

# Johns Hopkins University Credit Hour Policy

## Overview

The Johns Hopkins University's nine academic divisions operate under a combination of semester credit hour systems, quarter hour systems, and alternative systems with equivalent measures wherein credit hours are not awarded. The Credit Hour Policy codifies practices across JHU schools regarding course contact hours and out-of-class student work in accordance with Federal, State, and accreditation guidelines, as well as licensure requirements for many disciplines.

## Policy

JHU defines a credit hour as a reasonable approximation of the student learning outcome equivalency of an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates not less than, at a minimum, the federal definition:

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 15 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
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.

Programs operating outside the credit hour system administratively establish equivalencies that can be used for financial aid awards, transferring course work to other schools, state reporting requirements, and other external purposes. Each JHU academic division has internal procedures for ensuring these credit hour conversions are applied and reviewed on a regular basis. The Credit Hour Policy applies equally to courses of varying credits, duration, and modes of instruction.

## Procedures for Assignment of Credit Hours

1. Course developers are to ensure that the quantity of student learning required per credit is the equivalent of 15 hours of coursework through activities that address and demonstrate student competency in the defined learning outcomes; and draw upon recommended instructional practices identified by each department's faculty.
2. Student learning outcome equivalencies are to be based on documented qualitative and quantitative expectations for:
  - a) Time required of students to complete assigned learning activities, taking into account expectations based on degree level, discipline, and weight in students' final course grade;
  - b) Time required of students to read and understand content developed by course faculty, excluding time required to read assignments in a course syllabus;

- c) Time required of course faculty to respond to student questions received via e-mail, posted in the online classroom, and/or discussed in the online class chat room; and
  - d) Time required of course faculty and students to participate in online conference activities; and
  - e) Time required of students to participate in clinical learning activities, internships, student teaching, practica, studio work, etc.
3. Student learning outcome equivalencies reflect differences in delivery methods, type of instruction and interaction, degree of supervision, measurements of student work, academic disciplines, academic calendars, and degree levels.
  4. Each school is responsible for demonstrating that these requirements are met for both courses composed of seat-time and other alternative delivery methods.
  5. The length of academic terms is defined by each school. Recommendations on the length and number of class meetings per week are also established by each school and vary as appropriate to each discipline, course content, and/or instructional format.

#### **Periodic Review of Credit Hour Policy**

Each academic department should conduct an initial comprehensive review of the credit hour equivalency for all programs where credit hours are not formally awarded. The registrar of each school should record these within appropriate system for reporting to Federal, State, accreditation, and other entities as required. Each school should determine whether these credit hours should be included on the official transcript.

The review should be done either by the pertinent department faculty and/or school curriculum committee. Whereas each school should determine how best to organize and conduct its initial review, some common themes should be observed. The length of academic terms, the number and duration of class meetings per week, and the credit hours assigned to new courses should be reviewed by the pertinent unit/departmental structure responsible for compliance with the credit hour policy.

A periodic review of the Credit Hour Policy should be incorporated into each school's established academic program review/self-study procedures. A university committee comprising representatives of each division will meet at least twice a year to review compliance with the policy.