School of Professional Studies
Assignment of Credit Hours

All courses taken through Albright College's School of Professional Studies, which are credit bearing and count towards the completion of a degree, conform to the state of Pennsylvania and federal regulations pertaining to the assignment of credit hours regardless of format or mode delivery. These guidelines are in compliance with policies established by the federal government, the state of Pennsylvania, and in accordance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Albright College's SPS programs follow an accelerated schedule during fall, spring, and summer terms.

Credit Hour Standards for the School of Professional Studies

All SPS courses are established around the federal definition of credit hour (Title 34, §600.2), which says:

"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—(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."

Semesters in the School of Professional Studies

Albright College's SPS programs operate two standard semester terms in each academic year, plus a summer term. There are two accelerated periods in each term. The terms are fifteen weeks in length per semester, where full-time students earn a minimum of 18 credits in an academic year.

All accelerated courses under the School of Professional Studies must comply with contact time as defined below regardless of mode of the course.

Federal Definition Guideline of Credit Hour

For the typical three-credit hour class, a student spends three hours per week in class. The total semester hours are calculated by multiplying the weekly hours by 15.

3 Credit Course	3 hours x 15 weeks	45 instructional hours
4 Credit Course	4 hours x 15 weeks	60 instructional hours

School of Professional Studies Courses

All SPS courses (general education and major courses) are asynchronous online courses that are delivered in an accelerated format of 7.5 weeks. All major courses and most general education courses are three credit hours. Some general studies courses (natural science courses with lab, for example) are four credit hours.

3 Credit Course	6 hours x 7.5 weeks	45 instructional hours
4 Credit Course	8 hours x 7.5 weeks	60 instructional hours

Online Courses in Accelerated Degree Programs

Online courses are defined as any courses offered entirely online without any onsite face-to-face meetings. These courses have the same learning outcomes and components of a traditional face-to-face course. Instructional hours must be defined in the course syllabus to ensure compliance with Albright College's Assignment of Credit Hours Policy.

Homework

None of these instructional equivalency charts include homework. Homework must be listed separately. The federal definition for student homework expectations is two hours of homework per credit hour every week.

Instructional Equivalency Chart

Albright College maintains an Instructional Equivalency Chart, available for faculty to develop and maintain accelerated courses in compliance with the assignment of credit hours. The chart can be found HERE.

New Course Equivalency & Annual Review

The faculty is responsible for the curriculum. For SPS courses, faculty committees, the Registrar's Office, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the School of Professional Studies work together to ensure appropriate student work and outcomes, adherence to scheduling expectations, and compliance with credit hour policies. During the new course development process, the Director of Instructional Design helps ensure instructional equivalencies and ADA compliance. 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 SPS 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.

The Vice President of SPS is responsible for the initial and annual review of courses within each discipline to ensure credit hour compliance; the Vice President is also responsible for ensuring credit hour equivalency documents exist for each course in the program. Each course equivalency is documented on a shared drive, accessible to all reviewers.

New Courses for the School of Professional Studies

All SPS general education courses are required to have an instructional equivalency guide attached to the course, to ensure compliance with credit hour policies. This guide is submitted to the Vice President of SPS for review of equivalencies, then is stored on a shared drive.

Curriculum that is developed for the SPS major is locked, meaning an instructional facilitators guide is created to ensure consistency across faculty members teaching the course. All facilitator guides are required to have an instructional equivalency chart associated with the course to ensure credit hour compliance. This information is stored on a shared drive for all reviewers as well as accessible to all faculty in a Canvas administrative course.

Credit Hour Compliance Training

Training on instructional equivalencies is available to all Albright College faculty members. In addition, SPS faculty will be enrolled in a Canvas course on designing online classes.