

Marian University Credit Hour Policy

Marian University has an interest in awarding credit hours for courses and course work taken by its students at an industry accepted rate. The credit hour is used by the university, and quite often by its peers, to measure full time attendance status of a student, eligibility of certain types of financial aid, sufficient progress towards a degree, and the attainment of that degree among other things. While the university has long had and published in its faculty handbooks certain standards concerning credit hours, this document represents more formal statements of those practices.

Definition of Credit Hour

The U.S. Department of Education defines “credit hour” as:

“...An amount of work representing 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 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.

Marian University Policy Details

The faculty and academic departments of the institution have the responsibility for assuring that the learning objectives for each course are sufficient to justify the time spent in the classroom. When the learning objectives are found to be insufficient to justify the class time and the associated credit hours assigned to the course, the faculty and academic department must modify and/or increase learning objectives to maintain the course’s awarded credit hours. Alternatively, it can be decided to reduce the number of credit hours awarded for completion of that course.

Standard Undergraduate Courses

It is expected that during each week one hour of class or faculty instruction and at least two hours of accompanying student work out of class is necessary over the course of the semester for the student to earn one credit hour. Outside work is typically categorized as reading, studying, problem-solving, writing, or preparation.

Lab, Studio, Other

In the case of studio, laboratory, and other campus-based experiential learning the students are expected to weekly meet at least two hours for every credit hour.

Internships, Practica, Clinical, Other

In off campus experiential learning such as internships, practica and clinical, academic departments and/or outside agencies dictate a ratio of no fewer than three hours of experience weekly to one credit hour.

Accelerated Courses

All courses offered in accelerated format must have the identical set of learning objectives as their semester-long counterpart. Because these learning objectives are identical, the credit hour awarded to the student for successful completion of the course is equivalent to that awarded in a standard semester-long format. It is the responsibility of the faculty and academic departments to ensure that the learning objectives for all accelerated courses remain consistent with their semester long format. For example, a standard 3-credit course meeting for an entire semester (approximately 15 weeks) equates to 135 hours, which is 9 hours per week; three hours of “seat time” and 6 hours of outside work. This equates to:

- **8-week Course:** Approximately 17 hours per week
- **5-week Course:** Approximately 27 hours per week

In the circumstance where an accelerated course has no semester long equivalent offering, it is the responsibility of the faculty and academic department to ensure that the course and its objectives would be sufficient to meet the equivalent of at least one hour per week for direct faculty instruction for every credit hour awarded in a semester long format.

Hybrid Courses

Hybrid or blended courses use online content delivery for 25%-75% of the course time. These courses may have a proportional decrease in scheduled “seat time” associated with a credit hour with the expectation that the additional activities correspond directly to the reduced seat time.

Online Courses

Online courses use online content delivery for 76% to 100% of the course time. These courses may infrequently meet face-to-face or not at all during a semester or term. Rigor is based on the amount of assigned work expected of students in the course, such as readings, videos, synchronous sessions, deliverables, etc. Faculty must demonstrate active academic engagement through interactive methods, including but not limited to, synchronous sessions, discussion boards, virtual study/project groups, chat rooms, etc. Simply logging on, either by faculty or students, does not constitute active student learning.

Standard Graduate Level Courses

It is expected that during each week one hour of class or faculty instruction and at least two to three hours of accompanying student work out of class is necessary over the course of the semester for the student to earn one credit hour. Outside work is typically categorized as reading, studying, problem-solving, writing, or preparation. Minimum number of hours varies by academic program and should be confirmed within that program.