

Credit Hour Definition - Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Credit Hour Policy effective August 23, 2012

At Frederick Community College a credit hour is defined in accordance with the MSCHE Credit Hour Policy as “...An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalence 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 for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester...or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.”

Time Commitment for Academic Success:

At Frederick Community College, in all credit courses, students are expected to invest a minimum of two hours completing out-of-class course work for every hour of instructional time. Instructional time is calculated using 50 minutes as the “hour of instructional time.” For example, in a 3-credit course, students experience at least 37.5 hours of in-class instructional time and should invest a minimum of 75 hours of out-of-class time. In a traditional 15-week, 3-credit course, students should expect to invest an average minimum of 5 hours per week preparing for the course and completing assignments.

Optional replacement language in syllabi for different credits and course formats:

A ____ week, ____ credit course requires a minimum of ____ hours of instructional time and ____ hours of outside course work. Students should expect to invest an average minimum of ____ hours per week preparing for the course and completing assignments.

Examples of modified language:

15-week, 3-credit course

A 15-week, 3-credit course requires a minimum of 37.5 hours of instructional time and 75 hours of outside course work. Students should expect to invest an average minimum of 5 hours per week preparing for the course and completing assignments.

15-week, 4-credit course

A 15-week, 4-credit course requires a minimum of 50 hours of instructional time and 100 hours of outside course work. Students should expect to invest an average minimum of 6.7 hours per week preparing for the course and completing assignments.

15-week, 4-credit laboratory science course

A 15 week, 4-credit laboratory science course requires a minimum of 75 hours of instructional time and 75 hours of outside course work. Students should expect to invest an average minimum of 5 hours per week preparing for the course and completing assignments.

15-week, 3-credit online and hybrid course

A 15-week, 3-credit online or hybrid course requires a combined minimum of 112.5 hours of instructional time and outside course work.

Example of language: At Frederick Community College, in all online credit courses, students are expected to invest a minimum of 37 hours of “time on task” per credit. For example, in a 3-credit online course, students can expect to spend 112 hours for their course work. In a traditional 15-week, 3-credit online course, students should expect to invest an average minimum of 7.5 hours of course work per week.

In a 3-credit hybrid course students are expected to spend at least 18 hours of on-campus instructional time and should invest a minimum of 94 additional hours of “time on task” for course work.

Sample Charts of Time Requirements (adapted from PGCC Credit-hour Guide)

Table 1: Lecture

# of credits	“Instructional Time” (hrs. per week)				Student “out-of-class” time (hrs. per week)			
	15-week	10-week	8-week	5-week	15-week	10-week	8-week	5-week
1	50 min.	1.25	1.5	2.5	1.75	2.5	3.25	5
2	1.5	2.5	3.25	5	3.5	5	6.5	6.75
3	2.5	3.75	4.75	7.5	5	7.5	9.5	15
4	3.25	5	6.5	10	6.75	10	12.75	20
5	4.25	6.25	8.0	12.5	8.5	12.5	16.0	25

Table 2: Other Formats: Combined Instructional Time and Out-of-Class Time

# of credits	Total Time (hrs. per week)			
	15-week	10-week	8-week	5-week
1	2.5	3.75	4.75	7.5
2	5	7.5	9.5	11.75
3	7.5	11.25	14.25	22.5
4	10	15	19	30
5	12.5	18.75	23.75	37.5

Note: Calculations are based on the formula that a 50-minute instructional hour requires two clock hours of student time outside of class. These could be developed for 3-, 6-, 7-, 12-, 13-, 14-week sessions.