special Topics in Writing may be repeated under different subtitles (e.g. “The Essay”, “Literary Journalism”, “Spiritual Writing”) to a maximum of six credits.