Definition of Credit Hour

The credit hour is the unit of measure used at McPherson College to signify the amount of work associated with successful completion of a course. An hour of academic credit is awarded contingent upon evidence of student achievement of prescribed learning outcomes of the course. McPherson College delivers courses in both face-to-face and blended formats in terms of varying length, as follows:

- Fall and Spring semesters of 14 weeks
- Graduate program terms of 7-8 weeks
- A January Interterm of 3 ½ weeks

For each hour of academic credit, a student should expect to spend 50 minutes per week in class over the course of a 14-week semester, 50 minutes per day over the course of a 14-day Interterm session, or 85 minutes per week for an eight-week term. In addition, for each hour of credit, students should expect to spend approximately two hours outside of class for class preparation and completion of assignments. Regardless of the length of the term, the well-prepared, motivated student should expect to devote approximately 40 hours per term, in and out of class, for each hour of credit.

McPherson College also offers academic credit for internships and field experiences with approved student learning outcomes and appropriate assessment of those outcomes. Student-interns can earn one hour of academic credit for every 40 hours on the job at the site of the placement.

To demonstrate compliance with U.S. Department of Education regulations and standards established by the Higher Learning Commission, all McPherson College instructors include in their syllabi a course schedule with the requisite number of class meetings for the appropriate length of time as well as a detailed list of readings, assignments, and projects indicative of the expected hours outside the classroom.

Online Coursework

McPherson College offers a small number of online courses and traditional face-to-face classes blended with an online component. Consistent with the above guidelines, for every hour of credit granted for an online course or course component, the student should expect to spend the same 40 hours per term for each hour of credit. This can include time devoted to reading lecture notes, listening to recordings of lectures, or synchronous class time. Additional time elements to consider in the online environment are readings, writing assignments (including the discussion boards), exam/quizzes and student engagement.