

Policy on Credit Hours

1. WSCUC Requirement

In accordance with the Federal Definition of the Semester Credit Hour, WSCUC defines credit hour (see definition below) for learning outcomes and student achievement. In determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, an institution is permitted to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines and degree levels. Institutions have the flexibility to award a greater number of credits for courses that they can show require more student work.

2. Purpose

This policy is written to establish how credits are assigned to student learning in all CUSM programs.

3. Policy Statement

CUSM adopts the WSCUC definition of credit hour and employs credit hour as the measure of educational credit a student receives. Its use follows the rules, regulations, and guidelines as specified by the federal government and WSCUC. Where applicable, calculations to derive alternative unit equivalency to credit hours are detailed in the procedures.

4. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies across all programs at CUSM. The audience for this policy includes students, faculty, and clinical instructors. A student must accumulate the required number of credits to complete the degree program.

5. Definitions

A credit hour is defined as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that approximates:

- a. Not less than 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
- b. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a.) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practical, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

6. Procedures for Implementation and Review

- The Office of Assessment calculates and assigns credit hours to courses using the following equivalencies and presents them for approval to the Assessment & Evaluation Committee, and program curriculum committees.

- Students are expected to spend at least 45 hours of in-and-out-of-class time to earn one (1) credit. The following learning activities involve at least 45 hours of combined in-and-out-of-class student work for one (1) credit:
 - a week of learning activities in courses (lecture, flipped classroom sessions with assurance testing, laboratory, case presentation);
 - a semester of classroom lectures, or of supervised research work in a laboratory, clinical or community setting;
 - a week of clinical instructional activities.

*Specific to the MD degree program:

- Longitudinal components of the curriculum (e.g., Clinical Skills, College Colloquium, CHANGE, CARE) involve at least 270 hours of in-and-out-of-class student work during the first year (6 credits for 1 year), and at least 135 hours of in-and-out-of-class student work during the first semester of the second year (3 credits for 1 semester).
- The length of the MD program is defined by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education and must include at least 130 weeks of instruction.

7. Policy Administration

Responsibility

Course and clerkship directors must comply with this policy in delivering instructional activities and learning to students.

Schedule for Review and Update

Assessment & Evaluation Committee reviews the policy every year to monitor implementation, compliance, accuracy, reliability, and consistency. The policy may be updated sooner if necessary to accommodate curricular changes or comply with applicable accrediting standards.