

Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Ciencias Médicas
University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus



Senado
Académico
*Academic
Senate*

2025–2026
Certification 032

I, Mayra Olavarría Cruz, Acting Secretary (Secretary Pro Tempore) of the Academic Senate of the Medical Sciences Campus of the University of Puerto Rico, hereby certify:

That the Academic Senate, at its ordinary meeting held on February 5, 2026, after receiving the Report of the Committee on Academic Affairs, agreed to:

- **Endorse the revised document submitted by CIPE, “Credit and Contact Hour Policy.”**

In witness whereof, I issue and forward this Certification under the seal of the Medical Sciences Campus of the University of Puerto Rico, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 11th day of February 2026.

Mayra Olavarría Cruz, PhD.
Secretary Pro Tempore

MOC/mmr

Dirección/Address:
PO BOX 365067
SAN JUAN PR
00936-5067

Teléfono/Phone:
787-758-2525
Exts. 2210,
2351, 1837

Directo/Direct:
787-758-9845

Fax:
787-758-8194



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University of Puerto Rico | Medical Sciences Campus
Deanship for Academic Affairs
CREDIT AND CONTACT HOUR POLICY

Reviewed by CEIP on December 17, 2025 | Certification 032, 2025-26 AS

I. Purpose

This policy establishes the definitions and equivalencies of credit hours and contact (clock) hours used for academic accountability of student learning experiences at the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus (MSC), in alignment with federal regulations and institutional standards.

II. Definitions

1. Credit Hour

As defined by the U.S. Department of Education (34 CFR 600.2, effective August 15, 2025), a credit hour is a unit of measure representing an amount of student work that is:

- Approved by the institution,
- Consistent with commonly accepted practices in postsecondary education,
- Reasonably approximates—not less than—one (1) hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two (2) hours of out-of-class student work per week over approximately fifteen (15) weeks for one semester or trimester.

Credit hours may also include other academic activities such as laboratory work, internships, practica, and other learning experiences leading to the award of academic credit.

2. Clock Hour

As defined by the U.S. Department of Education (34 CFR 600.2, effective August 15, 2025), a clock hour is defined as a period consisting of 50 to 60 minutes of class, lecture, laboratory, internship, or other academic/learning experiences.

3. Institutional Definition

At the University of Puerto Rico, credit hours are assigned based on the number of instructional hours per week throughout the academic term. For semester-based courses, one credit hour typically represents one hour (or 50 minutes) of weekly instruction. Laboratory and practice-based courses may vary in their credit hour assignment (Certification #48, 2025–2026 Governing Board).

III. Academic Term Durations at MSC

- **Semester:** 18 weeks
- **Trimester:** 12 weeks
- **Academic Year:** 40–46 weeks
- **Summer Session:** 4–6 weeks

IV. Unit of Instruction by School

- **Credit Hour-Based Programs**
 - School of Pharmacy

- School of Nursing
- School of Dental Medicine (Residency Programs only)
- School of Medicine (Biomedical Sciences Graduate Programs only)
- School of Health Professions
- Faculty of Biosocial Sciences and Graduate School of Public Health

- **Contact Hour-Based Programs**

- School of Medicine (MD Program)
- School of Dental Medicine (DMD Program)
- School of Health Professions (Dietetic Internship Program)

V. Credit Hour Equivalencies by Instructional Strategy

The MSC defines credit hour equivalencies for various instructional strategies as follows:

1. **Lecture, discussion, seminar:** 1 credit = 1 hour per week (1:1) for 18 weeks for semester credits and 12 weeks for trimester credits
2. **Laboratory:** 1 credit = 2–3 hours per week (1:2 to 1:3) for 18 weeks for semester credits and 12 weeks for trimester credits
3. **Undergraduate clinical instruction/practice:** 1 credit = 3–7 hours per week (1:3 to 1:7) for 18 weeks for semester credits and 12 weeks for trimester credits
4. **Graduate clinical instruction/practice:** 1 credit = 2–8 hours per week (1:2 to 1:8)* for 18 weeks for semester credits and 12 weeks for trimester credits
5. **Professional doctorate clinical instruction/practice/internships (excluding MD & DMD):** 1 credit = 3–48 hours/week (1:3 to 1:48)*
6. **Independent study, supervised research, capstone, thesis:** 1 credit = 2–30 hours/week (1:2 to 1:30)
7. **Hybrid and online modality:**
 - 1 credit = 1 hour per week of direct faculty instruction (1:1) for 18 weeks for semester credits and 12 weeks for trimester credits
 - 1 credit = 2 hours per week of out-of-class student work (1:2) for 18 weeks for semester credits and 12 weeks for trimester credits, aligned with intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. Depending on the nature of the course, time requirements may exceed these minimums.

Clinical instruction, practice, and internships will follow face to face equivalencies

*Note: Programs may have clinical instruction/practice accounted by contact hours (with 0 credits)

VI. Oversight and Responsibility

Oversight of appropriate credit hour allocation is the responsibility of:

- Faculty developing a course and Program Directors
- Department Directors
- Academic Associate Deans of the respective School
- Faculty Curriculum Committees

Final oversight and implementation monitoring are conducted by:

- Office of Academic Development
- Campus Registrar

- Dean of Academic Affairs, MSC

VII. Severability Provision

The clauses of this document constitute a set of provisions designed to ensure the continuity and stability of the processes for academic accountability of student learning experiences at the University of Puerto Rico-Medical Sciences Campus (MSC), in alignment with federal regulations and institutional standards. However, each clause operates independently; therefore, the invalidation of any clause by a governing body of the University shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining rules or procedures contained in the document.

VIII. Policy Review and Update

This Credit and Contact Hour Policy was initially approved by the Council for Educational Integration and Planning (CEIP) on April 29, 2015. It was subsequently revised in 2020 and 2021, with the current revision approved on December 17, 2025. This revised policy becomes effective upon approval by the MSC Academic Senate on February 11, 2026 (Certification 032, 2025–2026, AS).

This policy shall remain in effect unless amended or superseded by future institutional actions. It will be reviewed every five years and revised as necessary.

The Deanship of Academic Affairs and the Registrar's Office are responsible for overseeing the review and implementation of this policy.