

**University of Massachusetts Medical School
Credit Hour Definitions and Audit Process
December 8, 2011**

The University of Massachusetts Medical School, which consists of its School of Medicine, Graduate School of Nursing and Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, fulfills the following Federal definition of a credit hour:

“Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (1), 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 hours 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.”

Faculty and Student Notifications:

The credit hour assignments will be included in the appropriate student handbook and they will be provided to the Office of Faculty Affairs for inclusion in the orientation program for new faculty. It will also be presented at relevant curriculum committee meetings to ensure faculty awareness.

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) Course Credit Hour Assignments

All new courses, their associated syllabi, methods of student evaluation and credit hours must be reviewed by the Graduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee. Once approved by this Subcommittee, the course is presented for approval to the Graduate Council, a body of representative faculty, students and administrators selected by each program and appointed by the GSBS Dean. An approved course returns to the Graduate Council for review only when the content, evaluation methodology or credit hours are significantly altered or when student evaluations of the course demand the attention of the GSBS Dean, Graduate Council and/or the faculty.

Examples:

- Block 1 in the basic biomedical sciences (BBS) core curriculum runs for eight weeks and meets for 67 hours total. Study outside of the classroom requires at least three hours per hour of class. $67 \div 15 = 4.5$ but the GSBS assigns three credits. Reading analysis and

problem solving (RAPS) in Block 1 of the core curriculum runs for eight weeks and meets for 32 hours total. At least five hours are spent reviewing class material before each class. $32/15 =$ two credit hours

- Block 2 in the BBS core curriculum runs for 11 weeks and meets for 75 hours total. Study outside of the classroom requires at least three hours per hour of class. $75 \div 15 = 5$ but the GSBS assigns three credits. RAPS in Block 2 of the BBS core curriculum runs for 11 weeks and meets for 34 hours total. At least five hours are spent reviewing class material before each class. $34/15 =$ two credit hours.
- Block 3 in the BBS core curriculum runs for 11 weeks and meets for 55 hours total. Study outside of the classroom requires at least three hours per hour of class. $55 \div 15 \approx 4$ but the GSBS assigns three credits. RAPS in Block 2 of the BBS core curriculum runs for 11 weeks and meets for 18 hours total. At least five hours are spent reviewing class material before each class. $19/15 =$ one credit hour.
- Students undertake two eight-week lab rotations each in the fall and in the spring and one 12-week rotation in summer. The eight-week rotations require 160 hours of research each and each is assigned two credits. The twelve-week rotation involves 240 hours of research and each is assigned two credits.

School of Medicine (SoM) Course Credit Hour Assignments

Existing Curriculum:

Each grade-granting course is assigned credits based on the following process, which builds on standard educational benchmarking and local expertise in curriculum development and expectations for clinical work:

- Year 1-2 foundational curricula: approximately 15 classroom hours and two out-of-classroom hours per classroom hour/semester (minimum 45 hours) = one credit
- Years 2-4 core clinical and elective experiences: one week = one credit
- Year 3-4 required sub-internship: one week = two credits

The Credit-Hours Work Group (CHWG) will present the slate of course credit hours annually to the relevant curriculum sub-committee of the Education Policy Committee (EPC) for review and endorsement, and to the full EPC at the request of the EPC curriculum sub-committee.

New Course Development:

Newly approved courses will apply this metric to confirm appropriate credit.

Adjustment:

- The CHWG will be convened annually three months before the start of the academic year to review any need to adjust policy or procedure, and on an ad hoc basis throughout the year as time sensitive issues arise. These meetings will be called by the CHWG Chair, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education.
- The credit-hours work group consists of the Associate Deans for Undergraduate Medical Education and Student Affairs, Chairs of the EPC curriculum sub-committees, Chairs of

the Basic and Clinical Sciences Academic Evaluation Boards, the Registrar and the Financial Aid Director.

- A sub-committee with expertise in elements unique to the MD/PhD program will meet annually and as needed to address credit-hour issues related to that program. This MD/PhD CHWG will be comprised of the Dean of the GSBS, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, the Chair of the relevant EPC sub-committee, MD/PhD leadership, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and other content experts as necessary.
- The policy will be posted on the EPC website.

Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) Course Credit Hour Assignments

All new courses, their associated syllabi, methods of student evaluation and credit hours must be reviewed by the responsible Program Director. They are then sent to the Curriculum Committee for approval. After approval by the Curriculum Committee, they are sent to the Faculty Assembly for full endorsement and final approval. Approved courses are reviewed by the Program Directors only when the content, evaluation methodology or credit hours are significantly altered or when course/student evaluations indicate the need. The Program Director would then follow the same course of action identified for new courses.

The GSN allocates one credit per 15 student contact hours/classroom hours. An additional three hours of independent work per contact hour is expected.

Example: For a three credit graduate course over the fall semester, the student may have a three hour class supplemented by nine hours of reading and/or other outside class assignments to complete each week for 15 weeks.

Clinical hours:

Pre-licensure clinical hours (500 level clinical) are allocated as one credit per 45 contact hours. Graduate clinical hours (600 level) are allocated as one credit per 90 contact hours.

Credit Hour Audit Process

The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education in the SOM, the Dean of the GSBS and the Dean of the GSN will annually supply a list of all credit granting courses to the Associate Dean for Allied Health and Interprofessional Education Programs (the “Associate Dean”), who will randomly select two courses from each of the three schools for an audit to determine credit hour compliance with this policy. The Associate Dean will formally notify each of these three individuals concerning the initial results of this audit. If there is a disagreement concerning the findings, the Associate Dean will meet with the individual for further discussion. The Associate Dean will report his final audit conclusions to the Provost.