

Credit Hour Policy and Scheduling Guidelines

1. Policy

Except as otherwise described in the “Specific Guidelines” below, all credit courses offered by the College of Engineering, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Professional Studies, and School Of Business are normally expected to meet for 50 minutes per credit hour per week during a fifteen-week semester; courses scheduled in shorter sessions (e.g. Summer Sessions; Fast Forward; Graduate Business; Online programs, etc.) must meet for an equal amount of time over the shorter period. The Villanova School of Law has its own credit hour policy; however, courses offered by College of Engineering, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Professional Studies, and School of Business as part of programs offered in partnership with the Villanova School of Law will comply with the University’s Credit Hour Policy. Consistent with the policies of the federal government and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, credit courses are normally expected to include approximately 100 minutes of out-of-class student work (or the reasonable equivalent) per credit hour per week during a fifteen-week semester; with reasonably equivalent amounts of out-of-class work for shorter sessions.

Exceptions to the credit hour requirements in this Policy will be allowed for academic activities that require reasonably equivalent work and are important to learning and teaching goals. Such exceptions to the credit hour requirements in this Policy must be approved by the Dean of the college or school and the Provost. Class schedules must be approved and developed in accordance with the following specific guidelines.

2. Specific Guidelines

- A minimum of 100 minutes of science lab or clinical practice per week in a fifteen-week semester generally counts for one credit.
- Three-credit graduate courses and Senior Seminars normally will be expected to meet a minimum of 120 minutes per week rather than 150, because of the higher expectations for work outside of class time
- Courses offered entirely online and courses with online components may use viewing video lectures and participation in blogging, discussion boards, etc. that are relevant to the learning and teaching goals of the course to count as part of class time.
- Course meetings that are conducted as non-science labs, oral presentations, studio sessions, rehearsals or other course-based activities will generally be granted one credit for a minimum of 50 minutes of meeting time per week (or the cumulative equivalent over a semester) as long as they are central to the course’s learning and teaching goals in the syllabus.
- Exceptions to the class time requirements in this Policy will be allowed only when (i) the course requires academic activity outside class meetings sufficiently in excess of the normal expectation (100 minutes per credit hour per week) to compensate for the reduced time in class; and (ii) the rationale for the exception is manifest in the course syllabus and clearly shown to be materially relevant to the course’s learning goals. Such courses will typically be either research-intensive (where students are undertaking an independent course of research over and above assigned reading) or have an experiential, clinical or service-learning component or be an approved independent study; in any case, such courses will depend on close monitoring by the instructor of the nature, quality, and quantity of the work done outside scheduled classroom hours.
- A syllabus for each course should contain a clear description of class meeting times and any approved or required non-classroom activities.

3. Time and Day Patterns

Standard Daytime Sequences

1	MWF 0830-0920 OR MW 0800-0915
2	MWF 0935-1025
3	MWF 1040-1130
4	MWF 1145-1235
5	MWF 1250-1340
6	MWF 1355-1445 OR MW 1355-1510
7	MW 1520-1635
8	MW 1645-1800
9	TR 0830-0945
10	TR 1000-1115
11	TR 1130-1245
12	TR 1300-1415
13	TR 1430-1545
14	TR 1600-1715

Standard Evening Sequences

UG 1 day/week
M/T/W/R 1815 - 2055

UG 2 day/week
MW or TR 1815 - 1930
MW or TR 1945 - 2100

Graduate 1 day/week
M/T/W/R 1720 - 1920
M/T/W/R 1930 - 2130
M/T/W/R 1815 - 2115
M/T/W/R 1815 - 2045
M/T/W/R 1815 - 2115

4. Departmental/Program Guidelines

Departmental Guidelines for Course Scheduling

- Departments must adhere to the standard time sequences. This ensures compliance with class time meeting requirements (50 minutes per credit per week).
- Departments should balance daytime course offerings evenly across the 14 standard time sequences. For example, a department should divide the total number of daytime courses they are offering by 14, the number of standard time sequences. Included in the total number of courses should be any graduate level courses offered during daytime sequences. To arrive at the maximum number of courses permitted in any one time sequence, round down to the nearest whole number. Once the department has filled all of the sequences with this number they would be allowed to add additional courses evenly across the sequences, as needed.

5. Implementation

- Each college or school is responsible for reviewing and monitoring existing courses and proposed new courses (including any online or hybrid courses offered by such college or school) to confirm compliance with the requirements of this Policy.
- Prior to submitting any course for which an exception is required to the University Registrar, the college or school will submit a written description of the course and a summary of the reasons for the requested suggestion to the Dean of such college or school for approval, and, if approved, to the Provost for approval. Approved exceptions will be submitted to the University Registrar with a copy of the approvals and the written course description and summary of reasons for the exception.

- In consultation with the Dean of the college or school, the Provost will approve exceptions to the credit hour requirements of this Policy.
- The University Registrar is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Policy and these guidelines through the regular course scheduling process.

Recommended by the

- Credit Hour Task Force on April 13, 2015
- Academic Policy Committee on April 23, 2015
- Council of Deans on April 23, 2015

Approved by the VPAA on April 27, 2015

Technical Updates Approved by Provost and Council of Deans on September 28, 2023

6. References

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. October 30, 2012. *Credit Hour Policy*. See:

<https://msche.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#46000000ZDJj/a/46000000XprZ/9QoYhBwk.X.JTjSqSgv4dqTw83Rvhz7rJbVZB5IEUIQ>

Georgetown University. January 28, 2011. *Scheduling Policies and Guidelines*.

Title 22, Education, of the Pennsylvania Code, 22 Pa. Code §§ 31.21-31.22