



ACCREDITING BUREAU OF HEALTH EDUCATION SCHOOLS
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ABHES BULLETIN

To: ABHES-Accredited Institutions and Programs

From: Carol A. Moneymaker, Executive Director

Date: January 28, 2013

Ref: ABHES *Accreditation Manual* Requirements – Additional Guidance

On January 2, 2013, the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES or the Commission) issued changes to Chapter IV, Section G.2., of the *Accreditation Manual*. The language addresses the requirements regarding credit hour conversions and the recognition of additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours.

This notice provides additional guidance and clarification to the standards as outlined in the recent Memorandum and updates the membership regarding the information contained in the August 3, 2012, ABHES Bulletin. Institutions holding only programmatic accreditation with ABHES are reminded that these standards fall within Chapter IV of the *Accreditation Manual* and are not applicable to programmatic accreditation. As is the case with all other standards contained in Chapter IV, the burden of compliance falls with the institutional accreditor.

Accreditation Requirements

Section IV.G.2. of the *Accreditation Manual* indicates the following:

Standard academic conversion methodology is applied in calculating and awarding academic credit.
(*****Please note that clock-hour programs do not fall under these requirements.**)

Institutions adhere to the following definitions and use the formula in calculating credit hours awarded on a course-by-course basis:

Semester – minimum of 15 weeks in length. One semester credit is equal to:

- a. one hour of lecture per week for a semester or the equivalent number of hours.*
- b. two hours of lab per week for a semester or the equivalent number of hours.*
- c. three hours of externship/clinical per week for a semester or the equivalent number of hours.*

Quarter – minimum of 10 weeks in length. One quarter credit is equal to:

- a. one hour of lecture per week for a quarter or the equivalent number of hours.*
- b. two hours of lab per week for a quarter or the equivalent number of hours.*
- c. three hours of externship/clinical per week for a quarter or the equivalent number of hours.*

The expectation is that non-terminal and transferrable programs must follow ‘standard academic conversion methodology’ requirements. Thus, for every one hour of in-class lecture work – generally – there must be two (two) hours of outside preparation student homework. For every hour of in-class laboratory (in certain cases this would also apply to clinical work experiences) – generally – there must be one (1) hour of outside preparation/homework assignments. The institution or program is expected to justify these outside preparation hours/assignments and must substantiate the hours/assignments and how they are determined; justification of the outside additional (student preparation homework assignment) hours must be on file. Departures from these expectations may be permissible for competency-based courses and documentation must be on file to support these deviations.

The standards further indicate:

Continuous Term - a non-traditional term length, allowing enrollment at various points in the calendar year.

Programs offered on a block basis or continuous term may elect either the semester or quarter formula for determination of credit. The minimum conversion formulas are as follows:

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Semester</u>	
10	15	<i>hours of lecture</i>
20	30	<i>hours of laboratory</i>
30	45	<i>hours of externship/clinical</i>

Partial credits for a course are rounded to the next lowest half or whole number. A course may be comprised of any combination of lecture, laboratory and/or externship. A clock (or contact) hour is defined as a minimum of 50 minutes of supervised or directed instruction in any 60-minute period. Care is taken in scheduling breaks.

An example of the calculation is as follows:

<u>Quarter system</u>		<u>Semester system</u>	
6 hours lecture =	0.60	6 hours lecture =	0.40
25 hours lab =	1.25	25 hours lab =	0.83
70 hours externship =	2.30	70 hours externship =	1.55
Total =	4.15	Total =	2.78

Rounding occurs following the calculation of the lecture, laboratory and externship components resulting in a total of 4.0 quarter or 2.5 semester credits when rounded down to the next lowest half or whole number.

If a program offers both a distance education and a traditional campus-based component, the quality of the education and credit awarded is equivalent in all three aspects of the curriculum: didactic, laboratory, and clinical.

Institutions should be aware that federal requirements regarding the calculation of clock and credit hours, including minimum number of weeks per academic year required for Title IV purposes, may vary from ABHES requirements.

Below is the only new section of the accreditation standards relative to academic credit conversions. These conversions are based on academic rigor and higher than the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) requirements. ED thresholds are based on Federal student aid, not academics.

Accreditation Requirements

Section IV.G.2. of the *Accreditation Manual* further requires the following:

Definitions, conversions and calculations for recognition of outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours are applied to programs which are terminal and not fully transferable.

Institutions and programs (terminal and not fully transferable) are expected to adhere at a minimum to the following formula for additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours on a course-by-course basis:

- i.) Semester Credit Hours- 7.5 outside preparation hours for each credit hour of lecture/laboratory (outside preparation hours for clinical experiences will be reviewed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis). In general, however, clinical experiences may not require outside preparation hours. If outside hours are awarded, the institution or program must provide justification and the rationale for these hours).*
- ii.) Quarter Credit Hours- 5.0 outside preparation hours for each credit hour of lecture/laboratory (outside preparation hours for clinical experiences will be reviewed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In general, however, clinical experiences may not require outside preparation hours. If outside hours are awarded, the institution or program must provide justification and the rationale for these hours).*

The institution or program may elect to include more outside preparation hours than the minimums listed above and these will be reviewed for their academic quality and rigor for the particular course.

The expectation is that terminal and non-fully transferrable programs must follow the new ABHES conversion requirements as described above. Schools must be aware that these conversion requirements differ from the U.S. Department of Education thresholds as ABHES additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours are based on academic requirements.

Conversion Examples

The following examples for converting clock hours to credit hours are provided to highlight the ABHES expectations and requirements along with the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) two conversion options regarding additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours. As a reminder, schools must be aware that these conversion requirements differ from the U.S. Department of Education thresholds as ABHES additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours are based on academic requirements. *These calculations are only applicable for terminal and not fully transferrable programs.*

3 Semester Credit Hour (45 contact hours) Course – All Lecture Hours	
Using the ABHES Lecture Conversion Formula	Using the Department Full Formula Conversion Option
45/15 = 3 semester credits (multiplied by 7.5, which is the academic requirement)	45/30 = 1.5 semester credits (multiplied by 7.5, which is the maximum allowable additional outside hours)
3 x 7.5 = 22.5 <u>minimum required</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.	1.5 x 7.5 = 11.25 <u>maximum allowable</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours for student aid purposes.
	Using the Department Default Option - 37.5 Clock Hours
	45/37.5 = 1.2 semester credits

3 Semester Credit Hour (90 contact hours) Course – All Laboratory Hours	
Using the ABHES Laboratory Conversion Formula	Using the Department Full Formula Conversion Option
90/30 = 3 semester credits (multiplied by 7.5, which is the academic requirement)	90/30 = 3 semester credits (multiplied by 7.5, which is the maximum allowable additional outside hours)
3 x 7.5 = 22.5 <u>minimum required</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.	3 x 7.5 = 22.5 <u>maximum allowable</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours for student aid purposes.
	Using the Department Default Option - 37.5 Clock Hours
	90/37.5 = 2.4 semester credits

3 Semester Credit Hour (160 contact hours) Course – All Externship Hours	
Using the ABHES Externship (Clinical) Formula	Using the Department Full Formula Conversion Option
160/45 = 3.5 semester credits (multiplied by 7.5, which is the academic requirement)	160/30 = 5.3 semester credits (multiplied by 7.5, which is the maximum allowable additional outside hours)
3.5 x 7.5 = 26.25 <u>minimum required</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.	5.3 x 7.5 = 39.75 <u>maximum allowable</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours for student aid purposes.
	Using the Department Default Option - 37.5 Clock Hours
	160/37.5 = 4.2 semester credits

4 Quarter Credit Hour (45 contact hours) Course – All Lecture Hours	
Using the ABHES Lecture Conversion Formula	Using the Department Full Formula Conversion Option
45/10 = 4.5 (multiplied by 5, which is the academic requirement)	45/20 = 2.25 quarter credits (multiplied by 5, which is the maximum allowable additional outside hours)
4.5 x 5 = 22.5 <u>minimum required</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.	2.25 x 5 = 11.25 <u>maximum allowable</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours for student aid purposes.
	Using the Department Default Option – 25 Clock Hours
	45/25 = 1.8 quarter credits

4 Quarter Credit Hour (90 contact hours) Course – All Laboratory Hours	
Using the ABHES Lecture Conversion Formula	Using the Department Full Formula Conversion Option
90/20 = 4.5 (multiplied by 5, which is the academic requirement)	90/20 = 4.5 quarter credits (multiplied by 5, which is the maximum allowable additional outside hours)
4.5 x 5 = 22.5 <u>minimum required</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.	4.5 x 5 = 22.5 <u>maximum allowable</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.
	Using the Department Default Option – 25 Clock Hours
	90/25 = 3.6 quarter credits

4 Quarter Credit Hour (160 contact hours) Course – All Externship Hours	
Using the ABHES Lecture Conversion Formula	Using the Department Full Formula Conversion Option
160/30 = 5.3 (multiplied by 5, which is the academic requirement)	160/20 = 8 quarter credits (multiplied by 5, which is the maximum allowable additional outside hours)
5.3 x 5 = 26.5 <u>minimum required</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours.	8 x 5 = 40 <u>maximum allowable</u> additional outside (student preparation) hours for student aid purposes.
	Using the Department Default Option – 25 Clock Hours
	160/25 = 6.4 quarter credits

As noted, differences exist between the Federal and the ABHES calculations. The Federal calculations are based on contact hours and specific to student aid thresholds whereas ABHES bases its calculations on academic credit hour measurement thresholds. The ABHES requirements are most likely higher than the Federal requirements in certain instances. Institutions must maintain documentation to support compliance with ABHES requirements and the Federal requirements. On-site evaluation teams will review and evaluate the reported additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours using a sampling of course syllabi for every program, as well as other school documents, including policies and procedures in this regard.

In all cases, student work performed outside of class must be documented and justified as leading toward the achievement of the stated goals and objectives of the program. The outside work must conform to commonly-accepted standards and requirements for the discipline and must be consistently applied by the program/institution. The outside work is to be graded, as appropriate, and must serve as an integral part of the structured, sequenced educational program as described in the syllabus. Credit for student work performed outside of class must reflect a reasonable estimate of the actual time required to complete the work taking into account the nature and rigor of assignments.

Non-terminal and transferrable programs:

Institutions and programs must follow ‘standard academic conversion methodology’ requirements for non-terminal and transferable programs, which are commonly ‘academic’ in scope. Generally, for every one hour of in-class lecture work there must be two hours of outside preparation. For every hour of in-class laboratory (in certain cases this would also apply to clinical work experiences) – generally – there must be one (1) hour of outside preparation. Departures from these expectations may be permissible for competency-based courses and documentation must be on file to support these deviations. **While no submission is required for these programs, the institution or program is expected to justify these outside preparation hours and must substantiate the hours and how these are determined. Justification of the outside additional (student preparation assignment) hours must be on file as on-site evaluation teams will review and assess these hours/assignments.**

Terminal and Non-transferrable programs:

Institutions seeking first-time recognition of the additional outside (student preparation) hours for terminal and non-transferrable programs (commonly competency-based programs) may do so via the submission of the appropriate program modification application. The institution’s submission must demonstrate that the new program length meets commonly-accepted standards for the discipline and is necessary to enable students to achieve the program objectives and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for employment. Such documentation could include programmatic accreditation or state requirements, national or regionalized results of employer surveys on educational demands for employment, or other documented research reflecting the educational requirements for the profession.

Institutions must substantiate **how** the required outside work complements each course and how the outside work assignment contribute to the program’s specified educational goals and objectives in their request to have these hours recognized. Institutions must demonstrate how these additional outside (student preparation assignment) hours have been determined, including applicable grading requirements, and, during on-site evaluations, school personnel must demonstrate to evaluation teams how these outside hours are evaluated and assessed to determine their value and weight to a given program.

Institutions eligible to participate in Title IV student aid programs must comply with Federal credit and clock hour requirements for certain federal purposes, including compliance with institutional, programmatic, and student eligibility for Title IV participation.

For those institutions and programs previously approved for the recognition of additional outside (student preparation) hours, the ABHES approval remains in place. Any changes to the previous approvals based on the new requirements must be submitted to the Commission office via the *Application for Change in Additional Outside (Student Preparation) Hours form* (appended to this document and which may be accessed via the ABHES website (www.abhes.org) under Forms).

Self-Evaluation Report, Meeting Room, or Other Requirements

Institutions requesting to have additional outside student homework assignment hours recognized must provide documentation to support these assignments/hours. At a minimum, the institution must submit with its Self-Evaluation Report (SER) the following:

1. 3-5 course syllabi per program.
2. Detailed description of the outside student assignment hours, including an assessment of the allotted time required for (student) completion of reported hours, including the rationale to recognize these hours.
3. Narrative assessment of the assignments/hours and how these conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.
4. Documentation to support that the reported outside assignments/hours are consistent with those reported on the course syllabi and that the educational activities described are appropriate.
5. Detailed description of the policies and procedures for the evaluation of and the weight of grades, as applicable.
6. A description of how the additional outside (student preparation homework assignments) hours complement the program(s).
7. A detail of the required educational activities for the hours (e.g., required written assignments; written book reports; required reading assignments; oral presentation activities; hands-on practice sessions; etc.).

On-site Evaluation Requirements

On-site evaluation teams will review institutional policies, procedures, and other information to determine compliance with credit hour conversions and the allocation, if applicable, of the additional outside (student preparation) hours. At a minimum, on-site evaluation teams are required to conduct the following:

1. A review of 3-5 course syllabi per program to evaluate the number of additional outside (student preparation) hours assigned, including a course-by-course assessment of the hours. While institutions must outline additional outside (student preparation) hours on a course-by-course basis, on-site evaluation teams may only select a sampling to determine compliance. Additional syllabi, however, may be selected for review.
2. An evaluation of appropriate student performance activities by which the additional outside (student preparation) hours are measured.
3. A review and evaluation of faculty evaluative assessments of student work, including an examination of grade books or comparable documents or reports.
4. A review and evaluation of the student work product that includes but is not limited to, research projects; journals; portfolios; presentations; or reports. These activities must be assessed and graded.

Team Reports

On-site evaluation team reports will include, as applicable, an assessment regarding the additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours. As appropriate, institutions will respond accordingly based on the team findings as noted in the team report. The Commission makes the final determination regarding any issues relative to credit hour conversions and additional outside (student preparation homework assignment) hours.

ABHES Partnership

ABHES considers the (new) credit hour conversion requirements to be a cooperative effort. ABHES staff members are prepared to assist institutions and programs regarding credit hour conversion and additional outside (student preparation homework assignments) hours. **For questions regarding the Commission's policies in this regard**, please contact Christopher Eaton, Associate Executive Director, at 703.917.9503 or ceaton@abhes.org or Thomas J. Cornacchia, Director of Curriculum and Policy Development, at 703.917.9596 or tcornacchia@abhes.org.



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APPLICATION FOR CHANGE IN ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE (STUDENT PREPARATION) HOURS

This application is required for a modification to previously approved additional outside (student preparation or assignments) hours. This application only applies to terminal and not fully transferrable programs and must be submitted to ABHES for approval prior to implementation.

To complete this document, place your cursor in each box or on each line and key the information. Answer spaces will expand to accommodate all your information.

Name & Title:

Institution:

ABHES Identification Number:

Street Address:

City: State: Zip Code

Telephone: Fax:

E-mail Address: Website:

Revised Program(s):

Program	In Class Clock Hours	Outside Class Hours	Total Clock Hours	Academic Credit Hours	Length in weeks	Credential Awarded
				<input type="checkbox"/> quarter <input type="checkbox"/> semester		

Submission Requirements:

1. A description of the change in additional outside (student preparation or assignment) hours.
2. A detailed description of the additional outside (student preparation or assignment) hours, including an assessment of the allotted time required for student completion of the reported outside hours (assignments).
3. A copy of the state or other overseeing authority that demonstrates approval, as applicable. If said approval is not required, please include documentation to support this assertion.
4. Processing Fee – There is no fee for this application.

Name and title of individual completing application:

Signature of Chief Executive Officer: Date: