

Howard University Credit Hour Assignment Policy

The Credit Hour Assignment Policy is intended to ensure that the number credits awarded per each transferable course reflects Howard University's academic rigor and contact hour requirement. University transfer credit hour values are based on the credit hour value assigned by the originating institution and the appropriate conversion is made to yield semester credit hours when deemed necessary. If the academic calendar of the originating institution is not following a semester system, the appropriate conversion of the assessed credit hours of course work will take place based on the calendar of the originating institution and the formula for converting to semester credit hours. (Quarter hours are multiplied by .667 to convert them to semester hours)

The Office of Admission and Office of the Registrar evaluate General Education courses. Core courses are subject to the approval of the individual schools and colleges and are submitted via the Advanced Standing form to the Office of the Registrar. Credit hours are submitted to reflect the initial values and converted in the Office of the Registrar if necessary.

Graduate level courses are subject to the same policy but may differ per academic program accreditation requirements.

Semester Calendar Credit Hours

Definition of a Credit Hour

In accordance with federal regulations, 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:

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;
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Contact hour or clock hour: A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students.

Credit or credit hour: A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma or certificate, or other award.)

Howard University operates on an academic year divided into two semesters of 15-16 weeks, with a winter break of 2-3 weeks and a summer session of 10-12 weeks, plus additional shorter breaks. The actual amount of academic work that goes into a single semester credit hour is calculated as follows:

- One lecture (taught) or seminar (discussion) credit hour represents 1 hour per week of scheduled class/seminar time and 2 hours of student preparation time. Most lecture and seminar courses are awarded 3 credit hours. Over an entire semester, this formula represents at least 45 hours of class time and 90 hours of student preparation.

- One laboratory credit hour represents 1 hour per week of lecture or discussion time plus 1-2 hours per week of scheduled supervised or independent laboratory work, and 2 hours of student preparation time. Most laboratory courses are awarded up to 4 credit hours. This calculation represents at least 45 hours of class time, between 45 and 90 hours of laboratory time, and 90 hours of student preparation per semester.
- One practice credit hour (supervised clinical rounds, visual or performing art studio, supervised student teaching, field work, etc.) represents 3-4 hours per week of supervised and /or independent practice. This in turn represents between 45 and 60 hours of work per semester. Blocks of 3 practice credit hours, which equate to a studio or practice course, represent between 135 and 180 total hours of academic work per semester.
- One independent study (thesis or dissertation research) hour is calculated similarly to practice credit hours.
- Internship or apprenticeship credit hours are determined by negotiation between the supervising faculty and the work supervisor at the cooperating site, both of whom must judge and certify different aspects of the student's work. The credit formula is similar to that for practice credit.

A typical bachelor's degree program of study on a semester calendar requires at least 120 credit hours to be earned by the student. Normal full-time registration is usually 15 credit hours per semester or 30 per academic year (shortfalls can be made up in summer sessions or independent study). This roughly translates into at least 30-40 courses (depending on the major subject and thus the proportion of types of credit hours earned) and represents at least 5,400 – and probably more – actual hours of dedicated academic work for a non-science or non-art concentration, and well over that total for graduates of programs in the sciences, engineering, fine arts, or performing arts. A master's degree program requiring at least 33 credit hours and including a research thesis or project represents over 4,000 actual hours of supervised and unsupervised (independent research) study, while a doctoral program can represent 8,000 or more actual hours of advanced study and research beyond the master's degree.