

ZCC Policy Recommendation by Subcommittee

Zero credit courses may be offered for experiential learning opportunities. These opportunities must exhibit academic rigor as defined by the discipline. Hope College faculty will interact directly with students, and the course will lead to specific learning outcomes. Exceptions will be made for attendance-based zero credit courses only when such courses are required for program accreditation.

We also recommend the following as additions or revisions to the implementation details provided by the Curriculum Committee:

- ***Proposals for a zero credit course may specify whether the course is graded or pass/fail. Zero credit courses required for a major must be graded.***
- ***If a student is taking fewer than 16 credits and a for-credit version of the course is available, students must take the for-credit option unless this would cause them to exceed 16 credits.***

Comments (and responses) received:

1. I am concerned about ZCC proliferation. Couldn't almost any course meet these criteria by claiming program accreditation? And what would prevent Cultural Heritage, for example, from being offered as a ZCC?

Change it to read: ***"Exceptions can be made for attendance-based zero credit courses required for program accreditation for which it can be demonstrated that attendance cannot be required in any other way."***

Include a preamble: ***"Offering courses for credit is the Hope college norm. Proposals for a zero credit course must provide compelling reasons why a course must be offered for zero credit, or why the course activity cannot be part of an existing course or take place alongside the academic program."***

2. ZCC for major courses must be graded... Yes, pass grades do not count for a major, however, ZCC is completely different set of circumstances than a standard major course. I can make ZCC courses graded pass count for a major and differentiate between a credit bearing major course. I always need to think about how the academic transcript looks and what someone reviewing/reading the transcript will think. I just feel that a zero credit course with a standard letter grade will raise red flags. As a reader of transcript for a transfer student, it would alarm me -- I would think it was a mistake. Since one of the main objectives of ZCC courses is to record the experience, I guess I don't see the importance of a standard letter grade vs. pass.

3. Allowed if only be 16 credits... This would be a nightmare for my office to maintain and implement. I don't think others folks on campus really understand the number of schedule changes my office makes, I would guess we are in the thousands. Whenever a policy is conditional, such as this, chances of error are significant.