I. CREDIT HOUR DEFINITIONS

Pennsylvania regulations state that "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 the faculty" (PA Code, Title 22, section 31.21), using a 14-week semester as its typical standard (excluding final examinations).

The federal definition of credit hour (Title 34, §600.2) states:

> a credit hour is 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 -
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> **(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
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> **(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, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Albright courses comply with state and federal guidelines.

II. CREDIT HOUR ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

In the traditional day program, Albright College follows a semester system. Both fall and spring semester classes run for 15 weeks, which includes one exam week. Albright also offers accelerated course opportunities of varying duration in the traditional day program in two summer sessions. The School of Professional Studies offers two sessions per semester and two sessions per summer. Courses meet for 7.5 weeks. Regardless of calendar, all courses meet the federal government's regulations for credit hours.

The faculty is responsible for the curriculum. Faculty committees, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Academic Affairs work together to ensure appropriate student work and outcomes, adherence to scheduling expectations, and compliance with credit hour policies. During the new course approval process, the faculty Curriculum Development Committee and the General

Education Committee (as relevant) review rationale for the new course, student work expectations, and the syllabus. Prior to the start of each semester, the Registrar's Office and the Office of Academic Affairs review the class schedule to ensure that all classes are scheduled for the minimum number of minutes required for its credit hour assignment. Discrepancies are brought to the department chair and the instructor for correction. All syllabi are collected by the Office of Academic Affairs each semester and are available for review during the periodic reviews of academic programs.

Credit hour assignment for new courses or changes to credit hour assignment for existing courses is subject to CAO approval, which must be secured before the course is reviewed by the CDC and GEC (as relevant).

Following is a general overview of credit-hour assignment in different instructional scenarios.

Traditional Day Program

1. Lecture and Seminar

Albright lecture and seminar courses are 3-credit hour courses. The courses in the traditional day program run in 15-week semesters for the Fall and Spring semesters, which includes one final exam week. Lecture and seminar courses typically meet either for three 50-minute, two 75-minute or one 170-minute class period(s). Programs may also develop courses that meet for 1 or 2 instructional hours and are 1- or 2-credit hour courses. Select lecture and seminar courses may meet 4 instructional hours and are 4-credit hour courses. Such lectures and seminars will typically be math, upper-level language, digital media, and other courses where additional contact time is materially relevant to the student learning objectives. In addition to instructional time, all courses expect two hours of outside work for each one hour in class.

2. Laboratory Courses

Many courses in the natural sciences include laboratory experiences for students. Laboratory classes meet for weekly sessions and are 1-credit hour in addition to the 3-credit hour lecture associated with the laboratory. Computer laboratory classes, as are typical in the social sciences and computer sciences, meet for weekly sessions and are 1-credit hour in addition to the 3-credit hour lecture associated with the laboratory.

3. Studio Sessions and Other Arts-Oriented Laboratory Courses

Some courses in fine and applied arts can require additional time for hands-on instruction and creative production. Programs such as studio arts, theatre, and fashion typically meet these needs through either studio sessions or an additional laboratory associated with a lecture class. Approved film courses offered in various programs may also add a laboratory session for the purpose of screening relevant media. These classes will be 4-credit hour courses.

4. Music and Theatre Practicum

Music lessons, ensembles, and other production experiences will be 1-credit hour per semester.

5. Independent Study

Each department provides opportunities for different levels of independent study of topics that no regular course addresses in the desired depth or breadth, and may at times offer as independent instruction courses in the catalog not available to a student in a given semester. The minimal hour requirements and learning objectives are the same as for any other credit-bearing course. The instructor is required to keep a record of the meeting times as well as the academic work required of and submitted by the student. These practices are evidenced in the required course syllabus, which is attached to the Independent Study Proposal Form that must be approved by the supervising instructor, the department chairperson, academic advisor, and the CAO. Six credit hours of independent study may be counted toward degree requirements.

6. Internship for Credit

Each department provides three levels of internships, each one reflecting the level of expertise and responsibility expected of the student. The minimal hour requirements are the same as for any other credit-bearing course. The student must spend between 130-150 hours on-site. In addition to on-site hours, periodic contact with the instructor overseeing the internship as well as written work are required. The student is required to keep a detailed record of on-site hours, verified by the on-site supervisor. The instructor is required to keep a record of meeting times as well as the academic work required of and submitted by the student. Such practices are documented by the course syllabus, which is submitted to the Career Development Center during the application process. Applications for internships are approved by the supervising faculty member and the CAO or designee.

7. Accelerated Courses

Summer courses in the traditional program maintain required minimum contact hours of 45 hours, plus 2 hours of additional work per every 1 hour in class, but these classes follow a much more intensive schedule. There are two summer sessions; typically summer courses meet for 5 weeks, although some courses run the full summer session. Summer courses cover the same content and contain the same student learning outcomes as courses taught during the regular semester. The Registrar advises faculty of credit hour needs when announcing the request for summer courses and reviews all class schedules once submitted prior to student registration. Syllabi document instructional time and outside work.

8. On-Line Courses

A limited number of on-line courses are offered in the traditional day program. On-line courses deliver all instruction via technology with no face-to-face instructional time. On-line courses follow expectations outlined in an instructional equivalency chart HERE that is a required part of the on-line course development process.

All on-line courses cover the same content and contain the same student learning outcomes as courses taught face-to-face. All syllabi document instructional equivalencies, which add up to 45 hours for a 3-credit course, along with two hours of outside work for each one hour in class; and 60 hours, along with two hours of outside work for each one hour in class, for a 4-credit course.

School of Professional Studies

All SPS courses follow the federal definition of a credit hour, as outlined in more detail in the SPS "Assignment of Credit Hour" policy HERE. As an accelerated program, courses use a schedule of instructional equivalencies to achieve expected instructional time (45 hours for 3-hour courses and 60 hours for 4-credit courses). In addition to instructional time, all courses assign two hours of outside work for each instructional hour.

The SPS credit hour equivalency guide was developed according to the guidelines set forth by the Council for Accelerated Programs (CAP); the equivalency guide is accessible HERE.

All SPS courses are on-line and subject to identical requirements as described above under "On-Line Courses."

Credit-Hour Designations by Course Category

The following is intended to be a quick guide. Please refer to the document above for details.

Lecture/seminar courses: 3 credit hours

Science courses with lab: 4 credit hours

Studio arts courses: 4 credit hours

Fashion courses with lab: 4 credit hours

Statistics and research methods courses with lab: 4 credit hours

Theatre studio courses: 4 credit hours

300- and 400-level language courses (for majors and minors): 4 credit hours

Computer science courses with lab: 4 credit hours

Calculus sequence (MAT 131, 132, 233): 4 credit hours

Film courses with lab: 4 credit hours

Independent studies (281, 381, 481): 3 credit hours

Internships: 3 credit hours

Special topics courses: 3 credit hours

Music and theatre practicum: 1 credit hour

Reviewed by the EPC and FEC. Final FEC review on 5/28/2025.