

Marian University Credit Hour Policy and Procedures

Marian University Credit Hour Policy

Credit Hour

The credit hour is the unit of academic credit used by Marian University. Following is the minimally required contact hours for classes and is based on a 15-week semester. Classroom-based courses must meet a minimum of 50 minutes per credit per week. In addition, it is assumed that an additional workload is assigned to equal two hours of coursework outside the classroom for each 50 minutes of meeting time, resulting in a total of 150 minutes per credit per week.

Hybrid, online, and any other non-classroom-based courses must include a combination of instruction, homework, and/or activities requiring student academic engagement that equals a minimum of 170 minutes per credit per week. Courses offered in a compressed format, such as 7-week sessions or Winterim terms, must meet the minimum of 150 minutes per credit per week within the shortened timeframe.

In summary, a credit hour is defined as the learning that takes place in at least 45 hours of learning activities, which may include lectures, class meetings, laboratories, examinations, presentations, tutorials, preparation, reading, studying, hands-on experiences, and other academic work, whether in-person or online. Learning may also be demonstrated through equivalent student performance measures. All for-credit coursework is guided by a qualified instructor and includes regular and substantive student–instructor interaction.

Semester hour credit is awarded only in accordance with the descriptions published in the University Catalog. No credit is given for any course in which a student has not registered.

Academic Engagement

Academic engagement refers to active participation by a student in instructional activity related to the student’s course of study. Engagement is defined by the institution in alignment with state and accreditor requirements. Examples of academic engagement include attending synchronous class sessions, submitting academic assignments, taking assessments, participating in interactive tutorials or webinars, taking part in study groups or group projects assigned by the institution, and interacting with an instructor on academic matters.

Activities that do not qualify as academic engagement include living in institutional housing, participating in meal plans, logging into an online class without further participation, and receiving academic counseling or advisement.

Procedure for Implementing and Monitoring the Credit Hour Policy

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the steps Marian University uses to apply, verify, and monitor compliance with the institutional Credit Hour Policy across all academic programs and course formats.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all undergraduate, graduate, and certificate-level courses across all delivery formats, including classroom-based, hybrid, online, clinical, laboratory, and compressed terms, and applies to all academic departments, faculty, program directors, and curriculum committees.

3. Definitions

A credit hour consists of a minimum of 45 hours of learning activities per credit, equivalent to 150 minutes per week in a standard 15-week semester. Academic engagement includes qualifying instructional activities aligned with federal, state, and accreditor expectations. A compressed term refers to any course delivered in fewer than fifteen weeks, such as 7-week sessions or Winterim.

4. Responsibilities

Faculty and course developers are responsible for creating syllabi that meet or exceed instructional and learning activity requirements, documenting instructional time and academic engagement, and aligning learning activities with course delivery formats. Department Chairs review all syllabi each semester to ensure compliance with the Credit Hour Policy, verify instructional minutes, and require revisions when needed. The CES and GCES Committees evaluate credit-hour calculations during course approval processes and ensure that proposals include sufficient documentation. The Dean of Faculty oversees semesterly syllabus monitoring and confirms compliance reports, while academic programs provide evidence of adherence during their Five-Year Program Review.

5. Procedure Steps

During course development and approval, faculty submit new or revised course proposals including delivery format, instructional minutes, academic engagement, out-of-class expectations, and a syllabus draft. CES/GCES review these materials to confirm that classroom courses meet the minimum 50 minutes per credit per week, all courses meet the total 150 minutes per credit per week requirement, compressed terms include proportionate instructional time, and academic engagement activities align with policy definitions.

For syllabus verification each semester, faculty submit syllabi to their Department Chair, who reviews each syllabus to ensure instructional minutes are accurate, academic engagement is clearly described, online and hybrid courses demonstrate regular and substantive interaction, and compressed terms meet required instructional totals. The Dean of Faculty compiles departmental reports to verify institutional compliance.

Ongoing monitoring includes program-level verification every five years, during which programs demonstrate adherence through representative syllabi, instructional-hour explanations, and documentation of corrective actions. Administrative audits may also be conducted by Institutional Research or academic administration to ensure compliance with federal, accreditor, and state requirements.

6. Documentation Requirements

Required documentation includes course proposals, syllabi, departmental compliance reports, program review materials, and any communications related to corrective actions. These documents are maintained according to university records-retention policies.

7. Corrective Actions

When non-compliance is identified, the Department Chair notifies the instructor and requests revisions within a specified timeframe. Continued non-compliance is escalated to the Dean of Faculty, who may require faculty training, curriculum adjustments, or administrative intervention.

8. Review of Procedure

This procedure is reviewed at least every five years or sooner if regulations change, accreditor expectations evolve, or new instructional formats necessitate updates.