

Butler University

Unit of Instruction – the Semester Credit Hour

Semester Credit Hour is the unit used to measure course work. The number of semester credit hours assigned to a course reflects the outcomes expected, the mode of instruction, scheduled in-class time, additional formal meeting times, and the amount of outside preparatory work expected for the class.

A Semester Credit hour is generally equivalent to one lecture per week or between two to four hours of laboratory work per week if the laboratory is a stand-alone class that is not associated with a lecture. Students are expected to work an average of two hours outside of class for every hour spent in the classroom for a ground-based, face-to-face lecture class. At Butler University, it is typical for the Semester Credit hours associated with a class to include both the required lecture and the laboratory class times.

The academic year at Butler consists of two semesters approximately 14 weeks in length and two seven-week summer sessions. Most degree programs require an average of 15 semester hours each semester for eight semesters.

The Federal definition states that "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;
2. Or at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work and other academic work leading toward the awarding of credit hours." 34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)

Butler University Equivalencies of the Credit Hour

The institutionally established equivalencies to the Federal definition of the credit hour at Butler University are below. These standards apply to both undergraduate and graduate courses.

1. For each semester hour of credit, classes that meet in a face-to-face format must include one 50-minute period with the instructor and two hours of outside of class work (e.g. class preparation, homework, projects, etc.) for 14 weeks.
 - 1 credit hour = 50 minutes contact + 120 minutes outside classroom work over 14 weeks for a total of 2,380 minutes of student effort.
 - Classes meeting for less than 14 weeks must adjust their weekly instructor contact hours, and outside classroom work accordingly.
2. Classes that do not have the required face-to-face contact time (for example, hybrid or online courses) meet the credit hour standard if they meet one of the following criteria:
 - The course covers the same material in the same depth as a face-to-face version of the same course.

- The course has been evaluated by the department and college for content and rigor, and the department and college have approved the semester hour credit to be awarded.
3. Any off-cycle course must be equivalent in both contact and outside work totals as a semester-length course. If outside work is not assigned, lost hours must be made up through additional contact time.

Lecture Classes

The typical lecture class carries 3 semester hours and requires students to spend 3 hours per week in class with an additional six hours per week spent outside of class. The estimated total time of engagement would be 126 hours per semester. At Butler University, it is typical for the Semester Credit hours associated with a class to include both the required lecture and the laboratory class times.

Laboratory Classes

Laboratory classes associated with lecture classes (i.e., not stand-alone laboratory classes), are considered as in class engagement without the expectation of outside preparation or assignments.

Studio | Applied Music Classes

Studio and applied music class semester credit hours may range from one to three semester credit hours. Studio and applied music classes may have the expectation of practice or creative work preparation outside of instructor contact time dependent on the discipline. Further, studio classes may include preparation for and presentation of creative activities to include production, performance, exhibition or concert. The overall estimated time of engagement exceeds the semester credit hours awarded.

Clinical and Field Experiences

For clinical and field experiences, the hours per week are a combination of experience and engagement within the discipline and the semester credit hour may range from one to twelve. The experiences are supervised by professionals in the field of study and oversight is provided by professors in related disciplines.

Internship and Practicum Classes

For internship and practicum classes, the semester credit hour may range from one to six. Internship and practicum classes are supervised by professionals in the field with oversight by professors in related disciplines. The overall estimated time of engagement may exceed the semester credit hour awarded.

Independent Study Classes

For independent study classes, the semester credit hours may range from one to three dependent on the depth and rigor of the project as determined by the professor of record. The overall estimated time of engagement may exceed the semester credit hour awarded.