

## Course Level and Credit Hour Policies and Guidelines

### Course Numbering Policies and Guidelines

- **100 level** courses are introductory and open to all students. Courses typically represent broad surveys of a topic or discipline and may serve as pre-requisites for upper-division (300-400) courses.
- **200 level** courses are open to sophomores, juniors, seniors, and qualified freshmen. These courses may be core courses for a specific program or major. Freshmen may be admitted to courses numbered between 300 and 499, upon approval of the instructor and advisor. Such approval is limited to students who have demonstrated superior ability or preparation.
- **300 level** courses are open to juniors, seniors, and other qualified students. These courses will likely have prerequisites and may require formal background in a discipline. The content of these courses is typically advanced and specialized, and require academic skills developed in lower level courses.
- **400 level** courses are open to juniors and seniors and are intended only for advanced students. These courses will have pre-requisites and will usually require preparation within the discipline. Courses will be taught at a level appropriate for juniors and seniors. These courses should present greater challenges and should require a higher level of independent scholarship than lower levels.
- **500 level** are graduate courses in the M.A.T. program. These courses require undergraduate preparation and degree completion, reflected in more rigorous evaluations and sophisticated outcomes.
- **600 level** are graduate course in the M.Ed. program. Courses shared by the M.A.T. and the M.Ed. are listed as 600. These courses require undergraduate preparation and degree completion, reflected in more rigorous evaluations and sophisticated outcomes.

### Credit Hour Policies – Standard definition

For most traditional courses, one semester credit hour (*credit hour*) is equivalent to at least 50 minutes of instructional class time per week for a period of 15 weeks, for a total of 750 minutes. Therefore, a three-credit-hour course would meet 150 minutes per week for 15 weeks, for a total of 2250 minutes. Furthermore, each credit hour requires approximately two hours of student work outside of class (represented by reading, studying, homework, or projects) per week as is usually necessary to achieve the stated expected course outcomes to at least an average level. This standard definition of the *credit hour* conforms to commonly accepted academic practice and adheres to the guidelines provided by SACSCOC for the interpretation of the federal definition. In addition, this definition provides the benchmark by which any deviation from the standard definition will be evaluated. Currently accepted deviations from this standard definition in place at Aquinas College are indicated in the following table.

<u>Experience</u>	<u>Example(s)</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Enhanced Student Teaching	EDU 435 and EDU 436 are the Enhanced Student Teaching courses required of undergraduate students of the School of Education.	The Enhanced Student Teaching courses require at least 640 hours of teaching in an elementary or secondary classroom under the supervision of a cooperating teacher and an Aquinas College faculty member. Students earn 11 credit hours for this experience upon successful completion of EDU 435 or EDU 436.

Supervised Student Teaching	EDU 560 is the Supervised Student Teaching course required of the M. A. T. graduate students.	The Supervised Student Teaching course requires at least 640 hours of teaching in an elementary or secondary classroom under the supervision of a cooperating teacher and an Aquinas College faculty member. Students earn 6 credit hours for this experience upon successful completion of EDU 560.
Job-Embedded Experience	EDU 565 is the Job Embedded (Teaching) Experience	The Job Embedded Teaching experience course requires two consecutive semesters of 3 credit hours each. Students will teach under the supervision of a mentor teacher and an Aquinas College faculty member for at least 800 hours for the 6 credit hours required of this experience.
Internships		The 3 credit hour course requires at least 100 hours under the supervision and guidance of a business practitioner who serves as the student's mentor.
Science laboratory	All lab-based sciences have a lecture and a lab component. The lecture component of the course conforms to the standard definition above.	The laboratory component of the course requires at least two contact hours in the science laboratory environment per week as a complement to the lecture. Lecture (3 credit hours) + lab (1 credit hour) provides four credit hours for lab-based science courses.
Accelerated courses: undergraduate; 500-level graduate courses	Some courses of the M.A.T. programs.	Accelerated courses meet $< 2/3$ but $\geq 1/2$ of the contact time of courses following the standard definition. The expected outcomes of all accelerated courses must be benchmarked against identical or similar courses utilizing the standard definition to ensure the credit hours awarded are comparable.
600-level graduate courses	Master of Education courses; some M. A. T. courses	Reduced contact time for 600-level graduate courses reflects the expected independence of the graduate-level learner. Credit hours awarded for 600-level courses are based on the expected outcomes of the course and require a considerable amount of out-of-class work.

All deviations from the standard definition of the credit hour use the standard definition as a benchmark for the assignment of the appropriate number of credit hours. Benchmarking is done in two ways: first, by comparing the course expectations (as indicated by expected outcomes) with similar courses adhering to the standard definition; and secondly, by comparing the amount of student work and time required to meet the expected course outcomes.