

Q & A on Credit Hours for Employees Covered by the Guild Contract

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Credit hours were first negotiated by the Guild in 1997 yet many of us (including managers) do not fully understand the rules about earning and using them. Here, we address some of the frequently asked questions by employees who are covered by the Guild's contract (Collective Bargaining Agreement).

I'm new to the Library, what are credit hours? "Credit hours are given for authorized work performed by an employee in excess of his/her regularly scheduled tour of duty in order to vary the length of a subsequent workday." Simply stated, credit hours provide a way for employees to earn extra time off. Employees elect to work credit hours. The procedures to request authorization and to earn and use these hours are established in the Guild's contract under Article 23.

Is everybody eligible to work credit hours? Rules on credit hours for the Guild's bargaining unit are established in our contract. If you are a Guild bargaining unit employee on a flexible schedule, then you are eligible to work credit hours on your normal days of work. However, some offices have their own guidelines based on operational needs. An example would be reading rooms. If you have questions about the administration of credit hours in your particular office, contact the Guild.

Where can I find information on credit hours? Information on earning and using credit hours for Guild bargaining unit employees is covered in the contract under Article 23. The contract article is based on the "Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1982." Copies of the contract are available in the Guild office (LM G41). You also can search an on-line version of the contract on the Guild's web site at this link <http://www.guild2910.org/CBA/art23.html>

How many credit hours can I work in one day? That depends upon your regular schedule. The number of credit hours you can earn is based on your regular daily schedule of 8, 9, or 10 hours. Maximum number of hours you can work in one day is 11 hours. You must work an initial increment of 30 minutes.

I'm a part-time employee, how many credit hours can I earn? This issue is not covered in the contract. But the Library often follows the Schedules Act which states, "...accumulation of credit hours for part-time employees is on a pro rata basis, and those employees are entitled to accumulate and carry over a number of credit hours equal to one-fourth of a biweekly basic work requirement." If, however, you have received approval to work more hours, that is fine, too.

Do I have to get advanced approval from my supervisor to work credit hours? Yes. Please, don't work the credit time until you have received approval. Check with your supervisor and record credit hours earned and used on WebTA. Unapproved credit hours could be denied.

Can supervisors require that requests be submitted 24 or 48 hours in advance? You must get advanced approval, but nowhere in the contract is it specified how far in advance you have to ask. Actually, you can ask at the last minute, but we suggest that you work out a mutually agreeable system with your supervisor. Many supervisors do prefer advance notice and it is in everyone's interest to establish a workable system.

Can my supervisor require me to request credit hours at the beginning of each pay period even though I'm not sure if I'll work them? Credit hours are initiated by you not by management. You elect to work credit hours. "Work performed for credit hours is differentiated from overtime work, which is ordered or directed by management in excess of the employee's basic hours." But if you request to work credit hours it may be more efficient to do so at the beginning of each pay period.

Can my supervisor ask me to specify what I will be working on while earning credit hours? Yes. Assignment of work is a management right and your supervisor may ask you to work on a specific project during credit hours, though no special project is required to justify your request. Most typically, employees perform the same work during credit hours that they perform during their regular schedule.

Can my supervisor deny my request to work credit hours? Yes. According to the contract: "Supervisors will consider operational requirements when considering requests to work credit hours. Employees who need close supervision because of disciplinary or performance-related considerations may be excluded from working credit hours." If your request for credit hours is denied, contact the Guild office to discuss your options.

I was approved to work 3 credit hours, but only worked 2. Is that allowable? Yes. Approval just means that you were approved to work that number of hours, not that you are required to work all of them. Record the actual number of hours you worked on WebTA.

If my tour of duty is from 1:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., can I earn credit hours before 1:00 p.m.? Yes, as long as you do not exceed working 11 hours per day.

Must I use my credit hours before using my annual leave? No. In the 1997 contract, credit hours had to be used before annual leave, but that created a problem for employees with "use or lose" leave at the end of the year. In the current contract a new clause was added, "Credit hours are to be used in the same manner as annual leave."

If I earned 24 credit hours last pay period and carried all of them forward, can I earn any credit hours this pay period? Yes. Section 3.A provides that employees can earn up to 24 credit hours per pay period and carry over 24 hours into the next pay period. If you accumulate more than 24 credit hours in a pay period, you would need to use those extra credit hours in that

same pay period. If you carry more than 24 credit hours into the next pay period, they would likely be forfeited.

Can I carry credit hours into a new leave year? Yes, and the limit is 24 hours.

Can I earn credit hours on my flex day? Yes. “Employees working for credit hours may work a maximum of 11 hours per day on a regularly scheduled workday, or 11 hours on their maxiflex/complex day.”

Do any Library of Congress regulations on credit hours apply? No, CBA Article 23 sets out the terms for members of our bargaining unit. Non-bargaining unit staff who are not covered by collective bargaining agreements follow the terms of LCR 2013-11
<http://www.loc.gov/staff/ogc/lcr/2013-11-1.html>

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