

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 and the Graduate School.

The guidelines for calculating credit/contact hours for a class are the same for distance (online) and 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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Distance (Online) Education: UAMS uses the federal definition for distance (online) education. Distance (online) education uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

Technologies used for instruction may include the following: Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communication devices; and audio conferencing.

Distance (Online) Course: A course in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education. Requirements for coming to campus for orientation, testing, or academic support services do not exclude a course from being classified as distance education. For planning and reporting purposes, all courses are classified according to the proportion of education content delivered through distance (online) methods, using the following scale: 100% face to face, 1-50% distance (online); 51-74% distance (online), 75-99% distance (online); or 100% distance (online).

Distance (Online) Program: A program for which all the required coursework for program completion is via distance education courses. For institutional purposes, programs are either 100% face-to-face; hybrid (a mix of face-to-face and distance (online) delivery, 1-99%), or 100% distance (online). A program has to have additional approvals to become a designated 100% online program.

Standard Credit Hour Calculation: In a course that uses the standard credit hour calculation, one credit hour is awarded for:

- One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (example: sessions that last 4-6 weeks); or
- An equivalent amount of work for other academic activities as approved by the college or program, including laboratory work, internships, practicums, clinical work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Equivalencies to this standard must be approved by the Curriculum Committees of the Colleges or Graduate School.

While the type of instruction and the timetable for when the instruction are distributed throughout a term may vary, course credit hours awarded must be equivalent to the following formula, at a minimum or unless otherwise noted under college specific requirements:

$$\begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ Semester credit hour} = \\ \quad + \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ hour instruction} \\ 2 \text{ hours study/prep} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} * 1 \text{ x p/wk} * 15 \text{ weeks} = 15 \text{ hours effort} \\ * 1 \text{ x p/wk} * 15 \text{ weeks} = 30 \text{ hours effort} \end{array}$$

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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 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.

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- Longitudinal experiences of unequal lengths (such as research or other ad hoc electives) are 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 distance (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-

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week period.

- 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 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.

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.

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.