

Frostburg State University Credit Hour Policy

Frostburg State University complies with Federal (U.S. Department of Education), Code of Maryland (COMAR), and Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE) regulations pertaining to degree requirements and credit hours. Frostburg State University undergraduate degrees require the successful completion of at least 120 semester credit hours. All graduate degrees require a minimum of 30 semester credit hours.

Frostburg State University follows the standard academic calendar, 30 weeks of instruction for the academic year, with semesters 15 weeks in length, fall and spring, excluding designated university closings and exam periods. Summer sessions, Intersession and accelerated (short) courses vary in length.

Background

The U.S. Department of Education, at 34 CFR Section 600.2, defines “credit hour” as: “...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; 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.”

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, in its Credit Hour Policy, effective August 23, 2013, requires institutions to verify compliance with Credit Hour regulations.

Code of Maryland (COMAR) regulations state –

- (1) A school may measure instructional time of programs and courses in either clock hours or credit hours with the approval of the Secretary of Higher Education.
- (2) Clock Hours. Schools that are authorized to measure instructional time in clock hours shall report the total number of clock hours and the number of weeks for each program and the component courses. A school shall adopt a consistent measurement of clock hours for which 1 clock hour equates to a minimum of 50 minutes of actual instructional time per each 60-minute hour.

(3) Credit Hours.

(a) Each school using credit hours shall use either semester hours or quarter hours.

(b) Schools that are authorized to measure instructional time in credit hours are required to convert clock hours to credit hours using a consistent formula.

(c) In converting clock hours to credit hours, the school may use either the following formula or a formula required by the U.S. Department of Education:

(i) One semester credit hour is the equivalent of 15 hours of classroom contact when the lecture instruction method is employed. Each hour of classroom instruction shall be at least 50 minutes in length.

(ii) One semester credit hour is the equivalent of 30 hours of laboratory contact when the supervised laboratory method of instruction is employed. Each hour of laboratory instruction shall be at least 50 minutes in length.

(iii) One semester credit hour is the equivalent of 45 hours of instructional situations such as shop, practica, and internships. Each hour of these instructional situations shall be at least 50 minutes in length.

(iv) One quarter hour of credit is the equivalent of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the contact hours required for 1 semester hour of credit. Therefore, one quarter hour of credit is equivalent to 10 contact hours of classroom instruction, 20 contact hours of laboratory instruction, and 30 contact hours in instructional situations such as shop, practica, and internships. A school shall have 3 academic terms in each calendar year in order to measure instructional time in quarter hours.

(v) In converting clock hours to credit hours a school shall adopt a consistent measurement of clock hours for all programs and their component courses.

(vi) A school shall adopt a consistent measurement of credit hours using either semester or quarter hour credits for all programs and their component courses.

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Frostburg State University has adopted the Credit Hour as the unit measure of instruction for awarding credit.

At Frostburg State University, a credit hour is equivalent to one hour of classroom instruction (50 minutes) with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study for each class session. Typically, a three-semester credit hour course meeting for 45 total hours over 15 weeks requires 90 total hours of out of class academic engagement. Frostburg adheres to the Federal standard of a total expectation of 45 total learning hours (15 hours for every 1 credit earned) in a semester regardless of time frame of delivery.

Frostburg State University Course Methods

Delivery Method:

1. Onsite – All classes meet at a site (can be a combination of campus and another site, e.g. student teaching).
2. Blended – A blended course is a combination of online and face-to-face instruction where a significant proportion of student learning activities are online and the time students physically spend in the classroom is significantly reduced but not entirely eliminated.
3. Online - Fully online courses at Frostburg State University (FSU) have most of their class materials available electronically and use the Internet as the primary means of communication. Regular on-site class attendance cannot be a course requirement.

Fully online courses may provide, when appropriate and feasible, occasional on-site contact between students and the instructor (e.g., an orientation session or proctored testing), but faculty must make alternative arrangements for students who cannot attend an on-site meeting.

Regardless of mode of instruction, courses should be consistent in terms of quality, assessment, learning outcomes, requirements, etc. as courses offered face-to-face with the same department prefix, number, and course title. Faculty must demonstrate active academic engagement through interactive methods, including but not limited to, interactive tutorials, group discussions, virtual study/project groups, discussion boards, chat rooms, etc. Simply logging on, either by faculty or students, does not constitute active student learning. *Credit hours assigned to a course delivered online must equal the number of credit hours for the same course delivered face-to-face.*

An equivalent amount of work is required in courses and academic activities where direct instruction is not the primary mode of learning, such as online and blended courses, laboratory work, independent study, internships, practica, studio work, etc. Credits will be awarded on the basis of documented learning objectives, expected learning outcomes, and student workload expectations within a specified period of academically engaged time.

Method of Attributing Credits per Course:

Undergraduate/Graduate credits are assigned per semester as follows:

Lecture/Seminar	One semester credit hour is the equivalent of 15 hours of classroom contact when the lecture instruction method is employed. Each hour of classroom instruction shall be at least 50 minutes in length.
Laboratory	One semester credit hour is the equivalent of 30 hours of laboratory contact when the supervised laboratory method of instruction is employed. Each hour of laboratory instruction shall be at least 50 minutes in length.
Ensemble	One semester credit hour. Course meets 100 – 150 minutes per week.
Independent Study	Credits vary; contact hours will vary based upon program and or program requirements and will meet minimum credit hour requirements.
Internship/Practicum	One semester credit hour is the equivalent of 45 hours of instructional situations such as practica and internships. Each hour of these instructional situations shall be at least 50 minutes in length.
Private Instruction	Credits vary from 1-2 credits for private instruction music courses. Private instruction ranges from 30 – 60 minutes with independent practice as prescribed by the instructor.
Research	Credits vary; contact hours will vary based upon program and or program requirements and will meet minimum credit hour requirements
Student Teaching	12 credits per semester, 14 weeks working with an assigned mentor teacher and university supervisor for a minimum of 70 days.
Studio	3 credits per semester. A combination of two hours of lecture and two hours of studio per week. Each hour of instruction shall be at least 50 minutes in length.
Thesis/Dissertation	Minimum of 50 minutes of student work, per credit hour, per week, throughout the semester or the equivalent distributed over a different period of time.

Credit Hours for Online, Blended, and Intensive Online Courses

Credit hours for online or blended learning courses, as well as intensive online courses at Frostburg State University must adhere to the Federal standard of a total expectation of 45 total learning hours for every 1 credit (15 hours of instruction with 30 hours of out of class academic engagement) earned in a semester regardless of time frame of delivery.

Attribute Definitions

Lecture/Seminar: Course focuses on principles, concepts or ideas, lecture, discussion and demonstration. A semester credit hour is earned for fifteen, 50-minute sessions of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of student preparation time outside of class per week throughout the semester. *A typical three-credit hour course meets for three, 50-minute sessions or two, 75-minute sessions a week for fifteen weeks. Most lecture and seminar courses are awarded 3 credits.*

Laboratory: A laboratory or studio is a regularly scheduled application session held in a specialized instructional area that is directly taught or supervised by a faculty member.

Ensemble: A one credit course in a variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles, including Wind Ensemble and University Chorale, along with smaller ensembles: Brass, String, Guitar, Woodwind, Percussion and Piano. Students can also join specialized musical groups like Jazz Orchestra, Marching Band, Vocal Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Choir and the Opera Workshop. Most courses meet between 100 – 150 minutes per week.

Independent Study: Courses that permit a student to study a subject or topic in considerable depth beyond the scope of a regular course. Students meet periodically, as agreed upon with the faculty member, for the duration of the course. University faculty provides guidance, criticism, and review of the student's work. Students demonstrate competency through the completion of a final assessment either by submitting a final paper, project or portfolio, etc. as required by the faculty member. *Credit hours are assigned based on the amount of activity associated with the course, faculty supervision, and amount of student outside work.*

Internship/Practicum: Guided work experience. Work must be directly related to the student's academic program. Credits and requirements vary by department.

Private Music Instruction: Courses taught as applied study on a private or semi-private basis. Courses may or may not include a group master class. A student taking a one our lesson will receive 2 credits. A student taking a 30 minute lesson will receive 1 credit.

Research: Original student investigations involving background research, development of project design, and data collection, executed under faculty guidance.

Student Teaching: The Internship II experience occurs during Phase III, in the final semester of the EC/Elementary, Elementary or Elementary/Middle program. Candidates will complete a 14 week internship in a PDS school, working with an assigned mentor teacher and university supervisor for a minimum of 70 days. Prior to the internship, candidates will make a pre-practice visit to the school and will complete an induction experience (Fall). During the Internship II, candidates are expected to observe and collaborate with the Mentor Teacher, gradually performing all professional and teaching responsibilities in the classroom for a minimum of 10 teaching days, 5 of which must be consecutive. Candidates will develop and teach a 10 day or two 5 day units during the internship. A service-learning experience would be included in one unit. Candidates will also complete assignments associated with the EDUC 422: Leadership Seminar and will develop a professional portfolio, to be presented and evaluated at the Portfolio Interview event at the end of the semester.

Studio: Courses are a combination of two 50-minute sessions of direct faculty instruction and two 50-minute studio experiences per week throughout the semester for a total of three credits.

Thesis/Dissertation: Thesis/Dissertation work is accomplished through varying means depending on the discipline. It may be provided through variable-credit (1-9 credit hours). For one credit hour of thesis/dissertation work, it is expected that students will spend approximately 150 minutes per week or a total of 2250 minutes in some combination of meeting with the advisor and/or committee and doing independent research.

United States Department of Education: Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 19, 2010 - <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf>

Code of Maryland (COMAR) Credit Hours Definition - <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13b/13b.01.01.09.htm>

Middle States Commission on Higher Education: Credit Hours Policy - <http://www.msche.org/publications/ComplianceReviewBookletDec2012.pdf>