



# UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

## Policy Manual

<b>Policy #:</b>	ACD-1007	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Policy on Zero-Credit Courses
<b>Effective:</b>	02/16/2024	<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Registrar’s Office
<b>Date Approved:</b>	02/16/2024	<b>Approval:</b>	Executive Vice President & Provost
<b>Replaces Policy Dated:</b>	N/A	<b>Responsible University Official:</b>	University Registrar

**PURPOSE:**

To clarify when a course may be offered for zero semester hours or zero units to ensure consistency across the University and compliance with related regulations and accreditation requirements.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all courses offered by the University of Richmond

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**POLICY STATEMENT:**

*ACD-1007.1 – Policy*

All academic courses should be offered for academic credit to reflect the instructional time and student effort required. The amount of credit to be earned must follow the guidelines in the University’s Academic Credit Policy. As outlined in that policy and in the University Faculty Handbook, faculty within each School are responsible for reviewing and approving academic course credit.

Courses that are required for graduation and that do not bear credit are appropriate only in rare circumstances, and only when the required activity would not meet the institutional and departmental requirements for credit-bearing work. Such zero-semester hour or zero-unit graduation requirements must be designed to advance an

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important educational outcome and be aligned with the University mission. Moreover, such zero-credit graduation requirements – individually and in aggregate -- should be limited in number only to those necessary to achieve their purpose and prepare students for graduation.

Courses offered for zero credit may be approved only if they meet the following conditions:

- The course is primarily student-driven and/or experiential in nature such as an independent study, practical experience, research, or creative expression OR the course is designed to transcript a student’s co-curricular, engagement, or other accomplishments outside of a formal academic classroom or research setting.
- Grading is accomplished with minimal assessment; letter grades are not assigned.

Summer research experiences in which students participate in faculty-mentored research and receive compensation or a fellowship for their research may be offered for zero credit hours.

## *Approval Process*

Courses offered by a school or program for zero credit must be approved by the faculty through the processes outlined for approval of credit-bearing courses in that school or program. Zero-credit courses offered outside of a school and required for graduation (e.g., Well 100) must be approved by the faculty of the degree-granting school, or the Faculty Senate (in the case of traditional undergraduates).

## *Audited Courses*

The requirements for approval of zero-credit courses do not apply to courses that are approved credit-bearing courses which students take as auditors.

## *ACD-1007.2– Applicable Regulations & Accreditation Standards*

SACSCOC Standard 10.7 *Policies for Awarding Credit*

## **RELATED POLICIES:**

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*ACD 1001 – Academic Credit Policy*  
*ACD 1002 – Undergraduate Academic Internships Policy*  
*ACD 1601 – Undergraduate Independent Studies Policy*  
University Faculty Handbook

## **POLICY BACKGROUND:**

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The policy dated February 2024 codified longstanding University practice. It was reviewed by Faculty Senate, Academic Cabinet and President’s Cabinet before approval.

## **POLICY CONTACTS:**

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University Registrar