

Credit Hour Policy

Introduction

The Rockhurst University academic year is divided into two semesters, Fall and Spring, of approximately 16 weeks each. Summer semesters are variable in length. Semester-length as well as accelerated sessions are offered during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

Credit Hour

The semester credit hour is the basic unit of academic credit used by Rockhurst University. The semester credit hour at Rockhurst University is defined as 50 minutes of faculty classroom instruction time per week for 16 weeks (no less than 750 minutes or 12.5 hours total per credit hour), and a minimum of two hours of student preparation time outside of the classroom each week per credit hour. An equivalent amount of work is required for other academic activities at Rockhurst University including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

The measure of instructional contact time may be adjusted to reflect different formats of study or lengths of academic sessions. These adjustments are reflective of the intended student outcomes and established equivalencies of the credit hour set by Rockhurst University and reasonably reflect the requirements established by the Department of Education Program Integrity Regulations published October 29, 2010.

Contact Hour Standards by Instructional Method separate

- I. **Lecture and Seminar** – courses with multiple students that meet to engage students in various forms of group instruction. Typical 3 credit hour course will meet 2,250 minutes.

Minimum hours required per week for 16 weeks:

- 1 credit hour = 50 contact minutes
- 2 credit hours = 100 contact minutes
- 3 credit hours = 150 contact minutes
- 4 credit hours = 200 contact minutes

- II. **Lecture/lab** – courses with multiple students consisting mainly of various forms of group instruction but with a component regularly devoted to lab/activity experience.

Minimum credit hour requirements are determined for weeks of lab/activity on a 2:1 lab contact minutes to lecture contact minutes ratio. In addition the minimum requirement for lecture contact time is calculated based on weeks of instruction time. Each department may determine contact time over the minimum requirement as needed.

- III. **Lab** – courses where the major focus is on “hands on” experience. Minimum contact time is based on 2 times the amount of contact time of a lecture (2:1 ratio). One semester credit hour is awarded for the equivalent of fifteen periods of lab activity consisting of a minimum 100 minutes in duration. Each department may determine contact time over the minimum as needed.

- IV. **Studio** – courses taught on a private or semi-private basis or involve an integrated teaching and learning methodology are taught on a minimum 2:1 ratio. (ex. 1 credit = 100 minutes per week for fifteen weeks).
- V. **Internships, Practicum/field experience, clinical** – courses developed for independent learning or experience involving self-directed and often off- site learning. These courses are taught on a minimum 2:1 ration. (ex. 1 credit = 100 minutes per week for fifteen weeks).
- VI. **Independent Studies, Readings, Research** – courses of study given instructor guidance followed by regularly scheduled conferences with instructor with periodic and final evaluation by instructor. Minimum credit hour requirements are determined for weeks of lab/activity on a 2:1 lab contact minutes to lecture contact minutes ratio. In addition the minimum requirement for lecture contact time is calculated based on weeks of instruction time. Each department may determine contact time over the minimum requirement as needed.
- VII. **Accelerated Courses** – courses offered in a shortened format (less than 16 weeks). These courses hold the same total credit hours as traditional semester length courses. Accelerated courses will, at a minimum, meet the contact requirements of traditional semester length courses. (see I. above)
- VIII. **Web or Distance Based Courses** – courses where “instructors interact with students in the same physical space for less than 75% of the instructional time with the remainder of the instructional time provided through distance education.” These courses will require a minimum 12.5 hours (750 minutes) per credit hour of active course time to include writing, responding, discussion of student-written case studies and analysis. Readings of instructor postings, lectures, assigned case studies, course-related videos and posted discussion as well as articles are also included. (Above explanation in quotation marks is from the Commission’s distance education protocol.)