

Location: Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Course Load

Current catalog copy:

Course Load

An appropriate course load is dependent upon two factors: the scholastic ability of the student as reflected by his/her academic history and the time available for study. For students without a graduate assistantship, a course load of 9 credit hours constitutes a normal full semester program for a graduate student. This is lower than the normal undergraduate load because of the extensive reading, independent thinking, and individual research required of graduate students. Generally, graduate students should not register for more than 12 credit hours during a semester.

A graduate assistant must register for at least six graduate-level credit hours during each semester in which an assistantship is awarded. Graduate assistants enrolled in the Graduate Assistance Support Plan (GASP) must register for a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours each term until they graduate, even if they exhaust all GASP funding before their final term.

International students on F-1 visa/status are required, by immigration regulations, to pursue a full course load during each academic semester, except during official school breaks (e.g., summer vacation and winter holidays) or unless a reduced course load is approved in advance by the Designated School Officer (DSO) at the International Students/Scholar Office. Failure to enroll for a full course load without prior approval is considered a violation of the F-1 legal status.

Proposed catalog copy:

Academic Load/Time Status for All Graduate Students

UNC Charlotte uses a standard Academic Load to determine time status of graduate students for Loan Deferment, Financial Aid, Visa Status, Payroll Tax Withholding, Graduate Student Support Plan Eligibility, and Veteran's Benefits. This Academic Load is the only resource used to determine a student's status for these purposes, and the following definitions apply to all graduate students, U.S. and international, participants and non-participants in the Graduate Student Support Plan.

An appropriate course load is dependent upon two factors: the scholastic ability of the student as reflected by his/her academic history and the time available for study. A course load of 9 semester hours constitutes a normal full semester program for a graduate student. This is lower than the normal undergraduate load because of the extensive reading, independent thinking, and individual research required of graduate students. Generally, graduate students should not register for more than 12 semester hours during a semester.

Students who hold an eligible graduate assistantship may hold the assistantship with 6 semester hours, unless they participate in the Graduate Assistant Support Plan (GASP) in which case they must be full time enrolled as defined below. Students enrolled in 6 semester hours, however, are not considered to be enrolled full time.

International students on F-1 visa/status are required, by immigration regulations, to pursue a full course load during each academic semester, except during official school breaks (e.g., summer vacation and winter holidays) unless a reduced course load is approved in advance by the Designated School Officer (DSO) at the International Student Scholar Office. Failure to enroll for a full course load without prior approval is considered a violation of the F-1 legal status. International students who hold a graduate assistantship must be full time enrolled as defined below.

Fall and Spring Semesters

Graduate students enrolled in doctoral program with a dissertation or in a master's program and pursuing the thesis option.

Full Time:

These students will be full time if they:

1. Enroll in at least 9 hours per semester, or
2. Have completed course work and the number of thesis/dissertation hours for credit in their graduate degree program, as well as the requisite milestones, and are approved to take GRAD 9800 or 7800 for 3 hours of credit (*may be repeatable with prior approval*), or
3. Have completed everything for their graduate degree program with the exception of the final defense, and the defense is scheduled within four weeks of the beginning of a semester, and are approved to take GRAD 9999 or 7999 (*one time only*).

Three Quarter (3/4) Time: 7-8 Hours

Half (1/2) Time: 5-6 Hours

Less than Half (1/2) Time: 1-4 Hours

Graduate students enrolled in degree programs not requiring a thesis or dissertation.

Full Time: 9+ Hours

Three Quarter (3/4) Time: 7-8 Hours

Half (1/2) Time: 5-6 Hours

Less than Half (1/2) Time: 1-4 Hours