

1. PURPOSE

In accordance with the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) on Higher Education guidelines, The American University of Paris clearly specifies how credit hours are assigned to courses. This policy ensures consistency and clarity in how the number of credit hours for a course, the number of classroom contact hours, and the expected hours of work outside the classroom are calculated. Most AUP courses carry four credit hours. However, some courses carry more or fewer credits. The number of in-class hours can also vary.

2. WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Students and faculty.

3. LEGAL CONTEXT BY THIS POLICY

Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with US Federal Government guidelines, The American University of Paris defines the 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 additional hours of out-of-classroom 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 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.

The American University of Paris requires that all students seeking a Bachelor's degree complete a minimum of 128 credits. A typical load for an undergraduate in a regular semester is four 4-credit courses, a standard in a liberal arts curriculum in which deep exploration and extensive reading and writing are the norms. Master's degrees vary by discipline and length of study but range from 38 to 64 credits. A standard load in a regular semester for a graduate student that is not the last semester in the program is between 16 and 18 credits.

The American University of Paris holds two fifteen-week semesters, one six-week summer term, and two three-week intensive summer terms. The class period is one hour twenty minutes during fall and spring semesters. The class period during the six-week summer term is one hour forty minutes. The class period during both three-week summer terms is three hours thirty minutes. For a small number of courses in certain disciplines, additional contact time is required for an equivalent number of awarded credits. While the University offers a variety of course scheduling formats, each upholds the minimum number of contact hours per credit awarded (37.5 contact hours minimum for one four-credit course). The mandatory exam period is 150 minutes.

Standard courses:

AUP's 4-credit course types (undergraduate and graduate) are as follows:

- A. The standard graduate and undergraduate lecture course (4 credits) meets twice a week during the semester. In addition, each course has a mandatory final exam period. Each course must meet for 26 sessions during each fall or spring semester.
- B. Certain foreign language courses (4 credits) have specific need for more intensive contact hours. Each foreign language course must meet for a minimum of 39 sessions during the semester. Some courses in the French department require an additional 13 sessions with a teaching assistant, bringing the number of sessions per semester to 52. The additional contact hours must ensure expected student learning outcomes.

- C. Certain math courses (4 credits) must meet for a minimum of 39 sessions during the semester in order to ensure expected student learning outcomes.
- D. All laboratory science courses (4 credits) must have a lecture component (26 during the semester) as well as an additional 26 sessions of dedicated laboratory time.
- E. Summer courses (primarily 4 credits), regardless of program length or intensity, are required to meet our standard ratio of contact hours to credit awarded, as listed above. To ensure desired student learning outcomes, the number of credits students may take during short-term registrations is limited.

More than four credits:

Specific **computer science courses** (5 credits) must meet for a minimum of 39 sessions during the semester. These specific courses require a heavier out-of-course preparation and practice than other courses.

The **International Criminal Law Practicum** (6 credits) consists of one week of lectures (35 hours of classroom time) about various theoretical and practical elements of international law, taught by expert judges and prosecution lawyers from the Hague. This preparatory week at The American University of Paris at the start of the summer session is followed by a one-week visit to The Hague (36 hours of court observation, onsite expert briefings and discussion at one of the International Courts). Students will travel to The Hague to visit several of the courts, and then devote two days to trial reporting as part of the requirements for the course. In addition to the assigned reading, class participation and the trial report, students will be encouraged to reflect in a graded final take-home exam on the legitimacy and enforceability of international law in the 21st century.

Two or fewer credit courses:

A two-credit course meets once a week for 13 sessions during the semester in addition to a standard final exam. Examples of two-credit courses include some MSc in International Management courses as well as MA0900 Intermediate Algebra, an introductory two-credit language course which meets once a week.

Flexibly scheduled or short courses:

AUP offers a variety of course formats that do not follow the typical semester calendar. One example is the graduate program module (2 credits), which requires 18 contact hours scheduled over three days of intensive learning, in-depth student preparation prior to the sessions, and a substantive written assignment.

Other Formats:

Courses that do not adhere to the standard definition of a credit hour include the following:

- A. A **Directed Study** (1-4 credit) allows the exceptional degree-seeking student to work within an area of specific academic interest under the direct supervision of a faculty member. The student is expected to develop his or her topic in close collaboration with the faculty supervisor. A maximum of 8 credits of directed study credit may be applied toward graduation. Among other requirements, undergraduate students must be in their third year with a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA. Graduate students must have a minimum cumulative 3.5 GPA. Expected outcomes: a predefined number of sessions with the project sponsor as well as a minimum of 10 pages of final written assessment per credit awarded. The student's advisor, the department chair or program coordinator, and the Office of Academic Affairs must approve directed study projects.
- B. A **Senior Project** (4 credits) is similar to a directed study insofar as it is an independent project subject to approval. A senior project serves as an undergraduate thesis and carries 4 credits. Certain majors specifically require a senior project. Others require either a senior seminar or a senior project. Expected outcomes: a predetermined number of sessions with the project supervisor as well as a senior thesis of at least 40 pages.
- C. The **Practica** (4 credits) offered through The American University of Paris are intensive courses taught under the direct supervision of a faculty member and accompanied by hands-on application of the subject matter in question. These take multiple forms. An example would be the month-long Sustainable Development Practicum taught in India over the December/January break. Expected outcomes: field notes, interviews, blog participation, final project submission, final essay.

D. A **Graduate Thesis** (6 to 12 credits) is required by most of our graduate programs. The length of the thesis and number of credits awarded vary per program and are, in general, linked to the length of the program. Some departments require a lengthier thesis than others.

- The word count **includes** all text from the beginning of the introduction to the end of the conclusion. It includes the footnotes or the endnotes.
- The word count **excludes** the bibliography and the words included in the graphics, charts, photos, etc. it also excludes the preliminary pages (such as the approval page, the intellectual property page, the acknowledgements, the statement of authenticity page, etc.

Each thesis has two faculty readers: a primary reader and a secondary reader. An abstract of the thesis proposal and requested readers is subject to the approval of the program director and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Once defended and updated with required changes, a bound copy of each thesis must be submitted to the University Library. Program thesis credit requirements and word limits are as follows:

Graduate Program	Course Code	Course Name	Minimum Word Limit	Number of Credits	Program Duration	Thesis Defense	Methodology
MA in International Affairs	PO5095	Thesis Project	12,000-17,000	6	1 year	Not Required	Bibliographical Research Required
MA in International Affairs, Conflict Resolution and Civil Society Development	PO5095	Research Project	15,000-20,000	12	2 years	Required	Bibliographical & Field Research Required
MSc in International Management	BA5095	Thesis Project	15,000-25,000	6	1 year	Required	Bibliographical Research Required
MA in Global Communications	CM5095	Thesis Project	15,000-20,000	8	1.5 years	Required	Bibliographical Research Required

E. A **Credit-Bearing Internship** opportunity (1-4 credits at the undergraduate level, 4, 6 or 8 credits at the graduate level) is available to both undergraduate and graduate students. A minimum number of working hours is required for each credit awarded. All internships require both a student and an employer evaluation of the internship. Undergraduates may apply a maximum of 4 credits of internship towards graduation. Graduate students may apply credits to graduation where programs allow. All internships, credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing, require written assignments consisting of varied components such as a mid-point note, weekly journal, internship report, consulting report, informational interview and CV as part of the graded internship portfolio. The length and content of these assignments has a direct ratio to the number of credits awarded. Below is a table outlining the basic requirements for each type of internship (see the [Internship Handbook](#) for further details):

Internship Type	Minimum Worked Hours	Maximum Length	Minimum Length of Written Assignments	Grade
Undergraduate 0-credit	120 hours	6 months	Three pages	AP/NA
Undergraduate 1 credit	120 hours	6 months	Three pages	CR/NC
Undergraduate 4 credits	160 hours	6 months	21 pages	CR/NC
Graduate 0 credit	120 hours	6 months	Three pages	AP/NA
Graduate 4 credit	160 hours	6 months	21 pages	Letter grade
Graduate 6 credit (only MSIM)	200 hours	6 months	80 pages	Letter grade
Graduate 8 credits (only MAGC)	240 hours	6 months	80 pages	Letter grade

- F. A **portfolio** (1 credit) requirement exists as part of several majors. This is a 1-credit course supervised by a department faculty member. The goal of the portfolio is to display the highlights of the student's performance. The portfolio is an excellent source of departmental learning outcomes assessment and complements students' résumés for job hunting and/or graduate school applications.
- G. An **Editorship** (2 credits) requirement is designed for students working in journalism workshops, such as magazine, online news, and video production. Students work in the journalism workshops of their choice under the guidance of a faculty member and are actively engaged in the newsroom activities for the workshop selected. The faculty member mentors, monitors and evaluates participation and work produced.
- H. **Les Jeunes ont la parole** (1 credit) is a practicum permitting students to spend time studying individual works of art housed within the Louvre Museum. The outcome of the practicum is the preparation of formal presentations under the supervision of an art historian as part of the Louvre Museum's program (*Les Jeunes ont la parole*). This exercise requires students to meet their supervisor once a week for 13 sessions during the semester, then present their work to museum visitors at designated times in multiple languages. Students may participate in the program multiple times for academic credit.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Curriculum Committee's role is to ensure the coherence and integrity of the University curriculum, in accordance with the educational goals of the institution. The Curriculum Committee evaluates proposals for new and adjusted courses. Proposal forms can be found on the Faculty Support webpage of The American University of Paris website. When new courses are created, the number of credit hours is determined by The Office of Academic Affairs and approved by the Curriculum Committee.

6. APPROVALS & HISTORY

This is a long-standing policy, as AUP has been continuously accredited by MSCHE since 1973.

Last review: Spring 2026

Next review: November 2028.

7. ISSUING OFFICE AND CONTACT

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