

ACADEMIC POINTS OF CREDIT

Guidance on Course Points

Regulations on the apportioning of academic points for graduate coursework are set forth by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Columbia University's Office of the Provost bears responsibility for university compliance with NYSED regulations and works with all Columbia schools to this end.

The Provost's Office delegates to the curriculum committees of the schools the task of ensuring that all courses carry an appropriate number of points of academic credit. The SIPA Committee on Instruction is therefore tasked with ensuring consistency of practice within and among academic programs and protecting the integrity of our students' graduate degrees.

Points are assigned to courses based on a minimum of in-class time in combination with a minimum of out-of-class hours for course assignments. The relevant NYSED regulation states, "Semester hour means 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 except as otherwise provided pursuant to section 52.2(c)(4) of this Subchapter. This basic measure shall be adjusted proportionately to translate the value of other academic calendars and formats of study in relation to the credit granted for study during the two semesters that comprise an academic year."

Thus, each point of academic credit requires a minimum of three hours of work each week in a Fall or Spring semester (i.e., a 15-week semester with 14 weeks of classes and 1 week of exams). These three hours are typically divided into one hour of classroom instruction (with an hour of classroom instruction defined as at least 50 minutes) and two hours of independent work (which may include readings, problem sets, papers, individual or group projects, and so forth).

Full-semester course (14-weeks + finals week)

Points of Academic Credit	In-class hours	Out-of-class hours	Weekly hours	Semester hours
1.5	2	2.5	4.5	67.5
3	2	7	9	135

1/2-semester course (7-weeks + finals week)

Points of Academic Credit	In-class hours	Out-of-class hours	Weekly hours	Semester hours
1.5	2	7.5	9	67.5