Definition of a Credit Hour and Time Equivalencies Policy

Applicability: All PharmD Courses
Who is affected: Course Managers
Effective: November 5,2025
Last Revision: August 15, 2025
Initiated By: Curriculum Committee
Responsibility: Associate Dean for Faculty and 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). Maryland COMAR §13b.02.02.16.D Credit Hours defines credit hour requirements as follows:

(1) An in-state institution shall award 1 credit hour for:

(a) A minimum of 15 hours, of 50 minutes each of actual class time, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays;

(b) A minimum of 30 hours, of 50 minutes each of supervised laboratory or studio time, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays;

(c) A minimum of 45 hours, of 50 minutes each of instructional situations such as practica, internships, and cooperative education placements, when supervision is ensured and learning is documented; or

(d) Instruction delivered by electronic media based on the equivalent outcomes in student learning in §D(1)(a) of this regulation, and may include a combination of telelessons, classroom instruction, student consultation with instructors, and readings, when supervision is ensured and learning is documented.

(2) One quarter hour of credit is awarded for instruction equivalent to 2/3 of the contact hours required for 1 credit hour

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

Credit-bearing courses are categorized into three types based on Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) contact hour requirements: lectures, laboratories, and internships (experiential learning). Credit hour assignments are based on the combination of direct instructional time and additional academic engagement.

One credit hour corresponds to approximately three hours of total student engagement per week over a standard 15-week semester. This engagement includes a combination of direct instruction and additional academic activities designed to support and reinforce learning.

Examples of direct instruction include:

- Instructor's explanation
  - Lecture (online or in- person)
  - Podcast
  - Recorded video
- Video from other sources viewed during class time (guest speaker, TED talk, or other videos)
- Discussions, blogs, wikis
- Exams and quizzes
- Any instructor-guided activity including small group activities
- Any assignment or activity you would traditionally do "in-class"

Examples of additional academic engagement include:

- Readings
- Other media consumption outside of scheduled class time
  - Videos or podcasts created by authors other than the instructor intended to replace readings
- Assignments
  - Papers
  - Projects
  - Presentations
  - Research
- Studying
- Group work that traditionally would be done "outside of class"

Online and hybrid courses must meet the same credit hour requirement and total contact time per credit as face-to-face courses.

Lecture, Seminar, Discussion

Credits	Direct Instructional Time per Week (based on 15 weeks)	Average Additional Academic Engagement Time per Week (based on 15 weeks)
1	50 minutes	100 minutes
2	100 minutes	200 minutes
3	150 minutes	300 minutes

***The time amounts vary based on the length of the course.** For a course offered over 8 weeks, the time referenced above is doubled. For example, a 1 credit course requires 100 minutes of direct instruction and an average of 200 minutes of additional academic engagement each week.

Laboratory

Credits	Direct Instructional Time per Week (based on 15 weeks)	Average Additional Academic Engagement Time per Week (based on 15 weeks)
1	100 minutes	50 minutes
2	200 minutes	100 minutes
3	300 minutes	150 minutes

Experiential Education

Experiential learning equates to one credit hour to a minimum of 45 hours per week engaged in learning. This reflects a 45-hour work week, with up to 5 hours per week permitted asynchronously.

Amendment History

11/5/2025 (Current), 08/15/2025, 3/21/2016, 03/12/2014 (Policy Adoption)