



Guidelines: Clock Hours, Credit Hours, and Out-Of-Class Work

Federal regulation requires the ACEN to:

1. Conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of an institution's assignment of credit hours as part of its review of a nursing program; and
2. Make a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

Programs Utilizing Clock Hours:

The U.S. Department of Education and federal regulation allow programs to use a combination of classroom/direct faculty instruction and acceptable, documented student work outside of class and/or instructional hours.

1. For programs applying semester/trimester credit hours, up to 7.5 clock hours may include acceptable and documented student work outside of class. For each 30 clock hours of instruction, the maximum amount of out-of-class assignments permitted is 7.5 hours. *(Example: If a course has 90 clock hours, divide 90 by 30, which is 3 credits. Multiply 3 by 7.5, which is 22.5 clock hours of out-of-class time per course. If it is a 15-week course, it is 1.5 hours per week. If it is an 8-week course, it is 2.8 hours per week.)*
2. For programs applying quarter credit hours, up to 5.0 clock hours may include acceptable and documented student work outside of class. For each 20 clock hours of instruction, the maximum amount of out-of-class assignments permitted is 5.0 clock hours. *(Example: If a course has 80 clock hours, divide 80 by 20, which is 4 credits. Multiply 4 by 5, which is 20 clock hours of out-of-class time per course. If it is a 15-week course, it is 1.3 hours per week. If it is an 8-week course, it is 2.5 hours per week.)*

All Programs (Clinical Doctorate, Master's, Baccalaureate, Associate, Diploma, and Practical):

The ACEN must recognize student out-of-class work assigned by a program. Therefore, the program/institution must provide the following information in its Self-Study Report and/or Follow-Up Report.

1. When applicable, the institution's policy related to credit-to-clock-hour conversion and documentation showing the application of this policy to the nursing program.
2. Documentation demonstrating the types of evaluation methods used to evaluate students'

academic achievement for both in-class and out-of-class learning activities. (Criterion 4.7)

3. Documentationsuch as a syllabus for each subject/course in the nursing program.
 - a) The documentation must clearly identify how the students are expected to show engagement in out-of-class learning activities equivalent to the required number of hours per week. See The Carnegie Unit a Century-Old Standard in a Changing Education Landscape: http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Carnegie_Unit_Report.pdf
 - b) Student out-of-class learning activities must be justified in terms of their contribution to the objectives/outcomes of each course and the nursing program's student learning outcomes. Student out-of-class learning activities may include:
 - Reading and writing assignments,
 - Projects,
 - Clearly defined papers or reports,
 - Practice or practical application of theory, and/or
 - Other learning experiences.
4. The documentation must provide appropriate content and student out-of-class learning activities to support the academic credit awarded for the course. It is the responsibility of the program/institution to demonstrate that equivalent instructional and additional outside preparation hours are accounted in programs that deliver instruction online or through non-traditional means.

Site visitors must make a professional judgment as to whether student out-of-class learning activities are justified in terms of their contribution to the objectives/outcomes of each course and the nursing program's student learning outcomes.