

80.20.007 CREDIT HOUR POLICY

Credit Hour Policy**PURPOSE**

- The St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences ("Graduate School") offers courses leading to degrees at the master's and doctoral level.
- A master's student who successfully completes all coursework and their thesis is awarded a terminal Master of Science degree.
- A doctoral student who does not successfully complete their Candidacy Examination, and who is otherwise in good standing academically, may be awarded a terminal Master of Science degree based on progress achieved, as determined by the Dean, and is dismissed from the program.
- A doctoral student who advances to candidacy and successfully completes and defends their dissertation is awarded a PhD degree.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled at the Graduate School, regardless of mode of instruction and physical location of the student.

STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Stakeholders affected by this policy include all current and prospective students and those responsible for overseeing the assignment of credit.

POLICY**1.1 Credit Hour and Semester Definition**

1.1.1 The U.S. Department of Education defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates:

- (1) Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week 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 activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

1.1.2 The Graduate School follows the federal definition of a semester, which is approximately 15 weeks long. Faculty on the subcommittees of the Curriculum Committee are responsible for determining credit hour assignments for each course. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for approving credit hour assignments, including the level and amount of credit awarded for each course.

1.2 Credit Hour Assignment

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1.2.1 The standard for a one semester credit hour course is one class hour (50 minutes) of direct instruction and a minimum of two class hours (100 minutes) of out-of-class student work/student academic engagement activities each week during the standard semester (15 weeks). This equates to a total of 750 minutes of direct instruction and 1,500 minutes of out-of-class student work per standard semester (15 weeks). A course offered in fewer than 15 weeks shall contain the same total hours (contact hours, preparation time, content, and requirements) as the same course offered in the standard 15-week semester.

1.2.2 While minutes of work and contact time can provide guidance in the establishment of credit hour equivalencies, it is understood that the student achievement associated with any credit hour can only be measured adequately in terms of documented qualitative and quantitative outcomes. The successful completion of a credit hour will always take into consideration expectations based on degree level, discipline, the type of learning experience (e.g., didactic, clinical, practica, or internships), and the mode of delivery (e.g., face-to-face or online). This definition is a minimum standard that does not restrict graduate faculty from setting a higher standard that requires more student work per credit hour.

1.3 Transfer credit

1.3.1 Transfer credit may be granted for a student transferring into the Graduate School from another program. The transfer credit request will be evaluated by the Associate Dean of the respective program, which typically occurs prior to student enrollment. The Associate Dean will collaborate with other subject matter experts, as needed. Only grades of "C" or better will be accepted for transfer credit. The maximum number of transfer credits will vary across programs; however, the student must still meet the minimum percentage of credits that must be earned through instruction by the Graduate School.

1.3.2 After admission to the Graduate School, graduate credit from another university may be accepted by the St. Jude Graduate Program with the approval of the appropriate Associate Dean of the respective program.

1.4 Graduate School Credits for a Graduate Degree

1.4.1 The Graduate School requires that a minimum percentage of the credits towards a degree must be earned through instruction provided by the Graduate School.

1.4.2 At least 60% of the credits earned towards a Doctor of Philosophy degree must be earned through instruction provided by the Graduate School.

1.4.3 At least 75% of the credits earned towards a Master of Science degree must be earned through instruction provided by the Graduate School.

1.5 Transferability of Credit to Other Institutions

1.5.1 The St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is a special purpose institution. The mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. The St. Jude Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences drives this mission by educating the next generation of biomedical researchers to probe the molecular basis of disease, develop novel therapies and train medical professionals to advance global health for children with catastrophic diseases.

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1.5.2 Students should be aware that transfer of credit is always the responsibility of the receiving institution. Whether or not credits transfer is solely up to the receiving institutions. Any student interested in transferring credit hours should check with the receiving institution directly to determine to what extent, if any, credit hours can be transferred.

1.6 Course Numbering

1.6.1 The Graduate School courses are labelled with a seven-character field. The first three characters represent an alphabetic prefix that defines the program to which each course is attached. The fourth character indicates courses earned toward a degree level. The fifth and sixth characters indicate the numbering of courses. The seventh character typically indicates the term the course is offered and/or whether the assigned credit hours for the course are scalable.

Examples:

BMS9301

'BMS': Biomedical Sciences '9': Doctoral level '30': Sequence of course '1': Fall term

GCH8132

'GCH': Global Child Health '8': Master's level '13': Sequence of course '2': Spring term

PROCEDURE

N/A

DEFINITIONS

N/A

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

N/A

FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

N/A

POLICY DETAILS

Policy Type	Policy Revision
Policy Number	80.20.007
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Policy Owner (Contact Info)	Steven Varga (steven.varga@stjude.org)

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Policy Alternate	Stacey Schultz-Cherry
Last Review Date	December 11, 2025
Next Scheduled Review Date	By June 1, 2026

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- V1.0 – May 9, 2023
- V2.0 – August 2, 2024
- V3.0 – December 11, 2025

APPROVALS

- Curriculum Committee – Approved on May 9, 2023
- Curriculum Committee – Approved on August 2, 2024
- Curriculum Committee – Approved on December 11, 2025