

## **American University of Beirut**

### **Overview**

All degree and certificate programs at the American University of Beirut (AUB) are approved and officially registered with the Ministry of Higher Education in Lebanon and with the New York State Education Department (NYSED). AUB is accredited since 2004 by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, Tel. 267-284-5000) (\*\*). The American University of Beirut's credit hour calculations for degree and certificate programs follow NYSED guidelines (\*) – which are based on the U.S. Department of Education's definition of credit hour.

Faculties are responsible for all aspects of the curriculum and degree program requirements. Each Faculty has a curriculum committee that reviews proposed new and revised courses and degree programs, including the credit hours associated with each.

### **Credit Hour Definition at the American University of Beirut**

At the American University of Beirut, a course credit (often called credit hour, or just credit or "unit") is a unit that gives weighting to the value, level or time requirements of an academic course taken at a college or university. A *semester hour* means a credit, point, or other unit granted for the satisfactory completion of a course which requires at least 15 hours (of 50 minutes each) of instruction and at least 30 hours of supplementary assignments.

Students typically receive credit hours based on the number of "contact hours" per week in class, for one term, formally, Semester Credit Hours. Regardless of the duration of the course (i.e. a short semester like summer or intersession), a semester credit hour (SCH) is 15-16 contact hours per semester. Most courses at the American University of Beirut are 3 Semester Credit Hours

SCH or 45-48 contact hours. To provide students with the minimum 45-48 contact hours while accounting for holidays, classes start dates, etc., many courses will have 50 or more contact hours. For instance, a Monday/Wednesday/Friday course may have only 42 contact hours, while a Tuesday/Thursday course may have 48 contact hours.

The following provides general guidance on how the credit hour translates to the particular instructional method.

**Lecture:** A lecture course consists of classes that meet weekly for a specified number of hours; instruction is delivered in a lecture setting.

**Lab Courses:** Laboratory experiences that require special-purpose equipment for student participation, experimentation, observation or practice in a field of study. May involve discussion of a forthcoming laboratory or review of a completed laboratory session. Includes scheduled laboratory periods as well as laboratory experiences for which times may be selected by individual students.

**Studio Courses:** Student-centered learning in a setting related to practical application of professional knowledge. Mostly found in Art courses.

**Lecture and laboratory:** The course consists of a mixture of lecture and laboratory course types. The lecture portion of the course follows the lecture only definition and the laboratory portion of the course follows the laboratory only definition.

**Design Courses:** An organized method of instruction with emphasis on the synthesizing nature of the design process and conducted through critique and one-to-one interactions. It is an organized method of instruction to train and acquire necessary skills for students to design a certain system.

**Studio Courses:** are mostly related to art courses where the student-centered learning in a setting is related to practical application of professional knowledge.

**Clinical Courses:** Courses which focus on experiential learning under the direct supervision of a faculty member wherein the student performs work in a clinical setting.

**Internship/Practicum:** Courses of study in which a faculty member regularly interacts and directs students with periodic contact, but where the actual learning experience takes place off-campus at an approved site. There is normally a site supervisor or a coordinator and directed activity will occur outside of a lecture setting.

	Credits awarded	Minimum contact time per week	Minimum Instructional time (15 weeks)	Minimum out of class work per week	Minimum out of class work (15 Weeks)	Total of instructional contact time and out of class student work
Lecture	1	50 minutes	750 minutes	100 minutes	1500 minutes	2250 minutes
Lab	1	100 minutes	1500 minutes	50 minutes	750 minutes	2250 minutes
Studio	1	100 minutes	1500 minutes	50 minutes	750 minutes	2250 minutes
Design	1	50 minutes	750 minutes	150 minutes	2250 minutes	3000 minutes
Clinical (Medicine)	1	40 hours				
Clinical (Others)	1	150 minutes	2250 minutes	150 minutes	2250 minutes	4500 minutes
Internship/Practicum	1	100 minutes	1500 minutes	100 minutes	1500 minutes	3000 minutes

**Other Types of Courses:**

**Recitation:** Organized instruction in a recitation (two-way communication) format. May be listed as the sole type of instruction for the course or in combination with lecture or laboratory sessions.

**Accelerated Courses:** Courses offered outside of a standard 15 week semester in which the credit hours offered are the same as standard semester courses and the content and substantive learning outcomes are the same as those in the standard semester. These courses must meet the total amount of instructional and student work time as the examples above even if delivered within an accelerated time frame.

**Hybrid Courses:** Courses offered in a blended format with 1 or more onsite face to face class sessions and at least one or more online sessions, both containing direct interaction with a faculty member. Contact time is assessed using both onsite definitions (for the onsite portion) and online definitions as above (for the online portion). In all such instances, these courses must meet the total amount of instructional and student work time as the examples above even if delivered online or asynchronously.

**Service learning and community-based learning:** The purpose of service and community based-learning is to give students field-based experiential and authentic experiences related to what they are studying in the classroom. To other essential and necessary components of this type of learning are service to the community and reflection on the field-based experiences to derive lessons learned from them.

**(\*) United States Department of Education – Credit Hour Definition**

The U.S. Department of Education defines *credit hour* as: 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 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 amount of time; or,
2. at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) 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.

**(\*\*) Middle State Accreditation**

The American University of Beirut is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) issued a “credit hour policy” in August 2012 that requires MSCHE institutions to comply with the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of “credit hour”.