New York City College of Technology compliance with credit hour policy for hybrid and online courses

As faculty and administrators, we are committed to seeing that our students receive the best education possible and to maintaining and expanding our external accreditations as evidence of academic quality. Accrediting agencies are directing increasing scrutiny toward verifying that learning outcomes in online and partially online courses are achieved and also that the online learning experience is in compliance with our credit hour policy.

This policy requires essentially that students commit 3 hours per week per unit of credit, with commensurate learning outcomes. Instructors, chairs, course coordinators and departmental peer mentors participating in online faculty re-certification and/or peer observation are responsible for confirming that credit hours are commensurate with course work, both within and outside the classroom.

Faculty teaching online and hybrid courses can monitor compliance by evaluating the quality of student work posted, and verifying that discussion threads and other communications demonstrate students' critical thinking, gains in skills, values and knowledge, and an appropriate time commitment to learning. Commonly accepted ways to measure academic engagement online include, but are not limited to, submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction; participating in online group work assigned by the instructor; contributing to course blogs, journals, and/or wikis; or reviewing and critiquing the work of other students online.[1] For hybrid courses, classroom attendance, examinations, practica, laboratory or clinical work, internships, and studio work should be included in the credit hours.

OLAC mentors and/or peer observers reviewing online or hybrid courses for course quality, for online teaching re-certification, or for peer observation, and Chairpersons or course coordinators designating the panel of observers and peer observer, should review and document verification of compliance with the college's credit hour policy, so that it can be included in future accreditation documentation. It is advised that the "Criteria for Assessing the Online Component of a Hybrid and Online Course Class Meeting" prepared by the Online Learning Advisory Council be used along with the "Faculty Class Observation Report" for documentation and guidance. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that anyone observing an online or hybrid course is certified to teach online. We also suggest that department Chairs and course coordinators take the City Tech Online Seminar to become more familiar with online teaching.

The college's credit hour policy is posted: http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/aboutus/docs/policies/CreditHourPolicy.pdf as required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

Thanks for your efforts toward this important goal.