

Minimum Registration Requirements
For Graduate Students

POLICIES

Type of Admission

The number of hours that a student must register in each semester is not dependent upon the type of admission status of the student. Both regular and conditional admissions are subject to the same registration requirements.

Semester

Course loads for the fall and spring semesters are the same. The normal course load is **12 credit hours**; the maximum load is **15**. For tuition purposes, enrollment in 9 credit hours is considered full-time. Students may register in fewer than 12 hours with the approval of their academic advisor and in accordance with any other conditions stipulated for each department or program.

A graduate student must be registered for a minimum of **3 hours** each academic term (and summer, too, if using facilities or faculty time) in thesis/dissertation research. This excludes “non” thesis/dissertation research.

Where an international student has an I20 which indicates that he or she is starting their program in the summer semester then the student must be enrolled full-time i.e. **9 hours**.

For the summer term students may register for a maximum of **6** semester hours per session or **12** hours during an entire summer dual session. A maximum of **3** semester hours applies during the interim session. A student who is not using University facilities is not required to be registered for any classes during the summer and interim terms.

Graduating Semester

The Graduate School will make an exception for the student’s final semester as follows.

If a student submits the thesis/dissertation AND receives the graduate dean’s approval before a semester begins, the student is not required to register for the final semester, because the obligation to the University is over. The student, however, does need to apply for graduation at the beginning of the final semester to initiate the commencement process.

If a student submits the thesis/dissertation before a semester begins but does NOT receive the graduate dean’s approval (i.e., it is still in the Graduate School’s editorial process or still back with the student being corrected), the student is required to register for the next semester, but for only one hour.

Students receiving financial aid may not take advantage of these exceptions, please see below for minimum registration requirements.

Continuous Registration for Doctoral Students

Once a student has met the requirements for admission to candidacy for a doctoral degree, the student is expected to pursue completion of the dissertation without interruption by enrolling each semester for at least **3** hours of dissertation research.

Minimum Hours for Regulatory Bodies

Minimum hours of enrollment are subject to any state or federal regulations relating to a student's financial and citizenship situations. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Financial Aid:** Federal regulations mandate that a student who is receiving financial aid must be registered half-time. This means a course load of at least **4.5** hours for graduate students. Summer sessions are combined and treated as one semester for financial aid purposes. *Where a student is receiving financial aid the exception listed above regarding the graduating semester does not apply.* (Students with questions concerning financial aid regulations should contact the Student Financial Aid Office.)
2. **INS:** International students who are attending college on F1 visas must be enrolled in accordance with the institution's minimum registration requirements. International students may take advantage of the graduating semester exception listed above however the International Center will require a letter from the student's academic adviser indicating that it is the last semester. (Students should contact the Capstone International Center with regard to INS regulations.)
3. **IRS:** As long as a student is enrolled half-time, no withholding taxes will be deducted from any wages or stipend payments made to the student. Half-time means at least **3** hours in a fall or spring semester. *This is regardless of any exceptions listed above.*

Assistantships

All graduate assistants must be full-time graduate students taking the equivalent of 12 semester hours. However, actual enrollment varies from 1 to 12 hours of classes depending upon the work load of the assistantship. Because the student is receiving funding from the university, the Graduate School stipulates a minimum level of registration for each level of work load where a student receives an assistantship during the fall and/or spring semesters.

This is summarized as follows:

FTE level	Workload (hours per week)	Minimum registered hours
1.00	40	1
0.75	30	3
0.50	20	6
0.25	10	9

Exceptions to these minimum levels for graduate assistants are permitted where:

- It is the graduating semester and all degree requirements have been met. If the student fails to graduate at the end of the semester this dispensation is not allowed a second time.
- The student is registering in thesis/dissertation research hours only and in accordance with the department or program policies. This excludes “non” thesis/dissertation research.
- Summer and interim terms. Students are not required to register for any classes.

Remember that any student who holds an assistantship greater than 0.50 FTE AND who is receiving federal financial aid, the financial aid minimum of 4.5 hours will still apply.