

# Howard Community College

## Credit Hour Definition and Application to Courses

### Credit Hour Definition at Howard Community College

*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 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.*

This definition is consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's definition. The definition also extends to other academic work that leads to awarding credit hours.

### Credit Hour Calculation

The *minimum* amount of time required for credit hour is calculated using 50 minutes as the recognized length of a classroom "hour."

#### One Hour of Classroom or Direct Faculty Instruction per Semester

$(50 \text{ minutes} \times 15 \text{ weeks}) \div 60 \text{ minutes in an hour} = 12.5 \text{ hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction.}$

#### Two Hours of Student Work Out-of-Classroom or Direct Faculty Instruction per Semester

$(2 \times 50 \text{ minutes} \times 15 \text{ weeks}) \div 60 \text{ minutes in an hour} = 25 \text{ hours of out-of-class student work}$

12.5 hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction plus 25 hours of out-of-class or direct faculty instruction per semester equals 37.5 hours.

### **One Credit Hour equals 37.5 clock hours of instruction/student work per 15 week semester**

The U.S. Department of Education is flexible on how much of this time is used in the classroom or for direct faculty instruction. Each course must account for 37.5 hours of instruction and student work per credit hour credit.

### **Clock hour Requirements for Courses**

Note: In the following clock hour requirements, the term "instructional time" is synonymous with "in-class" and "direct faculty instruction." Examinations may be included as instructional time. Instructional time applies to courses taught in all modalities, i.e., face-to-face, online, hybrid, etc. The term "student work" means all assignments or other academic activities required to be completed outside of instructional time.

Student work may include reading, studying, writing, completing worksheets, research, etc.

### 15-Week Courses

Each 3-credit theory course requires 37.5 hours of instructional time, and 75 hours of student work for a total of 112.5 hours. These courses typically have 150 minutes per week of instructional time that accounts for 37.5 hours per semester  $[(50 \text{ minutes} \times 3 \times 15 \text{ weeks}) \div 60 \text{ minutes}]$ . The remaining 75 hours  $(112.5 - 37.5)$  or the equivalent of 5 hours per week  $(75 \div 15)$  must be accounted for by student work outside of instructional time.

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**3-credit, 15-week course requires 5 hours of student work per week outside of instructional time.**

Each 4-credit theory course requires 50 hours of instructional time and 100 hours of student work for a total of 150 hours. These courses typically have 200 minutes per week of instructional time that accounts for 50 hours per semester [(50 minutes x 4 credits x 15 weeks) ÷ 60 minutes]. The remaining 100 hours or the equivalent of 6 hours and 40 minutes per week must be accounted for by student work outside of instructional time.

**4-credit, 15-week course requires 6.67 hours of student work per week outside of instructional time.**

Courses that meet for less than 15 weeks should be calculated accordingly.

Lab, Clinical, Studio and Theory Courses

Clock hour requirements for course which consist of a combination of theory, clinical, laboratory, or studio credit should be calculated based upon the credit allocation and equivalencies. See the following example:

**4-credit course: 3 credits of theory with 1 lab credit**

3- theory credits requires 37.5 hours of instructional time, and 75 hours of student work for a total of 112.5 hours. These courses typically have 150 minutes per week of instructional time that accounts for 37.5 hours per semester [(50 minutes x 3 x 15 weeks) ÷ 60 minutes]. The remaining 75 hours (112.5 – 37.5) or the equivalent of 5 hours per week (75 ÷ 15) must be accounted for by student work outside of instructional time.

**plus**

1-lab credit = 3 clock hours: requires 37.5 hours of laboratory instructional time, and 25 hours of student work .

**combined requirements**

*37.5 hours of instructional time + 37.5 hours of laboratory instructional time + 100 hours of student work*

**4-credit, 15-week course requires 6.67 hours of student work per week outside of instructional time.**

Online and Hybrid Courses

Online and hybrid courses must meet the same credit hour requirement as face-to-face courses. Faculty teaching online and hybrid courses must account for 12.5 hours of instructional time and 25 hours of student work for each credit hour. A three credit course requires 112.5 hours of instructional time and student work. 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.