

McDaniel College Credit Hour Policy

I. PURPOSE

This policy articulates the standards for assignment and application of credit hours to all courses and programs of study at McDaniel College.

Background:

McDaniel College complies with and endorses the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE) regulations pertaining to degree requirements. McDaniel has adopted the credit hour as the unit of measure for instruction and requires the successful completion of at least 128 semester credit hours for a baccalaureate degree. All graduate degrees require a minimum of 30 semester credit hours.

McDaniel College follows the [Federal definition](#) of a credit hour, which states:

Credit hour: Except as provided in [34 CFR 668.8\(k\)](#) and [\(l\)](#), a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that -

(1) Reasonably approximates not less than -

(i) 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 for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or

(ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; and

(2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

McDaniel also follows section 13b.02.02.16 of the Code of Maryland ([COMAR](#)) which says:

Credit Hours.

(1) An in-State institution shall award 1 credit hour for:

(a) A minimum of 15 hours, of 50 minutes each of actual class time, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays;

(b) A minimum of 30 hours, of 50 minutes each of supervised laboratory or studio time, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays;

(c) A minimum of 45 hours, of 50 minutes each of instructional situations such as practica, internships, and cooperative education placements, when supervision is ensured and learning is documented; or

(d) Instruction delivered by electronic media based on the equivalent outcomes in student learning in §D(1)(a) of this regulation, and may include a combination of telelessons, classroom instruction, student consultation with instructors, and readings, when supervision is ensured and learning is documented.

II. MCDANIEL CREDIT HOUR POLICY

Principles for Applying Credit Hour Assignments - Instructional Time and Student Effort

The following guidelines are intended to assure compliance across the various course delivery formats offered by the institution while providing the opportunity for faculty to exercise academic freedom in teaching to achieve the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the specific course most effectively.

1. Regardless of modality (face-to-face, online, or hybrid), every unit of credit is understood to represent a specified number of hours of student effort per week on the part of the average student, independent of the length of the course (in the context of a term, session or semester). Student effort includes direct instructional time, instructional equivalent activities, plus the student's independent learning work which can include reading, homework, and other assignments and activities. Therefore, student effort related to credits includes learning efforts inside and outside of the classroom.

2. Most courses represent a preset number of direct instructional hours per week and an approximate number of hours of student effort outside of direct instruction. The college also recognizes the use of instructional equivalent activities as appropriate teaching and learning strategies and can be used across modalities. See Instructional Equivalent Activities for Standardizing Academic Credit (below) for definitions and rates of equivalency.

3. An equivalent amount of work is required in courses and academic activities where direct instruction is not the primary mode of learning, such as online and blended courses, laboratory work, independent study, internships, practica, studio work, etc. Credits will be awarded on the basis of documented learning objectives, expected learning outcomes, and student workload expectations within a specified period of academically engaged time in accordance with the federal and state regulations. See section III. Course Components and Assignment of Instructional Time.

	Minimum Required Weekly & Total Instructional Time or Instructional Equivalency Activity per COMAR	Scheduled Weekly & Total Instructional Time based on McDaniel Calendar (14 weeks instructional time)	Additional Required Instructional Equivalent Activity (14 weeks instructional time)
1 credit	50 minutes/week & 750 minutes total	60 minutes/week & 840 minutes total	0
2 credits	100 minutes week & 1500 minutes total	120 minutes/week & 1680 minutes total	0
3 credits	150 minutes/week & 2,250 minutes total	180 minutes/week & 2,520 minutes total	0
4 credits	200 minutes/week & 3,000 minutes total	180 minutes/week & 2,520 minutes total	35 minutes/week & 480 minutes total

*McDaniel undergraduate face-to-face courses are generally 4 credits. In most cases, 4-credit face-to-face courses meet three times per week for 60 minutes, two times per week for 90 minutes, or once a week for 180 minutes. Some courses have additional required meeting time for labs or other scheduled face-to-face activities. Any course which meets less than the minimum required direct instructional time in the chart above is expected to implement instructional equivalent activities (IEA) to reach the minimum average required weekly direct instructional time. This additional instructional equivalent activity should be clearly outlined in the course syllabus expectations. See list of **Instructional Equivalent Activities** (Addendum A).*

III. DEFINITIONS OF COURSE COMPONENTS AND ASSIGNMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Credit hours for learning shall be determined based on instructional time ratios related to the identified course components which align to COMAR. Please note instructional time can be direct or a combination of direct contact instruction combined with instructional equivalency activities. Course components are maintained in the scheduling system by the Registrar's Office for the purpose of meeting minimum instructional activity as required by COMAR.

- (a) A minimum of 15 hours, of 50 minutes each of actual class time
- (b) A minimum of 30 hours, of 50 minutes each of supervised laboratory or studio time,
- (c) A minimum of 45 hours, of 50 minutes each of instructional situations such as practica, internships, and cooperative education placements, when supervision is ensured, and learning is documented.

See **Component Definitions and Assignment of Instructional Time** (Addendum B).

IV. CONVERSION OF INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIVALENT ACTIVITY (IEA)

The term “instructional equivalent activity” (IEA) is synonymous with “in-class” and “direct faculty instruction” particularly in a residential or blended course. One important point is that the IEA is not the amount of time that faculty spend teaching the course but rather the amount of time a student would be engaged in this faculty-directed/engaged activity. Methods such as discussion boards, exams, and chats can serve as instructional time.

See list of *Instructional Equivalent Activities* (Addendum A).

V. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND STANDARD AND NON-STANDARD MEETING PATTERNS

McDaniel has two standard undergraduate semesters (fall and spring) which are 15 weeks with a week of final exams. Graduate level offers two full 16-week semesters and includes two 8-week sessions. Winter term is 3 weeks in length and summer term is 12-weeks with two 8-week sessions (graduate) and two 6-week sessions (undergraduate and select graduate programs). Other variations are approved on a case-by-case basis by the Provost and Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies.

See *Minimum Instructional Time per Credit Hour by Session Length* (Addendum C).

The McDaniel Academic Calendar is available at:

Undergraduate : <https://catalog.mcdaniel.edu/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=3148>

Graduate: <https://catalog.mcdaniel.edu/content.php?catoid=49&navoid=3289>

Consumer Information Page - <https://www.mcdaniel.edu/about-us/consumer-information>

Events Calendar - <https://www.mcdaniel.edu/about-us/event-calendars>

Standard Meeting Patterns:

Standard face-to-face (onsite) meeting patterns (i.e., MWF, TuTh), have been established based on the minimum instructional requirements outlined in this policy.

M-W-F – 60 minutes with 10-minute break for students to travel from class to class

T-Th – 90 minutes with 10-minute break for students to travel from class to class.

Once a week (any weekday) –180 minutes with 10-minute break for students to travel from class to class.

Standard meeting patterns are maintained in the scheduling system by the Registrar's Office and assigned to individual classes by department chairs and program coordinators. In instances where standard meeting patterns are not assigned, (i.e., practica, internships, field studies, research, independent study), faculty and program administrators will determine the appropriate amount of instructional time as well as out of class student work requirements. (Undergraduate Class Times/Daily Schedule Document found in Addendum D)

VI. DEFINITIONS OF PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY

- **On campus** (also called on-site) – 80% or more of the courses require on campus attendance. The program may utilize a variety of course modalities to include hybrid, face-to-face, online asynchronous, and online webinar. The location where students meet can be on the McDaniel campus or at an approved instructional site.
- **Hybrid** – 50% or more of the program courses require on campus attendance, the remaining instruction takes place online. The program may utilize a variety of course modalities to include hybrid, face-to-face, online asynchronous, and online webinar. The location where students meet can be on the McDaniel campus or at an approved instructional site. Some programs may require a weekly on-campus requirement while other models may have a residency requirement where students are required to come to campus for an intense learning experience that can range from several days to two weeks.
- **Online** – 100% of the program can be completed online without the need to ever visit campus. Online courses can be asynchronous or may require synchronous virtual meetings using Teams or Zoom.

VII. Course Instructional Modality Descriptions

- **Face-to-Face (on site).** Between 80%-100% of class sessions meet in-person in a physical space. Some course material, assignments, activities, and tests may be hosted online. (Lecture)
- **Hybrid.** Between 50% and 80% of class sessions meet in-person in a physical meeting space with the remaining class sessions meeting online. Online sessions are usually asynchronous but may be synchronous in some cases using Teams or Zoom. Dates and times of required synchronous sessions will be published. (Hybrid)
- **Online Asynchronous.** 100% of course content, activities, and assessments, as well as class discussions and interactions (student-student and student-faculty) are completed online. No synchronous meetings are required. Students will not be required to come to campus at any time to participate in the course.
- **Online Bisynchronous.** 100% of course content, activities, and assessments, as well as class discussions and interactions (student-student and student-faculty) are completed virtually, some synchronous online meetings may be scheduled using Teams or Zoom. In such cases, these dates and times will be published before registration. Attendance at synchronous sessions is a requirement of the course.

Regardless of mode of instruction, courses should be consistent in terms of quality, assessment, learning outcomes, requirements, etc. as courses offered face-to-face (onsite) with the same department prefix, number, and course title. Faculty must demonstrate active academic engagement through interactive methods, including but not limited to, interactive tutorials, group discussions, virtual study/project groups, discussion boards, chat rooms, journals/blogs, etc.

Credit hours assigned to a course delivered online must equal the number of credit hours for the same course delivered face-to-face (onsite).

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL

While faculty and program administrators are responsible for the development of curriculum as well as the assignment of credit hours, all courses and programs (new and/or revised) follow a structured curriculum approval process beginning within the academic department, then to the undergraduate and graduate college curriculum committees. Credit hour assignments are reviewed at each step. The Registrar is an ex-officio member of both curriculum committees to act as an advisor to policy compliance. All courses and programs that gain the approval of the curriculum committees must then be approved by the full faculty and then are submitted to the Registrar's Office for inclusion in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs and the Schedule of Classes. New programs also require Provost, President, and Board of Trustee approval. All new and substantive changes to programs also require Maryland Higher Education Commission approval prior to implementation.

Additionally, the Registrar's Office adheres to the Academic Calendar, standard and non-standard meeting patterns guidelines, and established course components across all modes of instruction including online and hybrid courses. When a scheduled course falls outside of the approved standard meeting schedule, the Registrar requests a review and approval of the Provost office.

The academic calendar is developed by a calendar committee made up of the Registrar, Provost, Dean of Faculty, Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies and Associate VP of Student Success and is moved to McDaniel's leadership and President for final approval. This committee ensures that the required number of instructional days are included on the calendar. Offerings that do not follow the standard 15-week pattern are reviewed to ensure the minimum number of instructional hours are met.

Policy review cycle: Every three years

Policy Administrator: Provost

Policy Approved by President

Addendum A

Instructional Equivalent Activities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RATE OF EQUIVALENCY
Blogs, Journals, Logs	Opportunity for students to apply learned concepts or reflect on learning experiences; learned concepts to be shared with instructor and/or classmates for thoughtful analysis, feedback and assessment.	1 private posting = ½ hour instruction; 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates' postings) = 1 hour instruction
Case Studies, Problem Solving Scenarios, and Virtual Labs	In-depth analysis requiring utilization of higher order analytical skills which relate to course objectives and is shared with instructor and/or classmates for feedback and assessment.	1 case study analysis & post = 1-2 hours instruction
Conferences (group)	Under instructor's guidance, students participate in collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation & feedback (including exam reviews).	½ hour conference = ½ hour instruction; 1 hour conference = 1 hour instruction
Conferences (In-depth individual)	Instructor engages students in collaborative, one-to-one synchronous learning experience; student submit materials for review and meet specific participation & feedback expectations.	½ hour conference = ½ hour instruction; 1 hour conference = 1 hour instruction
Group Project	Instructor mediated group project with specific learning objectives; students collaborate via e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face contact to research, analyze, synthesize, and prepare a project. Instructor provides periodic guidance, support and feedback to the group.	1 hour per week for duration of project

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RATE OF EQUIVALENCY
Guided Individual Project	Instructor mediated individual project with specific learning objectives; student and instructor communicate via email, chat rooms, discussion boards, and/or face-to-face to discuss project research, analysis and development. Instructor provides periodic guidance, support and feedback to the student.	1 hour per week for duration of project
Instructional Presentations (Power Points, Videos, Voice Thread, etc.)	Instructor-mediated content is made available in an alternative delivery format for students to view/interact with in order to expand upon and clarify course concepts and objectives.	Student reviews and posts response to 1 unit of content = 1 hour instruction
Online Quizzes and Tests	Opportunity for instructor to assess students' subject knowledge and provide feedback on students' progress. (Formative or summative quizzes and tests)	1/2 hour quiz = 1/2 hour of instruction; 1 hour test = 1 hour of instruction
Discussion Board	Instructor guided or mediated threaded discussion that directly relates to course objectives and which has specified timeframes, expectations for participation, and thoughtful analysis. May include providing students an opportunity to develop questions, comments, or observations about course material.	1 posting (requires reading all postings) = 1/2 hour instruction; 1 posting (requires reading all postings and replying to a minimum of 3) = 1 hour instruction
Chat rooms for class or group projects	Instructor led opportunities for collaborative, synchronous learning with specific expectations for participation & feedback. (Chats are posted for review.)	1/2 hour chat = 1/2 hour instruction; 1 hour chat = 1 hour instruction

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RATE OF EQUIVALENCY
Field trips or tours (to include virtual tours)	Students engage at an assigned location and meet the prescribed, instructor-specified objectives	Instructor-led 1 hour field trip = 1 hour instruction; Student(s) without instructor: 1 hour field trip + reflection paper = 1 hour instruction
Library research	In-depth instructor led opportunity for students to research scholarly articles or professional journals that relate to course objectives; to be shared with class and/or instructor in a designated manner.	3-5 page paper = 1-2 hours of instruction
Internet research	Instructor guided opportunity for students to research information on the Internet that enhances student learning and addresses specific course outcomes; findings shared with the instructor and classmates.	1 in-depth posting/presentation = 1 hour instruction
Reflection paper or article review	Instructor guided activity for students to apply learned concepts and relate practices to personal experiences or apply higher order analytic skills in assessing scholarly articles or professional journals.	1 private posting = ½ hour instruction; 1 shared posting (required to read all classmates' postings) = 1 hour instruction
Data Analysis Project	Under instructor guidance, students compute, analyze, and/or interpret data and/or generate appropriate visual aids (using tools like Excel, SPSS, etc.).	Student completes data analysis for one unit of study = ½ hour instruction
Peer Review/ assessment	Employing instructor-designated criteria, students evaluate each other's work.	Peer review and follow up response to student/teacher = 0.5-2 hours of instruction based on scope and estimated number of hours of review/interaction

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RATE OF EQUIVALENCY
Portfolio Preparation	Instructors guide learners through compilation, evaluation, and production of learning portfolios prepared according to course /program rubrics and aligned with specific learning outcomes.	Portfolio conferencing with final presentation of completed portfolio = 1 instructional hour, or equivalent to length of the exercise.
Internship/ Externship / Practicum Experiences/Fieldwork/Direct Service Patient Care	Instructor-mediated “real world” interactive experiences related to the student’s program of study. These encounters provide opportunities to apply all acquired knowledge to the assessment and management of the presenting situation in accordance with expected professional standards.	60 minutes = 1 instructional hour; 45 patient care/service hours = 1 semester credit

Addendum B		
Component Definitions and Assignment of Instructional Time		
Component	Definition	Credit to Instructional Time Assignment
Lecture (LEC)	Traditional onsite lecture/recitation format, online or hybrid delivery format which must meet direct instructional time through synchronous (in person or virtual) or asynchronous delivery using instructional equivalency to meet the credit hour requirement.	1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)
Lab (LAB)	Instruction takes place in a traditional on-site laboratory or clinical setting. Course experts have discretion in making this equivalency determination, depending on the nature of the activity. Instruction takes place through online instruction (synchronous or asynchronous) using instructional equivalency activities to meet the credit hour requirement. Course experts have discretion in making this equivalency determination, depending on the nature of the activity. These courses can also be zero credit and be required as a co-requisite to account for instructional time equivalency of the related course.	1 credit to 2 hours (~100 minutes)
Independent Study (IND)	Students work one-on-one with professor, who sets the expectations for setting student learning outcomes and awarding credit. The instructional ratio can vary by discipline but is to be in the range similar to lecture.	1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes) Independent Study Registration Form Required
Internship (INT) and Practicum (PRA)	Guided work experience. Credits and requirements vary by department but must meet the minimum requirements. These courses can be variable credit. Some programs may require zero credit internship and practica which are identified as a co-requisite to a related course. In this case, the instructional time of a co-requisite internship or practicum would be considered as part of the credit assignment of the primary course.	1 credit to 3 hours (~150 minutes) Students who are not registered for a standard Practicum or Internship Course who are completing this independent of an established course section must have Internship and Practicum Registration Form approved and submitted for registration.
Thesis (THES)	Work expectations per hour of credit to be negotiated between an advisor and student in an independent study format and guided by program policy. Adequate academic progress within and across terms is expected.	1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)

Seminar (SEM):	Typically, discussion-based courses where students complete readings and outside research or assignments before the class and discuss major themes or topics during class. Typically, seminar courses are upper level or graduate courses.	1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)
Studio (STU):	Courses for creative work and practice.	1 credit to 2 hours (~100 minutes)
Study Tour Abroad (STA)	Course which requires all students to participate in a field trip/experience outside of the US for all or part of the course delivery.	Credits vary; contact hours will vary based upon program and or program requirements and will meet minimum credit hour requirements 1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)
Capstone Project/Experience (CAP)	Culminating guided project or experience. Work expectations per hour of credit to be negotiated with advisor or guided by program policy. Can be delivered in independent study format or course format. Adequate academic progress within and across terms is expected.	Credits vary; contact hours will vary based upon program and or program requirements and will meet minimum credit hour requirements 1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)
Domestic Study Tour (DST)	Course which requires all students to participate in a field trip/experience within the US for all or part of the course delivery.	Credits vary; contact hours will vary based upon program and or program requirements and will meet minimum credit hour requirements 1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)
Ensemble (ENS)	Course requires meetings of instrumental musicians	1 credit hour – class meets 100 to 150 minutes per credit
Lecture/Lab (LLAB)	Instruction combines both lecture and lab components in onsite lecture/recitation, online, or hybrid delivery format which must meet direct instructional time through synchronous (in person or virtual) or asynchronous delivery using instructional equivalency to meet the credit hour requirement.	1 credit lecture to 1 hour ~50 minutes instruction, 1 credit lab to 2 hours ~ 100 minutes
Kinesiology Activity Courses (PEF and PES)	Physical Activity Courses	1 credit to 1 hour ~ 50 minutes
Private Music Lesson (PVT)	Small group or one-to-one formal music instruction	1 credit to 1 hour ~ 50 minutes
Portfolio (PRT)	Guided project. Work expectations per hour of credit to be negotiated with advisor or guided by program policy. Adequate academic progress within and across terms is expected.	Credits vary; contact hours will vary based upon program and or program requirements and will meet minimum credit hour requirements 1 credit to 1 hour (~50 minutes)

Addendum C
Minimum Instructional Time per Credit Hour by Session Length

Credits	Minimum Required Total Instructional Time or Instructional Equivalency Activity per Term (COMAR guidelines)	Scheduled Weekly & Total Instructional Time Based on McDaniel Calendar (14 weeks instructional time)	Minimum Average Instructional Time or IEA per week based on 14 weeks of instruction	Minimum Average Instructional Time or IEA per week based on 8 weeks instruction	Minimum Average Instructional Time or IEA per week based on 6 weeks instruction	Minimum Average Instructional Time or IEA per week based on 3 weeks instruction
1 credit	750 minutes	840 minutes	54 minutes	94 minutes	125 minutes	250 minutes
2 credits	1500 minutes	1680 minutes	107 minutes	188 minutes	250minutes	500 minutes
3 credits	2,250 minutes	2,520 minutes	161 minutes	282 minutes	375 minutes	750 minutes
4 credits	3,000 minutes	2,520 minutes plus 480 minutes (IEA)	215 minutes (180 class time + 35 minutes of IEA)	375 minutes	500 minutes	1,000 minutes
<p>Please note that McDaniel's standard class schedule includes 60 minutes of instructional time followed by an additional 10-minute break to allow for student travel. Standard fall and spring calendar is based on a 16-week calendar (14 weeks of instructional time) including breaks and finals week. Condensed sessions are calculated based on the number of weeks in the session and adjusted accordingly.</p>						

Addendum D

Class Time and Schedule Guideline

MWF Class Schedule			TTH Class Schedule	
Classes 3X Week	Classes 2X Week	Classes 1X Week	Classes 2X Week	Classes 1X Week
8:00-9:00AM			8:00-9:30AM	
9:10-10:10AM				
			9:40-11:10AM	
10:20-11:20am			FYS (Fall)	
FYS (Fall)			11:20-11:50PM	
12:40-1:40PM	12:40-1:40PM	12:40-1:40PM	Meeting Period	
		Labs and Seminars	1:00-2:30PM	1:00-4:00PM
1:50-2:50PM				Labs and Seminars
	2:20-3:50PM		2:40-4:10PM	
3:00-4:00PM				
Activity Period 4:10-6:40pm			Activity Period 4:20-6:50pm	
6:50-7:50PM	6:50-8:20PM	6:50-9:50PM	7:00-8:30PM	7:00-10:00PM
8:00-9:00PM				
	8:30-10:00PM		8:40-10:10PM	

Please note that this is an undergraduate class time schedule. Graduate courses which are held face-to-face which meet during the day follow this schedule. Those which are held in the evening are generally hybrid courses which meet between 4 to 6 times per session for 2 to 3 hours depending on the course and program. Course times are generally scheduled between 5:00 pm and 9:00 p.m. to meet working professional schedules.