



Institutional Policy to Assign Credit-Hours for University Courses (Associate, Bachelor and Master Degrees)

All courses taken for credit at American University of Puerto Rico which are applied toward an associate, bachelor or master degree completion requirements conform to applicable state and federal regulations concerning the assignment of credit hours. This policy is intended to establish a uniform method for the assignment of credit hours for associate, bachelor, and master degrees courses. Based in the Carnegie System to assign credit hours, this policy responds to accepted common practice in higher education, academic accreditations agencies, and professional evaluation boards.

I. Credit Hour Definition

The U.S. Department of Education *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 each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter 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, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.”

II. Credit Hour Assignment Procedures

All semester / credit hours awarded by American University of Puerto Rico (AUPR) will conform to the definition listed above. These guidelines are also in compliance with policies set forth by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

AUPR generally follows a semester system with fall and spring semesters consisting of a minimum of 15 weeks, which includes one week for exams. The night session follows a trimester system (two terms equivalent for Fall semester and two terms equivalent to Spring semester). Each trimester runs for a minimum of 10 weeks. Summer term (June) adheres to the policy in terms of meeting time and the amount of work required.

The faculty and program administrators, via the Institutional Curriculum Committee (ICC), are responsible for developing, maintaining and evaluating the curriculum within an academic program, although the Presidency main cabinet retain final control and approval of the curriculum. Assignment of credit hours for courses is determined within the program based on faculty expertise and course learning objectives. Existing courses will be evaluated for adherence to the federal credit hour regulation. New courses will, upon review and approval at the program level, be reviewed by the ICC and recommended for approval or denial.

The ICC is charged with following the policy on credit hours in their review and recommendation of all courses and curricula and for certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the credit hour standard.

Approved courses are sent to the Registrar's Office for inclusion in the College Catalog. The Registrar's Office reviews the class schedules prior to the start of each semester to ensure that all classes are scheduled for the minimum number of minutes corresponding to the credits assigned, or otherwise notes when course schedules do not match assigned credit hours. Any discrepancies are brought to the attention of the appropriate department for correction or explanation.

The following provides general guidance on the how the credit hour translates to the particular instruction method. Note, however, that the credit-hour definition does not dictate particular amounts of classroom time versus out-of-class student work – the information below serves as general guidance only:

A. Lecture: Courses with multiple students which meet to engage in various forms of group instruction under the direct supervision of a faculty member. The minimum contact time (that is, direct instructor-led time) per credit per week is typically one (50 minute) hour for each credit (1:1 ratio of contact time to credits, per week). In addition, students are assigned two (50 minute) hours of outside work for each credit, per week. Examples of the minimal amounts for each activity on a per credit basis are displayed in the table below, using a traditional 15-week semester as the base:

Lecture: Classroom / Faculty Instruction and Outside Student Work					
Credits awarded	Minimum contact time per week	Minimum instructional time total for 15 weeks (contact time x weeks)	Minimum out of class Student work per week*	Minimum out of class student work total for 15 weeks (outside work for x weeks)	Total of instructional contact time and out of class student work
1	50 contact minutes	750 contact minutes	100 minutes	1500 minutes	2250 minutes (37.5 hours)
2	100 contact minutes	1500 contact minutes	200 minutes	3000 minutes	4500 minutes (75.0 hours)
3	150 contact minutes	2250 contact minutes	300 minutes	4500 minutes	6750 minutes (112.5 hours)
4	200 contact minutes	3000 contact minutes	400 minutes	6000 minutes	9000 minutes (150.0 hours)

*** Out of class student work:** This includes learning activities like completing assigned readings, participating in group projects sessions, studying for tests and examinations, preparing written assignments, researching in electronic data bases, surfing the Internet with a learning purpose, creating digital presentations, preparing for oral and/or written reports, and other tasks that must be completed to earn credit in the course.

For regular 3 credits courses, classes are scheduled in two sessions of 75 minutes (as minimum) per week in a 15-weeks semester; or its equivalent in 10-weeks trimester. Registrar's Office prepares academic calendar making sure to comply with hours required for every course.

B. Directed Study / Independent Study: Courses of study designed in instances where enrollment has fallen below established standards but under conditions where a student or students require that course be offered in order to progress academically (such as the need for a particular course in order to graduate). In such instances, the faculty member will work with the student(s) to arrange meeting times which may or may not match the

normal course schedule. In all such instances, such courses must match the total amount of work using the examples listed above, and the faculty member is required to keep records of the meeting times and student work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated.

C. Internship/Practicum/Field Experience: Courses of study in which a faculty member regularly interacts and directs student outcomes with periodic contact, but where the actual learning environment takes place off-campus at an approved site. The learning experience will typically involve a site supervisor or preceptor and directed activity/learning will occur outside of a lecture setting. Contact time and outside student work requirements must be established and documented, and must match the total amount of work using the example above. The faculty member or program director responsible for the experience is required to keep records of amount of supervised work and the amount of outside work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated.

D. Courses with a hybrid component: Courses offered on site (face to face), but with some on line activities, both containing direct interaction with a faculty member. Contact time is assessed using both on-site guides and online activities is assessed using regular guides for this modality (including time for telecommunication instruction with or without learning platform as Moodle software, discussion boards, chat rooms, blogs, academic email correspondence, conference calls, virtual collaborative group projects, and interactive tutorials, among others). In all such instances, these courses must meet the total amount of instructional and student work time as the examples above even if delivered online or asynchronously.

III. Responsibilities:

1. Academic administrators ensure that credit hours are appropriately awarded in accordance with this policy and federal guidelines.
2. In the process of approving courses, the ICC ensure that the proposed instruction, required learning activities and stated learning outcomes meet this credit-hour standard.
3. In the process of building the schedule, the University Registrar's Office, the Dean of faculty and the Vice President for Academic and Students Affairs are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are accurately established.

Approval Date: November 10, 2016

Effective Date: Immediately

Issuing Authority: Vice President for Academic and Students Affairs (VPASA)

Implementing Units: Dean of Faculty's Office, Institutional Curriculum Committee, Registrar's Office, and VPASA's Office)