



ACCREDITING BUREAU OF HEALTH EDUCATION SCHOOLS  
7777 Leesburg Pike Suite 314 N · Falls Church, Virginia 22043  
Tel. 703/917.9503 · Fax 703/917.4109 · E-Mail info@abhes.org

## ABHES BULLETIN

To: ABHES-Accredited Institutions and Programs  
From: Carol A. Moneymaker, Executive Director  
Date: August 3, 2012  
Ref: Credit Hour Conversions Recognition of Additional Outside (Student Preparation) Hours

At its recent meeting, the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES or the Commission) reviewed the proposed changes to Chapter IV, Section IV.G.2., of the *Accreditation Manual*, as outlined in the May 25, 2012, ABHES Call for Comment regarding credit hour conversions and the recognition of additional outside (student preparation) hours. In conjunction with its review of the proposed standards the Commission also took into consideration membership comments regarding the proposed language and, where applicable, revisions were made to address membership comments. As such, the *Accreditation Manual* has been updated. Please make certain to reference the 17<sup>th</sup> Edition *Accreditation Manual*, Effective January 1, 2012, August 3, 2012.

The following information outlines the current accreditation requirements regarding the recognition of additional outside (student preparation) hours, as well as provides specific details regarding expectations during an on-site evaluation.

### Accreditation Requirements

*Chapter IV.G.2.A., Programs which are occupational, terminal and not fully transferrable*

The Commission determined that **programs which are occupational, terminal, not fully transferrable** and wishing recognition of additional outside (student preparation) hours must adhere, at a minimum, to the following formula for outside preparation hours on a course-by-course basis:

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).

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. (*Note: clock programs do not fall under these requirements and will not have outside preparation hours reviewed by ABHES.*)

## **Accreditation Requirements**

*Chapter IV.G.2.B., Non-Terminal or Fully Transferrable Programs whose length is at least two academic years.*

The Commission determined that **programs which are non-terminal or fully transferrable and whose length is at least two academic years** must adhere, at a minimum, to the following formula for outside preparation hours on a course-by-course basis:

For every one hour of in-class lecture work there must be two (2) hours of outside preparation. These hours must be documented and justified.

For each hour of in-class laboratory work (in certain cases, this would also apply to clinical work experiences) there must be one (1) hour of outside preparation. The institution or program is expected to justify these outside preparation hours on a case-by-case basis).

## **Justification and Process Requirements**

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.

Institutions seeking recognition of these hours 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 contributes to the program's specified educational goals and objectives in the request to have these hours recognized as program hours. Institutions and programs must demonstrate how these additional outside (student preparation) hours been determined, including applicable grading requirements, and, during on-site evaluations – school personnel must justify to evaluation teams that these outside hours are evaluated and assessed to determine their value and weight to a given program.

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

## **Self-Evaluation Report and Assessment Requirements**

Institutions requesting to have additional outside hours recognized must provide documentation to support these 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 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 hours and how these conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.
4. Documentation to support that the reported outside 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 evaluation of and weight of grades, as applicable.
6. A description of how the additional outside (student preparation) 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 determine the number of additional outside (student preparation) hours, including a course-by-course assessment of the assigned 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 measures 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 student work product includes, but is not limited to, research projects; journals; and portfolios, including graded assignments and assessment measures.

## **Team Reports**

On-site evaluation team reports will include, as applicable, an assessment regarding the additional outside (student preparation) 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) hours.

## **ABHES Partnership**

ABHES considers the (new) credit hour conversion requirements to be a cooperative effort and Commission staff is prepared to assist institutions and programs regarding the credit hour conversion and additional outside (student preparation) hours. **For questions regarding the Commission's policies in this regard,** please contact Chris 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](mailto:tcornacchia@abhes.org).