CURRICULUM AND CREDIT HOURS POLICY

PERTINENT INFORMATION

As part of the continued accreditation of the institution, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) performs reviews of the institution's assignment of credit hours. Academic credit has stipulated the basis for measuring the amount of engaged learning time expected of a student enrolled not only in the traditional classroom settings but also laboratories, clinics, seminars, practicums, internships and other experiential learning, and distance and correspondence education. The common use of academic credit amongst all institutions ensures the transfer of coursework from one institution to another. The federal government also relies on the academic credit to assess student academic engagement as a basis of awarding financial aid. The amount of credit awarded for undergraduate and graduate courses is based on the unit of the semester credit hour, in accordance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rules (Title 19 Texas Administrative Code, 4.6).

This is meant to be a living policy which evolves with the integration of innovative methodologies and new instructional technologies into the curriculum.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Semester Credit Hour

34 CFR § 600.2 defines the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement within one semester (fall, spring or summer) that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates:

1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours 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

2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practicums, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. (See 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l).)

"Credit hour" may be used interchangeably at the health science center with "semester credit hour" or "unit."

Semester credit hours are based on contact hours. Contact hours are the amount of time a student has with an instructor or instructional assistant such as a research assistant or preceptor, whether face-to-face or virtual. A semester is defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ("THECB") as 15 weeks of instruction and a week for final examinations (Title 19 Texas Administrative Code §4.6). Therefore, assuming a lecture format, the traditional 3-hour semester credit-hour course, for example, contains 45 to 47 contact hours.

Distance education and hybrid courses use the same credit hour requirements as face-to-face courses. Further, courses delivered in shortened semesters are expected to have the same number of contact hours and the same requirement for out-of-class learning as courses taught in a normal semester. For example, a three-credit hour course that meets for one hour three times per week in a 15 week semester (45 contact hours) must meet nine hours per week in a five week semester (45 contact hours) to be equivalent. This does not apply to rotational classes offered in the School of Medicine or the School of Dentistry.

The School of Medicine determines the amount of credit awarded for courses in accordance with the accreditation standards of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the accrediting body for medical education programs in the United States.

The Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) and the Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic programs are workforce certificate programs. As such they follow separate definitions for a student credit hour, pursuant to rules established by the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board's Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education (https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/guidelines-manuals/guidelines-for-instructional-programs-in-workforce-education-gipwe/).

For the calculation of semester credit hours, the health science center recognizes the following components:

- Clinical
- Conference
- Laboratory
- Lecture
- Practicum
- Pre-clinical
- Seminar

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURE

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Course developers are to ensure that the quantity of student learning required per credit hour is the equivalent of 15 hours (=1 semester for the final) of coursework for the semester through activities that:

1. Address and demonstrate student competency in the defined learning outcomes; and

2. Draw upon recommended instructional practices identified by the health science center's Office of the University Registrar (see contact to credit hour ratio).

Student learning outcome equivalencies are to be based on documented qualitative and quantitative expectation for:

1. 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;

2. Time required of students to read and understand content developed by course faculty, excluding time required to read assignments in a course syllabus;

3. 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
4. Time required of course faculty and students to participate in online conference activities.

Student learning outcome equivalencies reflect differences in delivery methods, quality of instruction and interaction, degree of supervision, measurements of student work, academic disciplines, academic calendars and degree levels.

Each school is responsible for demonstrating to SACSCOC that these requirements are met for both courses composed of seat-time and other alternative delivery methods.

CREDIT HOUR BY COURSE

The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for calculating the number of semester credit hours associated with courses given the definitions above. The Office of the University Registrar strongly advises against courses that carry variable credit hours, that is, courses whose credit hours vary by student or by semester. This is because consistency and fairness are expected procedurally and with respect to the content of a course and the amount of instruction a student receives from an instructor.

AMOUNT AND LEVEL OF CREDIT

The amount and level of credit awarded for courses for each program by the school is determined by each school's dean's office, in conjunction with the Office of the University Registrar. The Office of the University Registrar uses established practices for awarding credit as specified by the THECB (Title 19 Texas Administrative Code, Section 4.6).

Each school is responsible for establishing a formal faculty review process to ensure that the amount and level of credit awarded for the undergraduate and graduate courses is compatible with the sound academic practice in the given field. As part of the review process, faculty ensure that all distance education courses have learning outcomes that are equivalent to the outcomes for the same or similar courses delivered through traditional formats.

The THECB requires that every student pursuing a baccalaureate degree program complete a core curriculum consisting of 42 credit hours that includes content found in Texas Administrative Code, Section 4.28 (https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage/?sl=R&app=2&p_dir=&p_rloc=156429&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=156429&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&rl=28&dt=&z_chk=1109108). The health science center curriculum assures that all undergraduate programs provide an appropriate breadth of knowledge in these required areas. If the student has already completed a core curriculum from another Texas public institution in a previous degree program, they are not required to complete the health science center core curriculum.

CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE

Each program requires a designated minimum number of hours to graduate. No student shall graduate without meeting this minimum as documented on the official transcript. For this reason, any credit gained through course substitutions, waivers or by challenge exams must be appropriately documented on designated forms in the Office of the University Registrar.

EXCESS CREDIT HOURS

Undergraduate students and graduate students seeking doctoral degrees are subject to rules in the Texas Education Code that limit the number of hours they may take before receiving the intended degree. For undergraduate students, these hours are based on a cumulative total across all institutions of higher education they attended, including technical and community colleges. Some exceptions are allowed. For graduate students, these hours are based only on hours taken at the health science center. See the Excess Hours Policy (http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/excesscredithourspolicy/) in this catalog for details.

Contact to Credit Hour Ratio: = 1 hour of credit

CONTACT TO CREDIT HOUR RATIOS

Dental School

Program	Lecture	Conferen	Laborato	Seminar	Practicu	Clinical	Pre-Clinical
Post-doctoral	16.0	16.0	48.0	16.0	N/A	64.0	N/A
Pre-doctoral	16.0	16.0	48.0	16.0	N/A	64.0	64.0
Undergraduates	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	N/A	60.0	N/A

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Program	Lecture	Conferen	Laborato	Seminar	Practicu	Clinical	Pre-Clinical
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences	16.0	16.0	48.0	16.0	48.0	N/A	N/A

School of Health Professions

Program	Lecture	Conferen	Laborato	Seminar	Practicu	Clinical	Pre-Clinical
Certificates							
Commun Sciences	15.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EMT Basic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
EMT Paramed	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Undergraduates							
Emergen Health Sciences	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	N/A	60.0	30.0
Medical Laboratory Sciences	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	30.0	40.0	30.0
Medical Sciences	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	40.0	40.0	30.0
Respirator Care	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	60.0	60.0	45.0
Graduate							
Health Sciences	15.0	15.0	N/A	15.0	45.0	N/A	N/A
Imaging Sciences	15.0	N/A	45.0	30.0	60.0	N/A	N/A

Medical Laboratory Sciences	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	30.0	40.0	30.0
Occupati Therapy	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	55.0	40.0	30.0
Physician Assistant Studies	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	N/A	40.0	N/A
Physical Therapy	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	N/A	80.0	30.0
Respirator Care	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	60.0	45.0	N/A
Speech Languag Patholog	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	25/50 †	45.0	N/A

* The EMT Basic and Paramedic program follow the WECM contact and credit hour ratio.

† MSLP 5015 Speech-Language Pathology Practicum 1 is 25. MSLP 6004 Speech-Language Pathology Practicum 2 and MSLP 6005 Speech-Language Pathology Advanced Practicum is 50.

Long School of Medicine

Program	Lecture	Conferen	Laborato	Seminar	Practicur	Clinical	Pre-Clinical
Graduates	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	N/A	N/A	30.0
Pre-clinical Years	16.0	16.0	48.0	16.0	N/A	32.0	N/A
Clinical Years	1 Week = 1 Hour	1 Week = 1 Hour	N/A	1 Week = 1 Hour	N/A	1 Week = 1 Hour	N/A

School of Nursing

Program	Lecture	Conferen	Laborato	Seminar	Practicur	Clinical	Pre-Clinical
Undergraduates	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	45.0	45.0	N/A
Graduate	15.0	15.0	60.0	15.0	60.0	60.0	N/A

School of Public Health

Program	Lecture	Conferen	Laborato	Seminar	Practicur	Clinical	Pre-Clinical
Graduate	15.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Suggestions for meeting hours of student work per week outside of instruction time:

- Online and hybrid courses must meet the same credit hour requirements as face-to-face courses.
- Faculty teaching online and hybrid courses must account for 48 hours of instructional time for every 3 credit hours.
- Logging on constitutes neither active faculty teaching nor active student learning. Faculty must demonstrate active faculty engagement in online teaching/instructing students. Methods such as discussion boards, chats, etc. can serve as instructional time.
- Other methods may include instructional how-to videos, small group activities, virtual labs, required participation in live or online discussion (e.g. review sessions, Canvas chat, case discussions, or other instructor-driven self-guided activity delivered live or by electronic media).
- Faculty may also consider field experiences, cultural events, group projects, increased course content, research and information literacy, service learning and civic engagement, individual or group conferences, oral presentations, or other methodology that should contain some rationale for SACSCOC.
- Activities that are counted for credit must be required and structured. Examples of activities that do not count toward instructional time: readings, homework and other intrinsic preparation or activities (e.g. practicing calculations).