

Intensive Course Formats and Condensed Semesters:  
Examining their Impact on Teaching & Learning

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The third goal of *The Elon Commitment* calls for “. . . the highest levels of achievement across our academic programs.” As the Elon University student demographic changes to become more heterogeneous, how will traditional course formats, support programs, and institutional policies change to meet the needs of this shifting populace and foster excellence among all students? This study proposes a partial answer to this question through an examination of teaching and learning in the condensed semester and intensive course formats, including study abroad and online experiences at Elon. The project will explore the questions of how students learn and how they use and apply their knowledge at the end of their experiences in the condensed semester and intensive course format compared to similar content taught in the traditional fifteen-week semester. Do course format & duration make a difference in students’ academic performance and achievement? Do students learn the content of their coursework more effectively, with greater retention, or with deeper reflection than they do in an intensive format or condensed setting? How do teachers select content, learning objectives and goals across these contexts and formats? Operating under the hypothesis that no significant differences exist in student learning outcomes and achievement in the traditional versus the condensed course format, why and how do instructors, institutions, and students choose one format versus the other?