**Policy:**              Definition of a Credit Hour
**Applicability:**       All PharmD Courses
**Who is affected:**     Course Managers
**Effective:**           June 1, 2016
**Last Revision:**       March 21, 2016
**Initiated By:**        Curriculum Committee
**Responsibility:**      Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

**Policy Link:**         http://go.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/policycredithour

## Background

It is important for accreditation, curricular design and assessment of student and faculty workload that the School of Pharmacy adheres to a definition of a credit hour that is consistent across courses and is compatible with state (Code of Maryland Regulations §13B.02.02.16D) and federal law (34 CFR 600.2). The definitions below are intended to ensure our students receive an appropriate amount of credit for their learning effort while being sufficiently flexible to not impede innovation in teaching methodologies.

## Policy

One hour of credit will be awarded for:

1. A minimum of 15 sessions, each consisting of 50 minutes of classroom instruction, or activity with an equivalent instructional impact. This may include live or recorded instructor led or directly supervised instructional time or assessments (quizzes or exams) to reinforce learning. One session = 1/15 of a credit.

2. A minimum of 30 sessions, each consisting of 50 minutes of practical instruction, or activity with an equivalent instructional impact. This may include real and virtual laboratory sessions in a large class or small group setting, or assessments (quizzes or exams) to reinforce learning. One session = 1/30 of a credit.

3. A minimum of 40 hours of PharmD Experiential Rotations.

For every 1/15 of a credit associated with a course, 2 hours of additional academic engagement is expected of students. This requirement can be met by independent study or homework assignments, including:

   A. Readings. Up to 600 pages (taking approximately 30 hours to read) per credit
   B. Problem sets or quizzes
   C. Other assignments deemed appropriate to facilitate academic engagement

If students are required to work in facilitated groups or watch recordings out of class an equivalent amount of time must remain unused in the academic schedule. It is appropriate to assess students on readings and material that is assigned out of class.

## Implementation Notes

Most required, didactic courses will be scheduled according to (1) above, with (2) being reserved for laboratory and practical type courses.

Quizzes may be included in the sessions described above to encourage students to keep up with course content and reinforce course learning.

Examinations will be included in the sessions described above according to the following schedule unless an alternative number of examinations are approved by the Curriculum Committee on a course-by-course basis. Exceptions are expected to be rare.

| Course Credits | Mid-term exams | Final exams |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 | 1 |

Midterm examinations will be scheduled within assigned course times by the Office of Academic Affairs with approximately equal spacing within the semester.

Final examinations may occur at other times within finals week (Week 15).  It is expect that there may be up to three mid-term and/or final exams on the same day, not exceeding 6 hours of examinations per day.

Because examinations and quizzes are used for formative and summative assessment, and it is difficult to discriminate between the two, they are counted along with instructional time when determining the credit weight of a course. This ensures (1) students receive a combined 15 sessions of instruction and assessment per credit, (2) the academic schedule fits within the university calendar and (3) third professional year students can complete their didactic coursework before starting Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences.

Calculating the credit weight of a course is somewhat subjective leaving room for debate among accreditors and schools. This document represents a best effort to ensure students are not subject to significantly more work than a course's credit weigh suggests, nor do they receive excessive credit for too little effort.

**Amendment History**

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| 03/12/2014 Adoption |
| 03/21/2016 Revision |