

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING  
MEASUREMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

1. Academic Measurement

Institutions accredited by the National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences (NACCAS) may express their academic measurement in terms of:

- a. Clock Hours
- b. Credit Hours
- c. Competencies

2. Notification

The institution must notify NACCAS of its academic measurement at the following points:

- a. Application for Initial Accreditation (main campus or branch campus)
- b. Before a change from one form of measurement to another or before adding a form of measurement
- c. Annual Report

3. Definitions

**Clock Hours:** Clock hour is defined as a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction during a 60 minute period.

**Competencies:** Competencies are skills and knowledge a person needs to acquire in order to obtain a license or certification to work in the field of cosmetology arts and sciences, massage, or related or unrelated areas.

**Competency-based academic program:** A self-paced program measured by the student's acquisition of knowledge and skills (competencies) rather than seat time.

**Non-standard term credit hour:** At least 30 hours of instruction (theory, practical and clinic).

**Non-standard term program:** A student-centered program with many start dates throughout the year (e.g., the second Monday of every month) which may be shorter than one academic year in length, equal to one or more academic years, or longer than one or

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more academic years with the remainder more or less than one half of an academic year in length.

Quarter: An academic period of 10 to 12 weeks.

Quarter credit hour or quarter hour: At least 20 clock hours of instruction (theory, practical or laboratory) = 1 quarter credit hour

Semester: An academic period of 15 to 18 weeks.

Semester credit hour or semester hour: At least 30 clock hours of instruction (theory, practical or laboratory) = 1 semester credit hour

### 4. Validity of Academic Measurement

A school must decide which of its academic programs will be offered on a clock hour basis, competency basis, non-standard term basis, semester basis, or quarter basis. While for many years institutions of cosmetology arts and sciences have generally measured their academic programs in terms of clock hours, as provided in state laws, more and more institutions are also measuring on the basis of competencies or credit hours. No matter which academic measurement a school uses, it must establish the educational validity of the program.

- a. A program measured in clock hours in accordance with minimum requirements for licensure or certification in a state, or up to 20% longer than the state minimum requirement, will be accepted as valid. For any program measured in clock hours that is 20% or more hours above state minimum for licensure or certification the school must provide reasons for the difference.
- b. A program measured in competencies must link acquisition or demonstration of knowledge and competencies to a curriculum developed around minimum state licensure or certification requirements, state minimum requirements augmented by recommendations from its Advisory Committee, or skills necessary for entry-level employment according to skills standards developed by a national body with recognized expertise in this area that go beyond minimum state requirements.

Methods for assessing competency may include

- i. Initial assessment of the student's knowledge and skills at time of enrollment, with advanced placement if eligible
- ii. Testing
- iii. Observation and grading of practical work
- iv. Observation and grading of clinic or laboratory work
- v. Observation and grading of work performed in an externship
- vi. Assessment of student portfolios

- vii. Assessment of special projects
- viii. Written or oral examination.

Competencies must be linked to the curriculum through grades, a point system, or similar assessment measure.

- c. A program measured in credit hours must satisfy at a minimum, the following requirements:
    - i. Academic Program measured on non-standard term basis:  
1 credit hour = At least 30 clock hours Theory (cognitive/lecture), Practice/Demonstration, and/or Clinical Experience
    - ii. Academic Program measured on semester (15 – 20 weeks) basis (Minimum):  
1 credit hour = At least 30 clock hours Theory (cognitive/lecture), Practice/Demonstration, and/or Clinical Experience
    - iii. Academic Program measured on quarter (10 – 12 weeks) basis (Minimum):  
1 credit hour = at least 20 clock hours of Theory (cognitive/lecture), Practice/Demonstration, and/or Clinical Experience
    - iv. If a state mandates a specific conversion rate, that conversion rate should be used.
  - d. In accordance with Standards I and VI, the Commission will pay special attention to the assessments of academic programs carried out by schools in relation to the system of academic measurement selected.
5. Conversion to or Addition of Credit Hour or Competency-Based Programs
- a. An institution which measures its academic programs on a clock hour basis may convert to a credit hour or competency-based academic measurement, by complying with the procedure set out in section 4.18 of the NACCAS *Rules of Practice and Procedure*, the procedures set out in section 5b of this policy, and the following conversion formula.
    - i. In establishing the appropriate conversation, a school will need to decide whether to organize its academic programs and the courses offered at the school in competencies, non-standard terms, semesters or quarters and how many weeks there will be in each semester or quarter. It must then

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divide the clock hours of the program by 30 (non-standard term or semester) or 20 (quarter) to determine the number of credit hours. Credits must be expressed in whole numbers and rounded down as needed. A school must then develop curricula, lesson plans, and course schedules in conformance with the new measure of academic programs and NACCAS standards and criteria.

- ii. If a state mandates a specific conversion rate, that conversion rate should be used.
- b. Procedure to obtain approval for Changes and Conversions from Clock Hours to Credit Hours or Competencies:

In order to change or convert a program or course of study already approved by NACCAS from clock hours the institution shall:

- i. Formally inform NACCAS of its intent to change or convert a program or course of study from clock hours to credit hours or competencies sixty (60) days prior to implementation of such a change or conversion. Notification must be on a form which can be obtained from the NACCAS office. The completed form shall be submitted by the chief executive officer of the school or other school designated individual to the NACCAS Executive Director.
  - ii. Ensure that there is no state prohibition on expressing of academic measurement in terms of credit hours or competencies for the type of course or program. If a state requires reporting of a student's education in clock hours, the institution must also comply with such reporting requirements.
- c. Sample Conversions<sup>1</sup>

Non-Standard Term Sample: 1450-hour basic cosmetology program

- $1450 \div 30 = 48.33$  which rounded down = 48 credits

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<sup>1</sup> Schools will want to take federal requirements into consideration when making a conversion such as:

- Minimum 15 weeks of instruction are required
- Minimum of 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours OR
- Minimum of 10 weeks of instruction and at least 300 clock hours, 8 semester or trimester hours and 12 quarter hours OR
- Minimum 10 weeks of instruction, at least 300 – 600 clock hours and satisfy 70% graduation and placement requirements
- The fact that only one academic year can occur in a calendar year.

Semester Credits Sample: 1450-hour basic cosmetology program

- School builds in 10%<sup>2</sup> hours student may be absent without requiring make-up hours
- $1450 \times 1.1 = 1595$
- $1595 \div 30 = 53.16$  which rounded down = 53 semester credits

Quarter Credits Sample: 1450-hour basic cosmetology program

- $1450 \text{ hours} \div 20 = 72.5$  which rounded down = 72 quarter credits

6. Review

A change or conversion from clock hours to credit hours can be approved administratively by the Executive Director of NACCAS if the change or conversion conforms to NACCAS' Policy and Procedures Governing Measurement of Academic Programs. The decision of the Executive Director shall be rendered within thirty (30) days after the completed form is received from the school. Such decision shall be communicated to the Executive Director of the school or other school designated individual in writing, via certified mail, return receipt requested. A denial decision of the Executive Director is subject to appeal to the Commission in the manner prescribed in Part 9 of the NACCAS *Rules of Practice and Procedure*. Notice to the school of the Commission's decision on the appeal shall conform to the Notice Requirements of Section 8.17 of the *Rules*.

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<sup>2</sup> This is allowed only if the State allows absences (that do not need to be made up), but may not exceed 10%