

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy 2.1.5



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

Policy: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Division of Academic Affairs
Subject: Assignment of Credit Hours for Education Programs
Number: 2.1.5

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SCOPE

This policy applies to all credit-bearing courses leading to a certificate or degree in the five colleges, Graduate School, and Clinton School of Public Service Executive Master of Public Service program.

The guidelines for calculating credit/ contact hours for a class are the same for online and distance courses as for traditional (face-to-face) instruction, and for all locations where the classes are delivered.

POLICY

The University academic catalog lists credit hours for all courses and credit-bearing activities and total credit hours required to progress and graduate in each academic program. The definitions used to calculate credit hours are included in this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Credit hour: A Credit Hour is the unit of measuring educational credit, typically based on the number of classroom hours of instruction per week throughout a term. While the length of a semester may vary, the Carnegie definition is based upon a minimum instruction length of 15 weeks. A unit of credit is equal to three hours of student work per week (1 hour of lecture plus 2 hours of homework or 3 hours of lab) for a minimum of 15 weeks. In certain circumstances, it may be possible to require more hours for a credit, but it is not possible to require fewer hours.

Independent or Supervised Scholarly Activity (such as thesis, dissertation or capstone experience): The student meets at least once a week with the instructor to discuss progress and future plans, but the work itself is typically unsupervised. A UAMS faculty member serves as the instructor of record and approves the activities and goals, evaluates the activities' outcomes, and assigns the final grade.

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3 Semester credit hours = 1 hour instruction * 3 x p/wk * 15 weeks = 45 hours effort
+ 2 hours study/prep * 3 x p/wk * 15 weeks = 90 hours effort

Independent or Supervised Scholarly Activity

For independent or supervised scholarly activities for credit, a faculty member serves as the instructor of record and approves the work activities and goals, evaluates the outcomes, and assigns the final grade. Activities are part of a course, or other approved credit-bearing activities such as a thesis or dissertation, externships, or capstone projects. The student typically prepares a written or oral report on the work performed.

Credit hours for independent or supervised scholarly activities should be awarded at a rate of 3-6 hours/week for 15 weeks per one credit (with an additional week to complete a final exam or equivalent).

General Rules for Calculating and Applying Credit Hours

- Credit hours may not be divided, except one-half credit hours may be granted at the appropriate rate.
- Any new course proposal must indicate the course format(s) in which the course will be taught and how the credit hours were calculated for the course.
- Credit may not be given more than once for a course unless a course has been designated in the college's catalog as repeatable for credit (ex. Research course).

ADDITIONAL COLLEGE-SPECIFIC STANDARDS

Some UAMS' professional and graduate programs must meet requirements of specialty accrediting bodies, such as the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME for the College of Medicine), and the Accreditation Council on Pharmacy Education (ACPE) for the College of Pharmacy. These accreditation agencies may have specific requirements and standards for various student learning activities. Additions, variations, and exceptions for credit hour assignment among colleges and academic programs are detailed in the sections below. Only variations from the above credit hour definitions are included below.

College of Medicine

The College of Medicine (COM) assigns credit hours as a unit of measurement using standards that meet or exceed those established by the United States Department of Education, and are in accordance with the program's accrediting body — the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the exclusive accrediting body for Doctor of Medicine programs in the nation. The COM awards credit to students who successfully complete required coursework, which may include clinical rotations, conferences, labs, research and study according to the following guidelines:

- 18 hours of exams, lectures, or other didactic or small group teaching experiences equals one credit hour.
- 36 hours of laboratory experience equals one credit hour.
- Longitudinal experiences of unequal lengths (such as research or other ad hoc electives) are

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calculated as 1 credit hour for every 36 hours of course work.

The LCME has established standards that require assessment of students in all phases of the medical education curriculum. The COM abides by the established standard of assigning one credit hour for each week of clinical rotation.

For example:

- A 4-week rotation equals 4 credit hours.
- A 6-week rotation equals 6 credit hours.
- An 8-week rotation equals 8 credit hours.
- Longitudinal experiences of unequal lengths (such as research or other ad hoc electives) are calculated as 1 credit hour for every 36 hours of work.

In accordance with the LCME Standard 8.8., the College has established a policy on limitations in student work hours during clerkship rotations that was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The clerkship coordinators and directors monitor student work hours to assure compliance with that policy. These hours represent clinical hours and not hours spent studying or working on other rotation or self-study projects.

College of Pharmacy

The College of Pharmacy uses the standard calculation of a credit hour that meet face-to-face and online. The following are used when assigning credit hour designations to courses (not including final exams).

One (1) credit hour is calculated as follows based on a 15-week semester for instruction:

Method of Delivery	Contact Hours (15-week semester equivalent)		Credit Hour
Lecture	15 hours of instruction	Equals	1
Recitation, TBL, or PBL	30 hours of instruction	Equals	1
Laboratory	45 hours of instruction	Equals	1
Experiential	40 hours of experiential education	Equals	1

College of Nursing

The standard calculation of a credit hour is used for didactic courses that meet face to face and online.

For clinical courses in the College of Nursing (CON), the ratio of credit hours to clock hour is 1:3 for baccalaureate courses and 1:6 for clinical courses in the Doctor of Nursing Practice and master's program (MNSc), except for the nursing administration practicum and nursing education practicum, which is 1:3, and the nurse practitioner specialty practicum courses which are 1:4.

For example:

- A baccalaureate clinical course that is 2.5 credits will require 112.5 clock hours in a 15-week period.

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- A graduate clinical course of 3 credits will require 270 clock hours in a 15-week period.
- For DNP clinical courses, the ratio of credit hours to clock hours is 1:6. For example, a DNP clinical course of three hours will require 270 clock hours in the 15-week semester.

College of Public Health

The standard calculation of a credit hour is used for didactic courses that meet face to face and online.

- The College of Public Health (COPH) uses the following minimum standards to calculate credit hours for laboratory study, clinicals, or practicums
1 credit hour for 30-32 class hours of laboratory study
- 1 credit hour for 40 hours of clinical, practicum, internship and instruction

College of Health Professions

The standard calculation of a credit hour is used for didactic courses that meet face to face and online.

The Physician Assistant Program in the College of Health Professions (CHP) includes clinical rotations as part of the curriculum. These rotations are assigned one credit hour for 40 hours effort.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy program in also requires clinical rotations. The length and credit hours awarded varies, according to the following guidelines:

- 8-week rotation equals 5 credit hours
- 10-week rotation equals 6-8 credit hours or .70 credit hours per 40 hour week

Graduate School

The standard calculation of a credit hour is used for didactic courses that meet face to face and online.

For courses containing laboratory work, 2-3 hours of laboratory work will be considered equivalent to one credit hour of lecture or recitation. This does not apply to clinical courses. Thesis and dissertation work in the UAMS Graduate School are one form of Independent/Supervised Scholarly Activity and are awarded at a rate of 2-5 hours/week for 15 weeks per one credit, with an additional week to complete a final exams or equivalent.

Clinton School of Public Service Executive Master of Public Service Program

The standard calculation of a credit hour is used for online courses.

Annual Audit

Each year, the Registrar will produce a schedule of classes report that includes all courses, meeting patterns and credit hour assignments for review by the Provost and the HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer to ensure all courses are being assigned the appropriate credit/contact hours, as outlined in this policy.