

Policy Name:	Credit Hour Policy (School of Medicine)
Original Approval Date:	6/20/2014
Approving Officer/Committee:	Medical Curriculum Council
Revision Dates:	9/18/2020, 11/18/2022
Relevant Associations (e.g., accreditation standards):	SACSCOC Standard 10.7 LCME Element 6.8

A. Policy

The School of Medicine generally calculates one (1) semester credit hour for every week of instructional time regardless of format or mode of delivery in line with the federal definition for credit hour. For parallel and longitudinal courses in the M1 an M2 years, credit hours are articulated by dividing total contact hours for the course (regardless of type) by 16. For online courses, one (1) credit hour is equivalent to approximately 3 hours of related coursework per week.

B. Purpose

This policy specifies consistent sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses regardless of format or mode of delivery.

C. Scope

This policy applies to all courses in the School of Medicine that award academic credit regardless of educational delivery modalities.

D. Definitions

Credit Hour (per Federal Regulation 34 CFR 600.2): Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that -

(1) Reasonably approximates not less than -

(i) 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 period of time; or

(ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) 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.

E. Procedure/Process

As part of its charge to oversee the medical education program as a whole, the SOM's Medical Curriculum Council (MCC) shall adhere to the following methodology for assigning credit for courses in the SOM curriculum:

- Courses in the M1 and M2 years are relatively homogeneous with regard to structure, educational experiences, and contact hours. Contact hours include but are not limited to lectures, laboratory, small group discussions, and problem- and case-based learning. Average contact time per week is approximately 15-20 class hours. Additionally, students are expected to complete a minimum of two (2) hours out-of-class time per hour of contact instruction. Given a three (3) semester credit hour course typically contains a minimum of 45 class hours of instructional time, one (1) week of instruction in the SOM curriculum generally equates to one (1) semester credit hour.
- For parallel and longitudinal courses in the M1 and M2 years (e.g., Module I, Courses 1-4 and Foundations of Clinical Medicine), credit hours are articulated by dividing total contact hours for the course (regardless of type) by 16.
- In the clinical experiences of the M3 and M4 years, the educational approach is fundamentally different, with less emphasis on formal didactic instruction and study and greater emphasis on experiential learning and patient care. As a result, the number of contact hours is often greater than traditional didactic courses, ranging from 30 to 80 contact hours per week. The credit hour equation for these experiences is one (1) week of instruction equals one (1) semester credit hour.
- For online courses, one (1) credit hour is equivalent to approximately 3 hours of related coursework per week.

NOTE: The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the accrediting body for medical education programs in the United States and Canada, defines program length in terms of weeks of instruction, requiring a minimum of 130 weeks of instruction for educational programs leading to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree (LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School, Element 6.8). The LSUHSC-S SOM curriculum is approximately 164 weeks over 4 years.

F. Related Policies, Forms, and Resources (if applicable)

Policies

LSUHSC-S Credit Hour Policy

Resources

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges. The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. 2018. Standard 10.7 (Policies for awarding credit). <https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Credit Hours Policy Statement

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Credit-Hours.pdf>

Federal Regulation 34 CFR 600.2

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart-A/section-600.2>

Functions and Structure of a Medical School: Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the M.D. Degree. Liaison Committee on Medical Education. Element 6.8 (Education Program Duration)

<https://lcme.org/>

G. Policy History

06/20/2014 – MCC approved credit hour assignment policy for the School of Medicine

09/18/2020 – MCC approved a separate Policy for Awarding Academic Credit aligned with LCME Element 6.8

11/18/2022 – MCC approved Credit Hour Policy, which consolidates previous credit hour assignment policy and Policy for Awarding Academic Credit into one policy.