

	Universidad Central del Caribe	Policy #	UCC-AA-101-2006R7
		Implementation Date/ Effective Date:	June 30, 2006
Equivalency of Contact Hours to Credit Hours Policy and Procedural Compliance	Contact:	Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs	
	Date Approved:	June 30, 2006	
	Last Reviewed/Update:	February 14, 2025	
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	Approval by:	President	

Rationale

This document represents a revision of the current Institutional Policy for Equivalency of Contact Hours to Credit Hours that was initially approved on June 30, 2006, and reviewed and updated on April 21, 2024. Recent revisions and internal audits of academic records, in compliance with healthy administrative processes, federal regulations and accrediting bodies, have led to reformulating the following regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Policy Statement

The credit hour serves as the University’s common measure of instruction based on the expected number of contact hours of coursework during the academic period (semester/quarter). All credit hours awarded by the Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC) will conform with the definitions and guidance outlined by the U.S. Department of Education (CFR, Title 34: Education, Part 600 – Institutional Eligibility under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Subpart A General, Section 600.2 §602.24 and §668.8), and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Credit Hour Policy, 2022).

The UCC establishes and defines the standards and procedures for assigning semester/credit hours to the courses offered by all academic programs at the University. In addition, establishes the method by which the University ensures compliance with its credit hour assignment policy.

Definitions

Academic period (term): At the UCC, two types of academic periods are in place, consisting of semesters and quarters.

Semester: a minimum of fifteen weeks of coursework and examinations represent a semester.

Quarter: a minimum of twelve weeks of coursework and examinations represents a quarter.

Credit hour: 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 semesters hours of credit (or twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit).

Contact hour: Refers to a 60-minute period of academic experience.

Assignment of Credit Hours for Course Types and Instructional Methods

The Curriculum Committee from each academic program assign credit hours to courses using the following recommendations, and final approval resides under the Dean of Academic Affairs:

Lecture/Seminar: Courses or teaching method with multiple students, which meet to engage in various forms of group scheduled instruction or examination under the direct supervision of a faculty member. The minimum contact time per week is 60 minutes plus a minimum of 120 minutes of out-of-class student worktime per week in an academic period for an assignment of one credit hour.

Laboratory: Courses or teaching method with a focus on experiential learning under the direct supervision of a faculty member wherein the student performs substantive work in a laboratory setting for scheduled instruction or examination. The minimum contact time is typically 120 contact minutes per week plus a minimum of 60 minutes of out of lab/class student work time per week in an academic period for an assignment of one credit hour.

Scientific Laboratory/Research: Courses with a focus on experiential learning under minimal direct supervision of a faculty where students are working on independent projects, such as in thesis/dissertation hours and independent studies wherein the student performs substantive independent work in a scientific laboratory setting. The minimum contact time is typically 248 contact minutes per week and 30 minutes of out-of-class student work per week in an academic period for an assignment of one credit hour.

Clinical experience: Courses with a focus on experiential learning under the direct supervision of a faculty member wherein the student performs substantive scheduled work and instruction, and examination in a clinical setting. The minimum contact time per credit is typically 73 contact minutes per week and 12 minutes out of class student work time per week in an academic period resulting in an assignment of one credit hour for graduate or professional programs. For undergraduate programs, a minimum of 420 contact minutes per week and 60 minutes out-of-class student work time per week in a standard semester result in an assignment of one credit hour.

Internship/Practicum/Field Experience: Courses in which a faculty member regularly interacts and directs students' 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 and directed activity/learning will occur outside of a lecture setting. Contact time and outside student work requirements must be established and documented. The faculty member or program director responsible for the experience keeps the records of the amount of supervised work and the amount of outside work assigned so that contact hours can be calculated using the definitions above. Note: this should be consistent with the best professional practices in the discipline and field.

Independent Study/Individualized Instruction: Courses or teaching method in which the faculty or mentor-guide the learning activities that will be performed by the learner outside of formal educational settings (classroom, lab, clinic). It is also dedicated to the time on learner schedules to prepare for specific learning activities, e.g., case discussions, **TBL**, **PBL**, clinical activities, and research project(s). Minimally, these learning experiences follow the model of requiring the student to work in the placement or devote focused study contact time per week of 180 minutes in an academic period for an assignment of one credit hour.

Non-Traditional courses

Distance Learning/Online Courses: Distance learning/Online courses shall be defined as those courses in which **80-100%** of class time is delivered by distance technology. Contact time should follow the same guidelines as traditional face-to-face courses. Online courses should meet an equivalent of the required 900 minutes of instruction per credit hour per 15-week semester and expect a minimum of 1,800 minutes (2 class hours; 120 minutes per week) of out-of-class student work.

Hybrid/Blended Courses: Hybrid or blended courses refer to a course in which **20 to 50%** of the instruction is entirely delivered online. Hybrid courses blend face-to-face interaction such as in-class discussions, active group work, and live lectures with typically web-based educational technologies such as online course assignments, discussion boards, and other web-assisted learning tools to form an integrated instructional approach.

Contact time is assessed using both on-site definitions (for the on-site portion) and online definitions (online course has the same learning outcomes and substantive components of a standard lecture/seminar/exam course). In any case, these courses must meet the total amount of instructional time, examination, and student work time as the definitions above even if delivered online, synchronously, or asynchronously.

For example, a course that is taught (50% online, 50% face-to-face) would require 450 minutes of instruction per semester hour must be conducted face-to-face; 450 minutes of instruction per semester hour must be conducted via distance per credit hour per 15-week semester. In addition, the minimum of 1,800 minutes (2 class hours; 120 minutes per week) of out-of-class student work is expected.

Short Term/Accelerated Courses: Courses offered outside of a standard 15-week semester or 12-week quarter in which the credit hours offered are the same as standard semester/quarter courses and the content and substantive learning outcomes are the same as those in the standard semester/quarter. These courses must satisfy the total amount of instructional, examination, and out of class student work time as the definitions above even if delivered within an accelerated time frame.

Procedures for Implementation

Credit hour assignment for courses using a combination of learning modalities will follow the above definitions in a combined summative fashion.

Undergraduate programs

Across all undergraduate programs, a semester credit hour is the academic unit used. The following standards are intended to specify the minimum contact time for the assignment of one (1) semester/credit hour in a typical semester of 15 weeks. Some courses may exceed these minimum standards.

Type of Course or Teaching Modality	Total Semester Hours (minimum)	
	Direct Instruction Time	Out of Class Student Work Time
Lecture/Seminar	15 Hr.	30 Hr.
Laboratory	30 Hr.	15 Hr.
Clinical Experience	105 Hr.	15 Hr.
Independent Study/ Individualized Instruction	30 Hr.	---
Internship/Practicum/ Field Experience	75 Hr.	---

First Professional Degree Programs

Courses in years one (1) and two (2) of the **UCCSoM** and **UCCDCP** curriculum are relatively homogeneous regarding structure, educational experiences, and contact hours. Contact hours include but are not limited to lectures, laboratories, small group discussions, and problem-solving/patient contact. Assuming a credit hour is based on at least an 18-week calendar and a class hour is equivalent to 60 minutes, one week of full-time instruction in the first professional degree programs is equivalent to one (1) credit hour. As a result, the credit hour equivalents of the curriculum are:

Type of Course or Teaching Modality	Total Semester Hours (minimum)	
	Direct Instruction Time	Out of Class Student Work Time
Lecture/Seminar	18 Hr.	36 Hr.
Laboratory	36 Hr.	18 Hr.
Clinical Experience	22 Hr.	3.6 Hr.
Independent Study/ Individualized Instruction	36 Hr.	---

Graduate programs

The course work in the PhD and MS/MA programs includes research rotations, seminar and lectures and other courses. The following standards are intended to specify the minimum contact time for the assignment of one (1) semester/credit hour in a typical semester of 15 weeks. Some courses may exceed these minimum standards.

Type of Course or Teaching Modality	Total Semester Hours (minimum)	
	Direct Instruction Time	Out of Class Student Work Time
Lecture/Seminar	15 Hr.	30 Hr.
Laboratory	30 Hr.	15 Hr.
Independent Study/ Individualized Instruction	30 Hr.	---
Internship/Practicum/ Field Experience	75 Hr.	---
Scientific Laboratory/ Research	62 Hr.	7.5 Hr.

Programs using Quarter academic terms

The following standards are intended to specify the minimum contact time for the assignment of one (1) semester / credit hour in a typical semester of 12 weeks. Some courses may exceed these minimum standards.

Type of Course or Teaching Method	Total Semester Hours (minimum)	
	Direct Instruction Time	Out of Class Student Work Time
Lecture/Seminar	12 Hr.	24 Hr.
Independent Study/ Individualized Instruction	24 Hr.	---
Internship/Practicum/ Field Experience	75 Hr.	---

Applicability

This policy applies to all courses and clinical clerkships offered by the Universidad Central del Caribe.

Responsibility for implementation

Responsibility for implementation and compliance with the policy is shared by the programmatic curriculum committees, and program directors/coordinators. The final responsibility for the establishment, maintenance, and enforcement of this policy rests with the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Procedures and Compliance Process

The faculty and program directors/coordinators are responsible for developing, maintaining, and evaluating the curriculum within an academic program, although the Dean of Academic Affairs retains final control and approval of the curriculum. Assignment of credit hours for courses and clinical clerkships are determined within the program based on faculty expertise and course learning objectives. Existing courses will be evaluated for adherence to the policy specified above. New courses will, upon review and approval at the program level, be reviewed by the Program-Curriculum Committee and recommended for approval or denial by the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Each Program-Curriculum Committee is charged with following the policy in their review, and recommendations to the Dean of Academic Affairs of all courses/clinical clerkships and curricula and for certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the credit hour standard.

The Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs maintains approved courses in the university catalog and student information system. The Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs will audit 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 the course schedules do not match assigned credit hours. Any discrepancies are brought to the attention of the appropriate department for correction or explanation.

The revised policy aims to make uniform and adhere to observed institutional practices. This revision shall be in effect immediately.

Related Policies

- General Rules for the Transferred-Convalidation of Credits-Courses

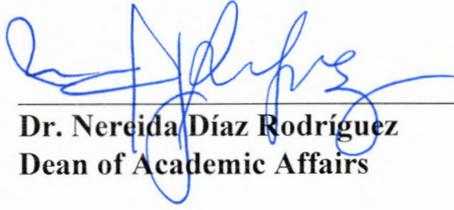
Applicable accreditation standards

- *Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)*, Standard II: Ethics and Integrity.
- *Standards for accreditation and requirements of affiliation* fourteenth edition Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2023.
- *Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)*, Element 6.3 Self-Directed and Life-Long Learning and Element 8.8 Monitoring Student Time.
- *Functions and Structure of a Medical School*, Published August 2024 (contains 2025-2026 LCME Standards).
- *CCE Accreditation Standards Principles, Processes & Requirements for Accreditation*, January 2025.
- *Council on Chiropractic Accreditation (CCE)*, Section 2. H. Curriculum, Competencies and Outcomes Assessment, January 2025.

References

- Part 600—institutional eligibility under the higher education act of 1965, as amended.
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/cfr-2017-title34-vol3/cfr-2017-title34-vol3-sec6002/context>
- MSCHE Credit Hour Policy v 2022-07-01, 7/1/2022
<https://msche.box.com/shared/static/o965z7wbir3leva2ci18sbm9ha73903z.pdf>
- 34 CFR Parts 600, 602, 603, et al. Program Integrity Issues; Final Rule *Code: Title 17. COPYRIGHTS.* (2018). LII / Legal Information Institute.
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/17>
- Institutional Eligibility for Participation in Title IV Student Financial Aid Programs
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43159.pdf>
- Credit hour issues (sec. 600.2; 602.24; 603.24; 668.8) (fr pp. 66946-7; 66949-50)
- Guidance to institutions and accrediting agencies regarding a credit hour as defined in the final regulations published on October 29, 2010,
<https://ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/gen1106.html>
- Program integrity questions and answers - credit hour
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html#credit>.
- MSCHE: Substantive Change Guidelines v 2024-07-24, 7/1/2024
<https://msche.box.com/shared/static/4qmgilpq13v74j89hv83jngldtida4at.pdf>

Authority



Dr. Nereida Díaz Rodríguez
Dean of Academic Affairs

2/14/2025

Date

Approved by:



Waleska Crespo, DrPH
President

2/14/2025

Date

Universidad Central del Caribe

Revision by:

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<i>First revision:</i>	January 25, 2016
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