

## 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 **in a fall or spring semester, while 6 semester hours constitutes a normal full load in a summer.** 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 **fall or spring semester or 9 semester hours in a summer 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.**

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*).

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
<b>Maximum Load:</b>	<b>12 Hours</b>

**Graduate students enrolled in degree or certificate 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
<b>Maximum Load:</b>	<b>12 Hours</b>

**Summer Semester**

**Graduate students enrolled in any program, with or without a dissertation or thesis option.**

Full Time:	6+ Hours
Three Quarter (3/4) Time:	4-5 Hours
Half (1/2) Time:	3 Hours
Less than Half (1/2) Time:	1-2 Hours
<b>*Maximum Load:</b>	<b>9 Hours</b>