

Credit Hour Policy

The U.S. Department of Education defines “credit hour “as: “...An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of-class student work for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter credit hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or,
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internship, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours”

Pennsylvania Department of Education (22 Pa. Code, Section 31.21(b)) states:

“...a semester credit hour represents a unit of curricular material that normally can be taught in a minimum of 14 hours of classroom instruction, plus appropriate outside preparation or the equivalent as determined by faculty.”

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations, 2017) states:

“...In accordance with the Commission policy, Credit Hour, and 34 CFR 602.24(f), the Commission ‘must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution’s assignment of credit hours.’ Specifically, the Commission must review the institution’s policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded as well as the institution’s policies and procedures to its programs and coursework, and make a ‘reasonable determination of whether the institution’s assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education”

Code of Federal Regulations (668.8 (k)(2)(l)(i)) states: “...for purposes of determining whether a program described in paragraph (k) (undergraduate programs in credit hours) of this section satisfies the requirements contained in paragraph (c)(3) or (d) of this section, and determining the number of credit hours in that educational program with regard to title IV, HEA programs: A semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction.”

Rosemont College’s Credit Hour Policy: The College complies with federal, state, and accreditation (MSCHE) standards and regulations pertaining to the assignment of credit hours. In all courses, the College complies with the PDE regulation of 14 hours of classroom instruction per semester credit, and interprets the USDOE’s guidance of “...or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time...” to equal a total of 2,250 minutes of instruction per semester credit hour awarded; this also conforms to the CFR definition where, “A semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction.”

The College typically follows a semester system. There are two semesters a year, and the semesters are defined as: Fall and Spring, with a short winter session and a summer session as options to catch up or accelerate through a program. Each term consists of 15 weeks, with a finals week, and a break between terms as stated in the College's catalog and on the website. All courses must comply with the College's Credit Hour Policy regardless of delivery method (on-ground, online, or hybrid) or designation (internship, independent study, etc.).

Discipline coordinators and program directors, with guidance from the dean of each school, are responsible for developing, maintaining, and evaluating the curriculum within an academic program. The assignment of credit hours for new courses is determined by faculty and programs chairs, vetted through the curriculum committee and ultimately approved/denied by the Provost before implementation. For existing courses, a courses will annually be evaluated for compliance with the federal credit hour regulation by the program chairs.

The following definitions and descriptions provide guidance on how credit hour(s) translates to the different methods of instruction used at the College. The federal definition of 37.5 clock hours of instruction per semester credit hour, does not dictate the exact ratio of classroom instruction and out of class student work; therefore, the following information serves as general guidance. Course(s) not aligning with the following guidance will be asked to provide supporting documentation to ensure/justify compliance with the Credit Hour Policy.

- One credit is equivalent to 50 minutes (at a minimum) of class time (direct instruction) and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work per week.
- A three-credit course will typically meet 150 minutes per week for 15 weeks (direct faculty instruction), excluding designated College closings and exam periods. Summer sessions and accelerated (short) sessions/courses vary in length.
- An equivalent amount of work is required in courses and academic activities where direct instruction is not the primary mode of learning such as online and hybrid courses, laboratory work, independent study, internships, practicum, etc. Credits will be awarded on the basis of documented learning objectives, expected learning outcomes, and student workload expectations within a specified period of academically engaged time.

LECTURE/SEMINAR

Course focuses on principles, concepts or ideas, lecture, discussion and demonstration. A semester credit hour is earned for fifteen, 50-minute sessions of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of student preparation time outside of class per week throughout the semester. A typical three-credit hour course meets for three, 50-minute sessions or two, 75-minute sessions a week for fifteen weeks. Most lecture and seminar courses are awarded three credits.

ACCELERATED SESSIONS

Courses offered within the accelerated 7-week semester have the same time requirements as standard semester courses. The content and substantive learning outcomes are the same. These courses must meet the definition of standard lecture contact time within the time frame the accelerated version is offered (750 minutes per credit).

LABORATORY

Practical application courses are those courses where the major focus is “hands on” experience to support student learning (use of equipment, activities, tools, machines generally found in a laboratory). Science laboratory classes will meet 2-3 hours per week to equal one semester credit hour. Technical Skills laboratory classes will meet three hours per week to equal one semester credit hour.

INTERNSHIPS

Courses developed for independent learning and the development and application of job related or practical skills in a particular discipline are classified as Internship. These courses allow for observation, participation, and fieldwork, and are generally offered off campus. Internship time includes a combination of supervised time by approved experts outside the college, student assignments, and time supervised by a college instructor.

Minimum number of hours varies based on credits

- 3 credit internship = 150 hours throughout the semester
- 1 credit internship = 50 hours throughout the semester

PRACTICUM/STUDENT TEACHING

Courses developed for independent learning and the development and application of job related or practical skills in a particular discipline are classified as Practicum/Student Teaching. These courses allow for observation, participation, client evaluation, fieldwork, and are offered off campus. Practicum time includes a combination of supervised time by approved experts outside the College, student assignments, and time supervised by a faculty member.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Courses that permit a student to study a subject or topic in considerable depth beyond the scope of a regular course are titled independent study. Students must interact with the faculty member on a regular and substantive basis to assure progress within the course. College faculty provide guidance, criticism, and review of the student’s work. Students demonstrate competency through the completion of a final assessment either by submitting a final paper, project or portfolio, etc., as required by the faculty member.

HYBRID

A hybrid course is considered hybrid (or blended) when it is composed of both online learning and classroom learning and incorporates the best features of both environments to meet the learning objectives of the course. The hours requirements remain the same.

ONLINE (ASYNCHRONOUS)

These courses are where “instructors and students do not meet in the same space.” Regardless of mode of instruction, these courses are consistent in terms of quality, assessment, learning outcomes, requirements, etc., as courses offered face-to-face with the same department prefix, number, and course title. Faculty must demonstrate active academic engagement through interactive methods, including but not limited to, interactive tutorials, group discussions, virtual study/project groups, discussion boards, and chat rooms. Simply logging on, either by faculty or students, does not constitute active student learning. Credits hours assigned to a course delivered online must equal the number of credit hours for the same course delivered face-to-face. Below offers guidelines for how to allocate hours for assessments.

Course Instructional Equivalencies Chart

Type of Activity	Definition of Activity	Instructional Hours
Article Reviews & Reflection	Students apply learned concepts and relate practices to personal experiences or apply higher order analytic skills in assessing scholarly articles or professional journals	1 article review = 1 hour of instruction
Attendance at Cultural or Artistic Events	Learners attend and review cultural or artistic events (such as a play, musical performance, exhibition of visual art, lecture, etc.). Reviews will be produced, assessed, and graded according to course rubrics and aligned with learning outcomes.	Attendance at event + three-page review essay = 1 instructional hour
Blogs, Journals, Logs	Students’ opportunity to apply learned concepts or for reflection on learning experiences; to be shared with instructor and/or classmates for thoughtful analysis, feedback and assessment. This can also be used for class or group projects or feedback after instruction.	1 private posting = 1/2 hr. instruction 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates’ postings) = 1 hr. instruction
Case Studies & Problem-Solving Scenarios and Simulations*	In-depth analysis requiring utilization of higher order analytical skills through examination and exploration, which relate to course objectives and is shared with instructor and/or classmates for feedback and assessment. Analysis is shared with instructor and/or class with posts.	1 case study analysis & posting = 1-3 hrs. instruction
Chat Rooms for Class or Group Projects	Instructor led opportunities for collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation & feedback. as well as possible asynchronous learning where post-review and discussion posts can assist in reflection. Where possible, chats should be posted for archive review. Can be done in LMS or any program which supports archiving. (Chats are posted for review.)	1 hr. chat – 1 hr. instruction

Conference Calls	Instructor led opportunities for collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation & feedback. (When possible, calls to be recorded for review.)	1/2 hr. call = 1/2 hr.
Conferences and Workshops on Learning Portfolio Preparation	Instructors meet with learners to compile, evaluate, and produce learning portfolios prepared according to course/program rubrics and aligned with course/program learning outcomes.	Portfolio conferencing with final presentation of completed portfolio = 1 instructional hour
Debates	Verbal arguments on a controversial issue conducted within a set framework, including constructive speeches, cross-examination, posed questions, and rebuttal.	5-minute debate (research and preparation of content and argument) = 1 hour of instruction
Discussion Board	Instructor-guided or mediated threaded discussion that directly relates to course objectives and which has specified timeframes, expectations for participation, and thoughtful analysis.	Initial post – min. 300 words with supporting reference(s) = 1 hr of instruction (requires reading all postings)
		Note: 1 posting requires reading all postings and reply to a min. of 3 peers
		3 post/replies/ responses= 2 hours of instruction (posts require citation)
Field Trips or Tours (to include virtual tours)	Students participate as individuals or in groups in analyzing an activity & preparing a paper or presentation, to be shared in whole or in part with instructor and/or classmates.	(Facilitator or Instructor-led) – 1 hr. tour = 1 hr. instruction
		(Student(s) alone without instructor.facilitator) – 1 hr.
		Tour plus reflection paper = 1 hr. instruction
Group Projects	An instructor-mediated culminating activity with specific learning objectives; students collaborate via electronic tools (email, chat rooms, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face contact) to research, analyze, synthesize & prepare project with instructor receiving periodic updates & providing guidance to group.	1 hr. per week for duration of project
Guest Lectures	Guest lecturers present on specialized topics relevant to course description, learning goals, and outcomes. Assessment instruments will be used to assess learning outcomes, aligned with unit objectives and learner responses.	Lecture of 1 hour with assessments = 1 instructional hour

Individual Guided Project	An instructor-mediated culminating individual project with specific learning objectives; student & facilitator collaborate via email, chat, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face to research, analyze, synthesize & prepare project with instructor receiving periodic updates and providing guidance and feedback.	1 hr. per week for duration of project
In-class Instruction, Presentations	Instruction, presentations, and tests provided in person in live classroom setting.	1 hr. = 1 hr. instruction
Instructional CDs, PowerPoints, Videos*	Instructor-mediated to expand upon and clarify course concepts and objectives.	Length of Video = instruction time Reviews and posts to 1 unit = 1 hr. Reviews & response to peers 1/2 hr
Lecture - Activity-written or audio	Opportunity for students to develop questions, comments, or observations, to be shared with classmates & instructor through discussion board postings or participating in chat rooms.	Reviews 1 lecture and posts response – 1 hr. instruction
Lecture: Asynchronous	Asynchronous instruction using instructor created resources such as narrated PowerPoints, written notes and screencasting. Gives students opportunity for comment and discussion through posts or chat room discussions. See Post or Chat equivalency above if this option is given.	Instructor estimate time taken to view instruction = instructional time
Lecture: Content Based	Instructor introduces key aspects of to-be-learned content, highlights important components of assigned reading, and/or helps students generate connections between new material and prior knowledge.	1 hour to 1 hour
Lecture: Online in Streaming Audio or Video	Learners view, listen, and respond to streaming lectures in online format and then answer questions designed and assessed according to course rubrics and aligned with learning outcomes. Learner answers will be shared with instructor and peers in order to generate further discussion of salient topics.	View or listen to lecture and post responses = 1 instructional hour
Lecture: Synchronous (Web Conferencing)	Instructor led instruction using web conferencing for synchronous learning using web conferencing like Adobe Connect. Gives students opportunity for participation and feedback. Should be archived when possible for review.	Time allotted for instruction = instructional time
Library Research*	In-depth instructor-led opportunity for students to research scholarly articles or professional journals that relate to course objectives; to be shared with class in a designated manner.	1 five-page project = 1 hr. instruction 1 3-5-page paper = 1-2 hrs. instruction
Online Quizzes	Opportunity for instructor to assess students' subject knowledge and provide feedback on students' progress.	1 hr. test = 1 hr. of instruction
Peer Review Assessment	Employing instructor- designated criteria, students evaluate each other's work.	One student review of peer assessment and follow-up response post to students and teacher= 1/2 hour – 2 hours of instruction.

Recitation	An instructor mediated small group setting (preferably not greater than 20 students) designed to encourage a cooperative approach to problem solving. The learning environment provides the instructor with opportunity to review each individual student's work and reinforce learning objectives to promote a better understanding of course material.	1 hour to 1 hour
Reflection Paper	In depth opportunity for students to apply learned concepts and practices, aligned with course objectives, to personal experiences.	3 pages of written analysis = 1 hour of instruction
Reflection Post or Article Review*	Instructor-guided activity for students to apply learned concepts and relate practices to personal experiences or apply higher order analytic skills in assessing scholarly articles or professional journals. Should be a guided activity for students to apply learned concepts or apply higher order analytic skills to assess scholarly articles.	1 private posting = 1/2 hr. instruction 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates' postings) = 1 hr.
Responsive or Announcement-Based Lecture	Technology tool: web conferencing and/or pre-recorded lecture Instructor responds to entire class about a particular assignment or discussion, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the class' understanding of content. Instructor may also use these lectures to provide suggestions or guidelines for future student work, or to make announcements about upcoming tasks.	1 hour to 1 hour
Scholarly Academic Paper	In-depth opportunity for students to research scholarly articles or professional journals that relate to course objectives culminating in a higher order analysis. This will include a rigorous theoretical or analytical review and allows students to demonstrate understanding of a topic or concept applied to program content. This paper will be shared with the instructor and fellow classmates.	3 pages of written analysis = 1 lecture equivalent hour of instruction
Screencast Lecture	Technology tool: web conferencing and/or pre-recorded lecture using screenshare technology. In a "how-to" lecture, instructor demonstrates how to complete a particular technological task by sharing his/her screen with students.	1 hour to 1 hour
Service-Learning Project	An instructor-led service project with specific learning objectives that integrates community service with academic study; faculty provides guidance, support & feedback to students & students share experience and reflection with fellow classmates via emails, chats, discussion boards, and/or face to face.	1 hr. per week for duration of project
Student Presentations: Asynchronous	Using LMS and apps that engage students in online collaboration and peer critiques via programs like Voicethread, website creation tools, student-created posted videos, etc. This is an electronic substitute for in-class presentation time.	1 posting = 1/2 hour instruction 1 response = 1/2 hour
Student Presentations: Synchronous	Presentations done via web conferencing. Gives the class opportunity for participation and direct feedback. Should be archived when possible for This is an electronic substitute for in-class presentation time.	Time allotted for presentation = instruct. time 1 posting = 1/2 hour 1 response = 1/2 hour
Virtual Laboratories	Learners use computer- simulation laboratories in blended lab-based courses or in order to replace missed laboratories. Learners submit, share, or post lab reports produced and assessed according to course or unit rubrics.	1 hour of virtual laboratory = 1 instructional hour

Virtual Tours	Learners take virtual field trips or tours and report in to instructor and/or peers.	1 hr= 1 hr instruction; 1 3-page reflective paper = 1hr
Web-Quest*	Instructor-guided opportunity for students to research information on the Internet that enhances student learning, addresses specific course outcomes; findings shared w/ instructor & classmates.	1 in-depth posting – 1 hr. instruction