



# Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

*"A Private University with a Public Mission"*

## Credit Hour Policy

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**Issuing Officer:** Provost/Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2018

**Revised Date/Review Date (If necessary):** Revised 9/27/2017, Reviewed January 2018

**Supersedes (If necessary):** Credit Hour Policy Sections in University Catalog/Website

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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish university-wide guidelines and standards regarding the definition and assignment of student credit hours for all academic programs at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. This policy is intended to reflect the commitment of the University to compliance with relevant regulations of the federal government, regional and specialized accreditation agencies, and professional licensing boards.

### POLICY TEXT:

Credit hour assignments must remain consistent with the following university-wide equivalency factors.

1. Lecture and seminar classes: calculated as 1 credit hour per semester for every lecture hour per week with a minimum of 2 additional hours of out-of classroom student work (for reading, writing, other preparation time, problem or group assignments or other homework...), for 3 total hours of actual student time per credit hour; or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., for accelerated, executive style semesters.)
2. Laboratory work: calculated as 1 credit hour for every 3 hours of laboratory sessions per week – as with didactic lectures, 3 hours of actual student time per week is equivalent to one credit hour per semester; or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time (e.g., for accelerated, executive style semesters.)
3. Clinical education: required credit hours and elapsed-hour equivalencies for professional practice programs usually vary by academic program as dictated by

specialized accrediting and licensing agencies. In the absence of external agency requirements, clinical courses of instruction are calculated as 1 credit hour per semester for every day of clinical rotation per week – a clinical day is approximately 6 hours of clinical site experience.

4. Service learning: community service and comparable service-learning requirements may be based in credit hours or fulfilled on a voluntary basis (non-credit bearing). In the absence of specialized accrediting or licensing agency requirements, academic programs may determine the credit-based and elapsed hour equivalency or total voluntary hours for such fieldwork. Students in undergraduate degree and certificate programs must complete at least 25 hours of service per academic year of instruction (e.g., 25 hours for a one-year certificate program, 50 hours for a two-year associate degree program, or 100 hours for a four-year baccalaureate degree program). The University does not set any comparable minimum community service or comparable service-learning requirements for graduate programs.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

This policy was created to comply with federal regulations effective July 1, 2011 regarding the definition and assignment of credit hours, and with collateral requirements of accrediting agencies for institutions of higher education to formally adopt, review, and secure accrediting agency approval for credit hour policy.

#### **APPLICABILITY:**

This policy provides opportunity and procedures for deliberation by faculty, faculty administrators, and other academic affairs officers regarding proposed credit hour policy and it is applicable to all academic programs at CDU, whether at the degree, certificate, or track levels.

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

For undergraduate and graduate degrees, credit and non-credit certificates, or any distinct tracks within a degree or certificate program, the deliberation regarding credit hour definition and assignment shall include program faculty, the department Chair and/or program Director, the College/School Dean, the Academic Senate, the Provost, and the President. Final approval of credit hour factors on a course-level basis for any new or revised academic program curriculum must be secured in advance of application and notification to matriculating or continuing students.



**COMPLIANCE:**

The regional accreditor of the University and any relevant professional accreditors and licensing boards must be apprised of deliberations and decisions about academic program credit hour policy consistent with the policies and procedures of those agencies concerning substantive change in general and credit hour policy in particular.

Students already enrolled or approved for admission in an academic program under consideration for a new or revised credit hour policy must be notified in a timely fashion about final decisions of the University concerning the status of the program's curriculum requirements in general and credit hour equivalencies in particular. Continuing students must be notified in writing about any implications of credit hour changes for normative and maximum time to completion of degree or certificate requirements, and they may retain the curriculum requirements in general and credit hour equivalencies in particular that were stated in the applicable catalog of their original student matriculation into the academic program.

Any other educational institutions or health care providers who have formal articulation or affiliation agreements with the University for student pipeline, clinical education, or community service facets of an academic program under consideration for credit hour policy change must be notified in a timely fashion about final decisions of the University concerning the status of curriculum requirements in general and credit hour equivalencies in particular. Students must be notified about any implications of credit hour changes for normative and maximum time to completion of clinical rotation or community services requirements of the program, and they may retain the curriculum requirements in general and credit hour equivalencies in particular that were stated in the applicable catalog of their original student matriculation into the academic program.

**APPROVING AUTHORITY:**

Board of Trustees

**DEFINITIONS:**

*Academic program:* a sequence of courses leading to a degree and/or a certificate, including a distinct track within a degree or certificate program. Academic programs covered by this policy include undergraduate and graduate programs, credit and non-credit certificate programs, and any distinct tracks within a broader degree or certificate program.

*Credit hour*: an amount of academic work that is represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement, and which is expressed in institutionally-established equivalencies consistent with federal, accrediting, and licensing agency regulations regarding academic program credit hours.

**PROCEDURES:**

Proposals for credit hour policy changes or new academic program credit hour equivalencies may be initiated by faculty, a program administrator, a College/School Dean, or the Provost.

**RELATED POLICIES:**

CDU Transfer Credit Policy

The [Credit Hour Policy](#) statement of the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accompanies this CDU policy.

# Credit Hour Policy

Academic credit has provided the basis to measure the amount of engaged learning time expected of a student enrolled in traditional classroom settings, laboratories, studios, internships, independent studies, and distance education programs. Credit hours are a commonly accepted means of measuring student engagement for multiple purposes, including the transfer of students from one institution to another and the award of financial aid. While this credit hour policy is intended to provide guidance to institutions and peer reviewers with expectations for compliance, the Commission is open to innovative ways to measure student learning and academic engagement.

## Definition of Credit Hour

The Commission 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

1. Approximates not less than:
  - a. 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 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
  - b. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph 1.a. of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; and
2. Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines and degree levels. Institutions have the flexibility to award a greater number of credits for courses that they can show require more student work.

## Review of an Institution's Credit Hour Policy and Procedures

Commission peer review teams will evaluate, as part of all seeking accreditation and comprehensive reviews for reaffirmation of accreditation, the extent to which institutions meet the Commission's definition of a credit hour, by examining:

1. The adoption of a policy on credit hour for all courses and programs at the institution.
2. The processes the institution employs to review periodically the application of its policy on credit hour across the institution to assure that credit hour assignments are accurate, reliable, and consistently applied.
3. Any variations in the assignment of credit hours to assure that they conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

In implementing this policy, teams will use the [Credit Hour and Program Length Form](#) to review

institutional documentation:

- The institution's policy on credit hour including expectations at each degree level;
- An explanation of the institution's process for periodic review of the application of this policy;
- Evidence of the implementation of institutional review processes to assure the reliability and accuracy of credit hour assignments in all courses and programs; for example, as part of program review, process for new course approval, or periodic audits; and
- Evidence that the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education, through sampling a variety of course syllabi based on degree level, academic discipline, delivery modes, and types of academic activities.

In addition, the substantive change committee process includes a review of credit hour assignments and validation of an institution's credit hour policy. Additional protocols for implementation of this policy may be developed to assist institutions and teams in conducting reviews under this policy.

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*Approved by the Commission, November 2011*

*Revised, November 2020*