

# PL- ACADEMIC-022: Credit Hours

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## Source / Authority

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This policy was developed by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs in close collaboration with the university colleges and academic programs.

The office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

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## Purpose

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The purpose of the credit hours policy is to establish standards for assigning credit hours to courses or other academic activities based on expected student work and to provide guidance to program Faculty and Curriculum Committees in determining the amount of credit hours that academic programs award for courses or other type of academic activities at Qatar University.

The credit hours policy ensures that the university employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount of credit awarded for courses or academic activities.

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## Who Should Know This Policy

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- President
- Vice President
- Legal Advisor
- Dean
- Director / Departmental Head
- Faculty
- Accounting/ Finance Personnel
- Student
- All Employees

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## **Policy Description**

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The credit hours policy at Qatar University defines the university standards and regulations for assigning credit hours to courses and other academic activities. The main purpose of this policy is to ensure that the assignment of credit hours at Qatar University conforms to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

Qatar University operates on a semester system including the Fall and Spring semesters and the Summer term. Semesters normally consist of fifteen weeks including fourteen weeks of direct instructional time followed by two additional final examination weeks. In some programs of study, courses may be scheduled for parts of terms different from a normal semester.

A credit hour provides the basis for measuring the amount of work expected of a typical student inside and/or outside the classroom during the Fall or Spring semesters or the equivalent amount of work during a different amount of time such as during the Summer term.

Credit Hours are assigned in accordance with the standard system of student contact hours. Typically, a one credit hour course requires 1 contact hour of classroom time per week during the semester. In non-traditional courses such as Internship courses, an equivalent amount of time and work as specified in this policy is required.

The assignment of credit hours depends on the type of instruction and academic activities being used. The following ten general categories represent the main types of instruction and academic activities that are awarded credit at the university: (1) Lecture; (2) Laboratory; (3) Independent Study; (4) Internship; (5) Field Work; (6) Studio Work; (7) Clinical Practice; (8) Preceptorship; (9) Seminars; and (10) Online / Hybrid.

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## **Definitions**

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### **Definition of Credit Hour**

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

1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practical, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

### **Definition of Contact Hour**

A Contact Hour is defined as 50 minutes of instruction time.

## **Main Types of Instruction and Academic Activities Awarded Credit**

- 1. Lecture.** Lecture type of instruction is a standard classroom instruction focusing on theory under the direct supervision of an instructor.
- 2. Laboratory.** Laboratory instruction focuses on experimentation in a classroom or laboratory under the direct supervision of an instructor.
- 3. Independent Study.** Independent study provide students with the opportunity to explore an area of interest in great details under the direct supervision and direction of a faculty with whom there is periodic contact and consultation throughout the study. Independent study includes Thesis and Project courses.
- 4. Internship or Externships.** Internship or externship offer students the opportunity to develop their job skills by providing them with a structured employment situation that is directly related to, and coordinated with, their program of study.
- 5. Field Work.** Field work is an academic activity that is conducted in the context of a course either on a weekly basis or by dedicating a specific amount of time for this activity. Field work is defined as any practical work carried out by students in the field as opposed to the classroom or laboratory. Field work provide students with the opportunity to apply theory learned in class in a real world environment.
- 6. Studio Work.** Studio Work provides student with the opportunity to study and learn in a studio setting under the supervision of an instructor.
- 7. Clinical Practice.** Clinical Practice is conducted in the learning environment at the university but may include out-of-class assignments. It offers an experience-based instruction for the purpose of developing skills related to the discipline focused on “real world” activities that may be offered in a simulated “real world” environment generally in healthcare or service occupation programs. Clinical practice instruction is conducted under the direct supervision of an instructor.
- 8. Preceptor ship.** Preceptor ship is an experience-based instruction conducted in a real world environment under the supervision of a healthcare professional for the purpose of enhancing occupational competencies. Preceptorship is offered in the context of a course where the course instructor consults and closely collaborates with the healthcare professional particularly in determining the clinical assignments for students.
- 9. Seminars:** Seminars are conducted in the context of a course under the supervision of a seminar course instructor or coordinator. Each seminar lecture may be offered by a different instructor or speaker and different subjects may be discussed in each lecture. A seminar course covers advanced topics related to the student's major.
- 10. Online Courses:** are those in which 50% or more of the content is delivered online or in an electronic format using web-based tools.
- 11. Hybrid/blended Course:** is a combination of face-to-face instruction with web- based instruction. In a hybrid/blended course, more than 25% but less than 50% of the course learning is online.

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## **Policy Statements**

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1. This credit hour policy applies to all courses at all levels (undergraduate and graduate) that award academic credit counting towards graduation requirements regardless of the mode of delivery of the course.
2. Exception to the standards set by this policy may be granted in order to comply with discipline or accreditation specific requirements.
3. The credit hour definition and requirements as specified in this policy represent a minimum standard that does not restrict a program of study from setting a higher standard that requires more student work per credit hour.

4. Determination of credit hours shall be made by faculty in accordance with the definition of a credit hour as described in this policy and in conformity with common accepted practices in higher education, guidelines of professional bodies and accrediting agencies.
5. The amount of credit hours assigned to a course is to be determined based on the amount of work a typical student is expected to complete within a specified amount of academically engaged time to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
6. Determination of credit hours is made when a new course or a revision to an existing course is proposed. The submitted course details or syllabus are to be examined for contact time as well as for assignments and evaluation mechanisms.
7. Courses that have less structured classroom schedules, such as research seminars, independent studies, internships, studio work, or any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours, at a minimum, should state clearly learning objectives and expected outcomes and workload expectations that meet the standards defined in this policy.
8. Credit hours may not be divided. Thus, one-half credit hours may not be granted to courses.
9. All Curriculum related committees within the university at the program, college, or university levels are charged with the application of the policy on credit hours in their review and recommendation for approval of all courses and for certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the credit hour standard.
10. The Scheduling office at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs responsible for creating the schedule for each semester and for the summer term shall ensure that the schedule is in compliance with the present policy and should notify the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for any case of non-compliance.
11. To ensure that standards for assigning credit hours are maintained, Qatar University has adopted the guidelines recorded in the table below for the assignment of credit hours. The table below indicates the minimum amount of time and work required for the assignment of one credit hour for the different types of instruction and academic activities as defined in this policy.

Type of Instruction / Academic Activity	Minimum Required Time for the Assignment of (1) Credit Hour	
	Classroom Instruction Time	Out of Class Time
Lecture	50 min (per week)	2 h 00 min
Laboratory	2 h 00 min (per week)	-
Independent Study	3 h (per week) in instruction and/or out of class time	
Internships	40 h ( <i>per semester</i> ) in instruction and/or out of class time	
Field Work	-	3 h (per week or equivalent)
Studio Work	2 h 00 min (per week)	2 h 00 min
Clinical Practice	2 h 00 min (per week)	-
Preceptor	40 h ( <i>per semester</i> ) in instruction and/or out of class time	
Lecture / Seminars	50 min (per week)	2 h 00 min
Online / Hybrid Courses	50 min (per week)	2 h 00 min