

Credit Hour Policy

The University of Scranton complies with Federal (US DOE) and Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE) regulations regarding degree and credit hour requirements. The University of Scranton undergraduate degrees require the satisfactory completion of at least 120 semester credit hours, of which at least 63 credit hours satisfy, but are not exclusive to, fulfillment of general education requirements. Associates degrees require at least 60 semester credit hours. All master's degrees require at least 30 semester credit hours beyond the baccalaureate level. The number of credit hours for a degree beyond a master's degree is determined by the faculty and reflects the recommendation of professional associations or National learned societies.

The University's academic calendar includes an academic year divided into two semesters (fall and spring). Each is approximately 15 weeks in length. Accelerated sessions, such as Intersession and Summer, are variable in length and comply with the established University credit policy. In addition to the nonstandard, accelerated terms of intersession and regular summer, the University has three 16-week "special" terms each academic year for some graduate programs. Each of these special terms is comprised of one full 16-week session, two 8-week sessions and four 4-week sessions designated as "parts-of-term" in the enterprise database. The special term calendar launches using the same start date as the standard fall semester.

The University of Scranton defines a credit hour pursuant to federal guidelines. A credit hour is: *"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:*

1. *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 for a semester or trimester hour, ... 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 such as laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, or other academic work leading to the award of credit hours"* (34 CFR 600.2 as cited in FSA BB, Jan 2013, Vol. 3, p. 3-4; and DCL GEN-11-06).

The University also complies with the established curricular credit regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE): 22 Pa. Code Chapter 31, 31.21-31.22. One semester credit is defined as 14 hours of classroom instruction, exclusive of registration, final examinations and holidays.

Credit Hour Standard by Instructional Method

The University of Scranton measures credit hours using the Carnegie unit; a credit hour is expected to be a reasonable approximation of a minimum amount of student work in accordance with the Carnegie unit. PDE's curricular credit policy allows for determining activities that are the equivalent of classroom instruction. Definitions of The University of Scranton's instructional

methods appear below. For purposes of the definitions below, 50 Carnegie minutes equals 1 hour.

Lecture: courses with multiple students that meet to engage in various forms of group instruction under the direct supervision of a University faculty member. One lecture, seminar, or discussion credit hour represents 1 hour per week of scheduled class/seminar time and a minimum of 2 hours of student preparation time. Lecture courses are typically offered in accordance with the University’s standard block schedule.

Lecture Hours Per Credit

Credits Awarded	Minimum Contact Time Per Week (excluding final exams)	Minimum Contact Time Per Week in Carnegie Hour Minutes (excluding final exams)	Total Instruction Time for a Standard Semester[1] (excluding final exams)	Minimum Total Instruction Time for a Standard Semester in Carnegie Hour Minutes (including final exams)
1	1 hour	50 minutes	14 hours	820 minutes [i.e., 700 minutes of teaching + 120 minutes of final exams]
2	2 hours	100 minutes	28 hours	1520 minutes [i.e., 1400 minutes of teaching + 120 minutes of final exams]
3	3 hours	150 minutes	42 hours	2220 minutes [i.e., 2100 minutes of teaching + 120 minutes of final exams]
4	4 hours	200 minutes	56 hours	2920 minutes [i.e., 2800 minutes of teaching + 120 minutes of final exams]

[1] Standard semester at The University of Scranton is 14 weeks of direct teaching plus 2 literal hours (120 minutes) of final exams. The University considers the “one hour of direct faculty instruction” within the Carnegie unit to be 50 minutes, rather than a literal 60 minutes per hour.

Laboratory and Studio: courses with a focus on experimental learning under the direct supervision of a University faculty member wherein the student performs substantive work in a laboratory or studio setting. One laboratory credit hour represents 1-2 hours per week of scheduled supervised laboratory work and a minimum of 2 hours of student preparation time.

Practicum: a practicum provides students with the opportunity to practice and enhance skills that they have acquired in previous coursework. Practicum coursework may include a mix of didactic, group supervision and clinical hours. One practicum hour is equivalent to approximately 3 or more hours of work per week for 14 weeks.

Education Practica: Student Teaching Practicum: supervised student teaching representing 3 lecture hours and at least 30 classroom hours each week for 14 weeks.

Internships, Clinical/field experience, Residencies, Externships: courses developed for independent learning or experience involving directed and/or self-directed and often off-site learning. The content and learning outcomes are determined by the supervising faculty and the work supervisor at the cooperating site, both of whom must judge and certify different aspects of student's work and completion of agreed upon outcomes and assessment of those outcomes. The University requires a minimum of 14 hours of work for each credit hour earned in these types of experiences.

Accelerated Courses: courses offered in terms of length less than a traditional semester. These courses offer the same semester credit hours as traditional semester-length classes. Within the shortened time-frame, accelerated courses must meet the minimum contact hour requirements of the lecture format and the expectations of student preparation time equal that of a lecture course.

Experiential Learning: credit for experiential learning may be granted to individuals who submit evidence of learning equivalent to University level course objectives/learning outcomes. Considered evidence may include portfolios, summaries of learning experiences, letters from supervisors, CLEP, Excelsior College Examination, ACE-approved credit, portfolio credit, and PONSI credit and/or other materials that clearly illustrate achievement of each course learning outcome. Credit for experiential learning must be comparable in scope, content, academic rigor and student study time as courses offered in a lecture format.

Independent Study: courses of study in which a University faculty member regularly interacts and directs student outcomes with periodic contact. Students must illustrate achievement of the independent study course objectives/learning outcomes in order to receive credit. The student must interact with the faculty member on a regular and substantive basis to assure progress within the course. Semester hour credit awarded must be comparable in scope, content, academic rigor and student study time as courses offered in a lecture format.

Hybrid: Hybrid courses are a combination of face-to-face and online distance learning methods. Contact time is satisfied through face-to-face instruction as well as other methods, such as, but not limited to: a) regular online instruction or interaction with a faculty member once a week for each week the course runs; b) academic engagement through interactive tutorials, group discussions moderated by faculty, virtual study/group projects, engaging with class peers, journals, web-links, discussion board exchanges, chat room activities, blogs, on-line quizzes/exams, video conference, email correspondence, conference calls, etc. c.) computer tutorials graded and reviewed by faculty. Minimum student preparation time expectations equal that of a lecture course.

Online (web-based): courses offered entirely online without regard to face-to-face meetings. These courses have comparable learning outcomes and substantive components of a standard lecture course with alternate delivery methods. Minimum student preparation time expectations equal that of a lecture course. The University follows the definition of Distance Education/Distance Learning consistent with HEOA, PDE and Middle States standards and guidelines for all distance learning degree or certificate programs. Contact time is satisfied through several means which can include, but is not limited to, the following: a) regular online instruction or interaction with a faculty member once a week for each week the course runs; b) academic engagement through interactive tutorials, group discussions moderated by faculty, virtual study/group projects, engaging with class peers, journals, web-links, discussion board exchanges, chat room activities, blogs, on-line quizzes/exams, video conference, email correspondence, conference calls, etc. c.) computer tutorials graded and reviewed by faculty.

Practices to Determine Amount and Level of Credit

The faculty is responsible for the curriculum. Credit values for courses are determined at the department level based upon faculty expertise, instructional method and course objectives. Upon departmental approval, the course undergoes additional evaluation as it moves through the course approval process. Faculty on the Curriculum Committees and the Faculty Senate review each new course and ensure that credit hours are in compliance before voting for approval of these new courses. The Office of the Provost reviews all new courses in order to ensure compliance with credit hours and course learning outcomes before awarding final approval of courses. Changes in curriculum are noted in the University Catalog (updated each July/August) and on the website.

Approved courses are sent to the Registrar's Office for inclusion in Schedule of Classes. The Office of the Registrar regularly audits scheduled course offerings to ensure compliance with credit hour requirements through its process for scheduling each semester. Discrepancies are brought to the attention of the appropriate department for correction.