



ROLLINS COLLEGE POLICY

Title: Academic Credit Hours/Levels of Courses	Type	Academic
No: AC 2000	Approval Date: 12-12-2022	
Responsible: VP Academic Affairs & Provost	Reviewed By: CLA Interim Dean of Faculty, 10-31-2022; Holt Dean, 10-31-2022; Crummer Associate Dean for Academics, 10-13-2022; VP Academic Affairs & Provost, 10-31-2022; CLA Curriculum Committee, 11-15-2022; CLA Executive Committee, 12-2-2022; Crummer Faculty, 11-10-2022; President’s Cabinet, 12-12-2022; Approved By: President, 12-12-2022	
Next Review: 2028	Revision No: 4; See Section VII this document for revisioning history.	

I. Purpose/Introduction/Rationale

Academic credit provides a means of measuring and valuing the amount of engaged learning time expected of students enrolled not only in traditional classroom settings, but also in laboratories, studios, internships/practica, independent study, thesis or dissertation research and writing, experiential learning, and blended or hybrid learning environments. Academic credit may also help to quantify the level and academic rigor of student learning.

II. Definitions

In accordance with Federal regulations and for the purposes of this policy, at Rollins the semester hour is the basis for measuring, calculating, recording, and interpreting the number of credit hours accumulated by students in completing degree requirements. Factors for determining semester hours awarded in the Rollins definition include student time on task(s), subject competency, and achievement of learning outcomes attained by a typical student engaged in focused study for a designated period. Factors contributing to student time on task(s) for purposes of awarding academic credit at Rollins may be comprised of direct and indirect instructional time (see below); course-related independent preparation, study, or additional out-of-class activities; and/or related educational experience(s).

The 1906 Carnegie Classification Unit is commonly accepted as the historical standard for determining academic credit in higher education and informs this Rollins policy.¹ The policy is also grounded in the fundamental notion that Rollins students receive intensive direct instruction from faculty members in the form of: substantial individual in-class attention; extensive feedback on written work and assignments; comprehensive academic warnings involving advisors, instructors, and the director of undergraduate academic advising support services; and frequent one-on-one meetings with faculty instructors and advisors.

As substantiation, in 2021-2022, the median student-to-faculty ratio at Florida’s state universities was 21:1, while at Rollins this ratio was 12:1. Thus, Rollins’ students receive 1.75 times more attention from faculty than the average student does from state university school faculty. Further, in 2021-2022, Rollins, similar to a group of 28 benchmark liberal arts colleges, delivered 60% of all undergraduate instruction via classes of 20 or fewer students; in Florida universities, 35% of instruction was delivered in classes with 20 or fewer students enrolled.²

Given that the College’s student-to-faculty ratio is nearly two-thirds lower than that of Florida’s state universities and that nearly double the percentage of the College’s undergraduate instruction is delivered via classes of 20 or fewer students when compared to state universities, three 50-minute hours of instruction per week at Rollins may be equated to more than five 50-minute hours of instruction per week at a Florida state university. Click this link, [Appendix I](#), for detailed comparisons.

In practice and for the purposes of this policy, at Rollins College a direct or indirect instructional hour is defined as a 50-minute period and a course-related out-of-class activity hour is defined as a 60-minute period.

¹ For additional information about the Carnegie Unit please see The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/faqs>).

² Comparisons made using 2022 *U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges* reports, which draws its data from the Common Data Set (CDS) Initiative. The Florida state universities sample consisted of the nine Florida institutions classified as “national universities” by *U.S. News & World Report*.

III. Procedure or Application

This policy applies to all courses that award academic credit as described in the sections that follow (e.g., any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the College) regardless of the mode of delivery including, but not limited to, traditional lecture-discussion, independent study, hybrid/online, seminar, laboratory, or other formats. Academic units and appropriate faculty governance bodies of the College are responsible for ensuring that academic credit is awarded at appropriate levels for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

College of Liberal Arts (CLA) and Hamilton Holt School (Holt) Undergraduate Course Credit

Undergraduate course credit is typically determined based on direct and indirect instructional time; course-related independent preparation, study, or additional out-of-class activities; related educational experience(s); and/or equivalent factors, as outlined previously. Rollins faculty expect undergraduate students to spend a minimum of two and one-half (2.5) hours (60-minute periods) per week working on course-related activities for every hour (50-minute period) of engaged learning time, an increased expectation from the commonly accepted higher education practice that students spend approximately two hours (60-minute periods) outside of direct/indirect instructional time for every hour (50-minutes) of direct/indirect instructional time.

Examples.

- For a typical four-semester-hour undergraduate course, the College schedules three (50-minute) hours of direct or indirect instructional time or the equivalent per week across a 14-week semester, a total of 42 (50-minute) hours per semester. Course learning outcomes and assignments are designed to require a typical student to spend an additional 7.5 (60-minute) hours per week, or 105 (60-minute) hours per semester, on outside preparation or course-related activities. The total engaged learning time for the semester is 147 hours. Non-laboratory courses that provide students with an additional fourth or a fifth (50-minute) hour of direct instructional time per week earn a maximum of five semester hours. Laboratory courses earn up to five or six semester hours depending on the length of the laboratories (two or four 50-minute hours). Studio and performance courses generally earn two to three semester hours.
- Academic credit awarded for short-term courses of variable length is determined proportionally based on the following calculation: each semester hour of academic credit requires a minimum of 9 (50-minute) hours of direct instructional time combined with 22.5 (60-minute) of additional preparation or course-related activities, for a total of 31.5 hours of engaged learning time.

Assurance of Standards. In each syllabus, faculty members must specify activities seen as justifying the fourth credit hour. Outside-of-class work may include additional reading and/or writing, fieldwork, research, experiential education, small group projects, etc. Course syllabi will be sampled and reviewed on a regular basis to assure compliance.

All syllabi must include the following statement and identification of additional out-of-class expectations for the fourth semester hour.

CLA and Holt Undergraduate Credit Hour Statement. Rollins College offers four-semester-credit-hour courses that provide three (50-minute) hours of direct or indirect instructional contact. The value of four credit hours reflects the substantial individual attention each student receives from instructors, as well as additional out-of-class activities. Faculty require that students undertake at least 7.5 (60-minute) hours of outside work per week, averaged over the course's duration and equaling two and one-half (2.5) 60-minute hours of outside work for every (50-minute) hour of scheduled class time. In this course, the additional outside-of-class expectations are: *[faculty fill in what this course requires, e.g., additional reading and/or writing, fieldwork, research, experiential education, small group projects, etc.]*.

Hamilton Holt School (Holt) Evening Graduate Program Course Credit

Holt graduate course credit is typically determined by direct instructional time; course-related independent preparation, study, or additional activities; related educational experience(s); and/or equivalent factors, as outlined previously. Holt graduate students are expected to spend a minimum of three to four hours (60-minute) hours per week working on course-related activities for every 50-minute hour of direct or indirect instructional time. Course

credit in Holt graduate courses may be set at three or four semester hours per course dependent upon the level of course-related activities expected outside of direct instructional time. In programs where a typical course earns four semester hours of credit, longer, deeper, or experiential learning is required through additional projects, reading of the literature of the discipline, writing, training, or professional publications (*click links to access [Appendix II: MLS Credit Hour Justification](#) and [Appendix III: MHR Credit Hour Justification](#)*).

Examples.

- For a typical three-semester-hour graduate level course, the College schedules three (50-minute) hours of direct instructional time per week or the equivalent across a 14-week semester, a total of 42 (50-minute) hours per semester. Course learning outcomes and assignments are designed to require a typical student to spend an additional nine (60-minute) hours per week, or 126 (60-minute) hours, per semester, in course-related activities and/or preparation. The total engaged learning time for the semester is 168 hours.
- For a typical four-semester-hour graduate course, the College schedules three (50-minute) hours of direct or indirect instructional time or the equivalent per week across a 14-week semester, a total of 42 (50-minute) hours per semester. Course learning outcomes and assignments are designed to require a typical student to spend an additional 12 (60-minute) hours per week, or 168 (60-minute) hours per semester, in course-related activities and/or preparation. The total engaged learning time for the semester is 200 hours.
- Academic credit awarded for short-term courses of variable length at the graduate level is determined proportionally based on the following calculation: each semester hour of academic credit requires a minimum of 9 (50-minute) hours of direct or indirect instructional time combined with 27 (60-minute) hours of course-related activities and/or preparation, for a total of 36 hours of engaged learning time per hour.

Validation of factors contributing to and calculation of academic credit (semester hours) awarded, and levels of courses are determined by academic departments. The CLA Curriculum Committee, which is responsible for academic oversight of Holt, reviews these expectations before new courses are approved.

Crummer Graduate School of Business (Crummer) Course Credit

Crummer graduate course credit is typically determined by direct instructional time; course-related independent preparation, study, or additional activities; related educational experience(s); and/or equivalent factors, as outlined previously. Crummer graduate students are expected to spend a minimum of three hours per week working on program-related activities for every hour of direct instructional time. Course credit in Crummer's MBA courses is typically set at three semester hours of credit per course, while EDBA courses are typically set at two or four semester hours of credit per course.

Examples.

- Early Advantage and Professional MBA (EAMBA and PMBA) students, regardless of delivery modality, are scheduled for three-hour blocks (180 minutes) of direct instructional time, or the equivalent, per week across a 12-week semester, a total of 36 hours per semester. Course learning outcomes and assignments are designed to require a typical student to spend an additional nine hours per week, or 108 hours, per semester, in program-related activities and/or preparation. The total engaged learning time for a typical 12-week offering is 144 hours.
- Executive MBA (EMBA) students are scheduled for 12 (60-minute) hours of direct instructional time one weekend a month for three months, a total of 36 hours per session. Course learning outcomes and assignments are designed to require a typical student to spend an additional nine hours per week, or 108 hours per session, in course-related activities and/or preparation. The total engaged learning time for a typical three-month course offering is 144 hours.
- Executive Doctorate in Business Administration (EDBA) students are scheduled for eight (60-minute) hours of direct instructional time one weekend per month, such that two-month course totals 16 hours or a four-month course totals 32 hours per session. Course learning outcomes and assignments are designed to require a typical student to spend an additional nine hours per week, 72 hours, for a two-month course or 144 hours for a four-month course, in course-related activities and/or preparation. The total engaged learning time for a two-month course is 88 hours, while a four-month course is 176 hours.

Validation of factors contributing to and calculation of academic credit (semester hours) awarded, and levels of courses are determined by Crummer programs. Proposals are then reviewed and approved by the Crummer Curriculum Committee or in the case of the Executive DBA program, the EDBA Academic committee, and full faculty.

IV. Related Policies

Rollins College. (2019). *Faculty Handbook, Section II: All Faculty of Rollins College Policies and Procedures, Policy on Academic Credit Hours and Levels of Courses*. Retrieved from <https://scholarship.rollins.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=handbooks>.

V. Appendices/Supplemental Materials

[Appendix I: Institutional Comparison Data](#) (click link to access)

[Appendix II: MLS Credit Hour Justification](#) (click link to access)

[Appendix III: MHR Credit Hour Justification](#) (click link to access)

VI. Effective Date

This policy is effective December 12, 2022, and supersedes all previously issued versions.

VII. Rationale for Revision(s)

Rev. 4: Required five-year review and non-substantive updates, 12-12-2022.

Rev. 3: Updated for CLA governance and name changes, 4-27-2017.

Rev. 2: General revisions to philosophy, assurance of standards, and systems for the fourth semester hour, 11-17-2015.

Rev. 1: Alignment with 2012 revisions to Federal and regional accreditation requirements, 1 10-17-2013.

Appendix I: Institutional Comparison Data

Student-Faculty Ratios and Class Sizes: Rollins College vs. Florida State Universities

Florida State Universities	Student-Faculty Ratio	% Classes Under 20	% Classes 50 or More
Florida A&M University (Tallahassee)	14:1	40%	7%
University of Florida (Gainesville)	17:1	53%	9%
University of North Florida (Jacksonville)	19:1	27%	13%
University of West Florida (Pensacola)	20:1	35%	7%
Florida Gulf Coast University (Fort Myers)	21:1	34%	7%
Florida State University (Tallahassee)	21:1	61%	11%
University of South Florida (Tampa)	22:1	46%	13%
Florida Atlantic University (Boca Raton)	23:1	17%	22%
Florida International University (Miami)	23:1	35%	16%
University of Central Florida (Orlando)	31:1	29%	25%
MEDIAN	21:1	35%	12%
Rollins College	12:1	60%	0%

Source: U.S. News and World Report 2021-2022, released Fall 2021.
Retrieved from: <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges>.

Rollins College student-to-faculty ratio as compared to benchmark institutions.

Institutions at median for student-faculty ratio shaded in gray;
Rollins College shaded in yellow.

Benchmark Institutions	State	Student-Faculty Ratio
Muhlenberg College	PA	8:1
Furman University	SC	9:1
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	NY	9:1
Rhodes College	TN	9:1
University of Puget Sound	WA	9:1
Dominican University of CA	CA	10:1
Macalester College	MN	10:1
Ohio Wesleyan University	OH	10:1
Pacific University	OR	10:1
Sarah Lawrence College	NY	10:1
St. Lawrence University	NY	10:1
Wagner College	NY	10:1
Willamette University	OR	10:1
Allegheny College	PA	11:1
Augustana College	IL	11:1
Gustavus Adolphus College	MN	11:1
Hope College	MI	11:1
Illinois Wesleyan University	IL	11:1
Luther College	IA	11:1
Roanoke College	VA	11:1
Saint Anselm College ¹	NH	11:1
Rollins College	FL	12:1
Eckerd College	FL	12:1
Manhattan College	NY	12:1
St. Olaf College	MN	12:1
Whittier College	CA	12:1
Bryant University	RI	13:1
Emerson College	MA	13:1
Pacific Lutheran University	WA	13:1
Susquehanna University	PA	13:1
MEDIAN		11:1

Note: Data presented were collected in 2021-2022 and released Fall 2021.

Source: U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges>.

¹ Saint Anselm College data retrieved from: <https://www.anselm.edu>.

Rollins College percentage of classes under 20 and above 50 as compared to benchmark institutions.

Institutions at median for percent of classes under 20 shaded in gray;
Rollins College shaded in yellow.

Benchmark Institutions	State	% Classes Under 20	% Classes 50 or More
Bryant University	RI	24%	0.00%
Pacific Lutheran University	WA	49%	3.50%
St. Olaf College	MN	50%	3.00%
Whittier College	CA	51%	0.50%
Dominican University of California	CA	52%	0.00%
Manhattan College	NY	55%	0.10%
Roanoke College	VA	55%	0.00%
Hope College	MI	57%	2.00%
Pacific University	OR	57%	3.00%
Susquehanna University	PA	57%	0.20%
Eckerd College	FL	59%	0.00%
Rollins College	FL	60%	0.20%
Luther College	IA	63%	0.50%
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	NY	64%	0.00%
Illinois Wesleyan University	IL	64%	1.00%
St. Lawrence University	NY	67%	1.00%
Wagner College	NY	67%	2.00%
Gustavus Adolphus College	MN	68%	0.20%
Macalester College	MN	69%	0.40%
Ohio Wesleyan University	OH	70%	0.50%
University of Puget Sound	WA	70%	0.20%
Saint Anselm College ¹	NH	75%	0.20%
Rhodes College	TN	76%	0.00%
Willamette University	OR	77%	0.00%
Emerson College	MA	80%	0.00%
Allegheny College	PA	81%	0.20%
Furman University	SC	81%	0.00%
Muhlenberg College	PA	83%	0.30%
Sarah Lawrence College	NY	88%	0.30%
MEDIAN		64%	0.20%

Note: Data presented were collected in 2021-2022 and released in Fall 2021.

Source: U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges>.

¹ St. Anselm College data retrieved from: <https://www.anselm.edu>.

Appendix II: MLS Credit Hour Justification

From: Patricia Lancaster
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 2:32 PM
To: Toni Holbrook
Subject: MLS Clarification re: Credit Hours

The MLS program adopted the 4-credit course standard when the undergraduate program moved to a system that awarded 4 credits for a regular course. I believe that it was, at the time, designated a Rollins Unit (RU). The expectation was that courses would require students to do a significant amount of independent work each week in addition to the 150 minutes that they spent in class.

Prior to the change, the credit for an MLS course was 3.3 semester hours. The MLS faculty reviewed course requirements, especially in the six core courses to make certain that the amount of work required outside of class was sufficient to justify awarding 4 credits.

Because most courses are taught as seminars, it is virtually impossible for a student to succeed without spending three or more hours outside of class for every hour in class. In contrast to courses taught in lecture style with learning evaluated through tests, the learning experience in MLS courses is based on the students' ability to contribute meaningfully to the discussion of the assigned readings. Both the reading and writing assignments in MLS courses require significant time outside of class. In most courses students read at least one book a week as well as supplementary critical and analytical texts, usually made available by the professor using Blackboard courseware.

Students in the first core course, *Human Order*, write one paper each week and a longer paper at the end of the term. In the second core course, *Religion and Western Culture*, they write several short papers and one long research paper. The research project is monitored from note-taking, through outline and draft form, to final draft. The emphasis on writing and research in these first two courses prepares students for the work they will do in subsequent courses and in the thesis project.

Often students are required to present written and oral reports to the class two or three times each semester. Thus, a student in the third core course, *Origins of Modernity*, will read at least one book each week, make at least two presentations in class, write two or three short papers on subjects other than their presentation topics, and write one longer paper.

Patricia Lancaster, Ph.D.
Director, Master of Liberal Studies
Rollins College
203 E. Lyman
Winter Park, FL 32789

Phone: 407- 657-0028
Office: 218 Holt School (2nd floor)

Appendix III: MHR Credit Hour Justification

From: Don Rogers
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2013 10:42 AM
To: Toni Holbrook
Subject: MLS Clarification re: Credit Hours

When Holt graduate programs were asked to go to 4 credit hours from 3, we agreed. We did not initiate the change.

At the time we agreed to increase the time spent out-of-class to justify the additional credit hour. We did so by adding projects and additional material. Strategic HRM requires students to write & submit an article for publication. Recruiting, Selection, & Retention and Employment & Labor Law require significantly more outside reading of original documents (and legal cases). Training & Development required students to actually conduct a training program for their organization. Organization Change & Development required a large scale OD project. Etc.

We have continued the policy of longer, deeper engagement in HR content material & experiential learning. We use this in advertising, promotion, and external reviews as a differentiating factor.

The move to 4 credit hours also provides a financial benefit to our students. Many of our students from large companies receive tuition remission based on the number of credit hours. A four credit hour course provides remission of a larger percentage of the total per course tuition (a fact noted by some of our students from Disney, Florida Health, and OIA).

Donald P. Rogers, PhD, SPHR, GPHR
Professor, Business & Social Entrepreneurship
Director, Master of Human Resources (MHR)
Rollins College
1000 Holt Avenue #2723
Winter Park, FL 32789-4499
407-646-2348