

OSU Graduate College

Important Enrollment Considerations for Graduate Students

The following presents important (in some cases essential!) points for graduate students and advisors to bear in mind as students register for the Fall or Spring semesters. Attention to these matters prior to registration will minimize the occurrence of problems (and possible student disappointment) as the semester begins

ALL STUDENTS SHOULD PRINT A COPY OF THEIR SCHEDULE AND VERIFY ENROLLMENT. Mistakes due to student error may not be corrected after the final deadline for enrollment.

What are the minimum enrollment requirements?

- [Domestic Students holding at least 0.5 FTE assistantship.](#)
- [Domestic Students holding less than 0.5 FTE assistantship.](#)
- [Domestic Students receiving federal financial aid.](#)
- [International Students](#)
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For information regarding the following topics, click on the following choices:

- [Variable Credit Courses](#)
Students should print a copy of their schedule and verify the credit hours for which they are enrolled in such variable credit courses and adjust, if necessary. Failure to be enrolled in the proper number of hours and courses may result in loss of full-time status, violation of assistantship requirements (and thus loss of a non-resident tuition waiver), and/or loss of immigration status (for international students).
- [Continuous Enrollment](#)
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College will not allow late enrollment into independent study courses or research hours to compensate for dropping a course.
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All graduate students to enroll in research, thesis, or dissertation hours (as appropriate) each semester in which they are engaged in research leading to a thesis or dissertation.
- [Time Limits](#)
Masters students have seven years to complete their degree. Doctoral students have nine years to complete their degree. Students within two years of these time limits should be identified and encouraged to meet with their advisor, with a view to enrollment in remaining required courses (especially those offered rarely).
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Minimum Enrollment Requirements

The Graduate College receives several questions from students and faculty/staff concerning the minimum number of hours that students need to take (e.g., in order to be considered full-time). This is not a trivial question, and great care should be taken to take into account the student's graduation status, whether or not they hold an assistantship (and what FTE that assistantship carries), financial aid requirements, whether they are domestic/international, etc., before providing an answer. As a guide, we offer the following (but caution that combinations of these requirements, together with department/college requirements and the student's individual circumstances require careful attention in each case).

Domestic students:

- To be considered full time in a fall or spring semester, a domestic graduate student who is not on an assistantship, or who holds an assistantship *less than 0.5 FTE* (20 hours per week), must enroll in at least **nine** (9) hours;
- To be considered full time in a fall or spring semester, a domestic graduate student who holds an *0.5 FTE (or greater)* assistantship must enroll in at least **six** (6) hours
- Regardless of whether a student holds an assistantship, generally a domestic graduate student must enroll in a minimum of **four** (4) **graduate** credit hours that apply to their program to qualify for federal student loans [**for complete financial aid requirements, students should contact the Scholarship and Financial Aid office at 405-744-6604**] and must enroll in at least nine (9) **graduate** credit hours that apply to their program to qualify for the full amount of federal financial aid—students should contact the Scholarship and Financial Aid office for complete details.
- *Any semester that a student who is utilizing physical or faculty resources of the University (to include completing course requirements [including incomplete grades from previous semesters], creative component work, sitting for comprehensive exams, research leading to a thesis or dissertation, defending a thesis or dissertation, revising a thesis or dissertation, etc.) the student must be enrolled in a minimum of 2 hours. These hours should be appropriate to the type of work in which a student is engaged (e.g., 5000 for thesis work, 6000 for dissertation work).*

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International students:

In addition to the requirements for domestic students above, international students on F-1 and J-1 nonimmigrant visas are required – except in their *final semester* (see below) – to be enrolled and be full time in each fall and spring semester in order to maintain their immigration status, as recorded on the SEVIS system.

- Students who have been approved for Optional Practical Training (OPT) in a previous semester must be enrolled in a minimum of two hours.
- Students enrolled in Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or a required internship class (e.g., MBA, TCOM, HRAD) during the final semester must be enrolled in at least two hours, or whatever is required for the degree (whichever is greater), unless they hold an assistantship, in which case the greater requirement applies.
- In the final semester an international student need not be considered full-time. Students should verify final semester status through completion of the Final Semester Verification form available in the International Students & Scholars Office in 076 Student Union. *Note that the “Final Semester Verification form”, which requires approval of the advisor, department head, and graduate dean, must be completed before the end of the second week of the final semester; otherwise the full-time requirement will apply.*

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Variable Credit courses

Courses with numbers that end in a zero, such as 5000 (Thesis) and 6000 (Dissertation), are termed “variable credit courses.” When students enroll in such courses via the SIS website, the system defaults their enrollment to only one credit hour. *Students should print a copy of their schedule and verify the credit hours for which they are enrolled in such variable credit courses and adjust, if necessary. Failure to be enrolled in the proper number of hours and courses may result in loss of full-time status, violation of assistantship requirements (and thus loss of a non-*

resident tuition waiver), and/or loss of immigration status (for international students). Further, variable credit courses have a maximum number of hours that can be applied to the Plan of Study (see the OSU Catalog). Students should verify that courses on their Plans of Study do not violate this maximum number of hours. Verification of the correct number of hours for all courses is the responsibility of the student.

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Continuous Enrollment

It should be noted that students who are not required to maintain a full time enrollment might still be required to enroll in the upcoming semester in order to satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement. In order to enroll in a given semester, a student must have received grades for at least six semester credit hours (including I, R, SR and UR, but excluding W) in the twelve months prior to the beginning of that semester.

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Tuition Waivers

Graduate teaching assistants and graduate research assistants receive a certain level of resident tuition waiver, depending upon the level of appointment (3 credit hours for 0.25 FTE, 6 credit hours for 0.5 FTE). Note that should a student resign their assistantship or have their FTE reduced after the waiver has been awarded, the student's account will be charged an amount equal to the appropriate fraction of the award. Also, any course withdrawal that results in the remaining course load being below the minimum levels will result in the student account being charged an amount equivalent to the value by which the new course load falls short of the minimum required. ***The Graduate College will not allow late enrollment into independent study courses or research hours to compensate for dropping a course.*** Should a student withdrawal from a course, he or she must realize any academic or financial consequences of that decision.

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Students Engaged in Research

Following a recommendation from the Graduate Council, the Office of the Provost has approved a policy requiring ***all graduate students to enroll in research, thesis, or dissertation hours (as appropriate) each semester in which they are engaged in research leading to a thesis or dissertation.*** Such enrollment is "over and above" any minimum number of credit hours of thesis/dissertation/research hours that are required for a degree. Further, it is ***not*** limited by the maximum number of such hours that can be applied to a graduate degree.

Research Grades

Beginning Fall 2008 the grading model for courses numbered 5000 or 6000 (thesis or dissertation research) will change. Instead of getting "R" grades that change at the time of completion of the document, these courses will receive "SR" (for satisfactory research) or "UR" (for unsatisfactory research) in real time. These grades will be permanent and will not be changed.

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Time Limits

Master's students must submit their Plan of Study to the Graduate College before completing 17 credit hours and have 7 years from their first enrollment to complete their degree. Doctoral students must submit their Plan of Study prior to completing 28 hours and have 9 years from their first enrollment to complete their degree. ***Students within two years of these time limits should be identified and encouraged to meet with their advisor, with a view to enrollment in remaining required courses (especially those offered rarely).*** Note that credit for all courses used on a Plan of Study must have been awarded within 10 years of the time degree requirements are complete.

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Maximum Enrollment

Graduate students may enroll in a maximum of 16 hours toward their degree during each fall or spring semester. Requests for exceptions to this requirement should be directed to the Dean of the Graduate College, and should be supported with clear evidence indicating the student's capability to carry an excessive course load.

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Other Enrollment Considerations

It should be noted that students who are not appropriately enrolled may have to start repaying their student loans. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may result in a hold on registration and require submission of a new application for readmission to the graduate program. If readmitted, all degree requirements in effect at the time of readmission will apply.

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Timeliness of Enrollment

University policy does not permit students to add or adjust hours in regular semester courses or course hours after the end of the second week of the semester. For example, students are not permitted to increase their thesis/dissertation hours or switch from other courses to thesis/dissertation hours after the second week of the semester. Enrollment in appropriate courses therefore needs to be established during the registration period.

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Health Insurance

To qualify for the health insurance premium benefit, a graduate student must hold at least a .25 FTE (10 hours per week) assistantship and be enrolled full time. All international students with a J-1 visa must obtain health insurance, whether or not the premium is paid by the University. For those holding an F-1 visa, health insurance is optional, but strongly recommended.

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Visa Issues

Please remember that H1 visa holders are not allowed to hold graduate assistantships or to enroll in a full time course of study.

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Facility Use

A student must be enrolled in courses to use university facilities during the semester. These facilities include access to university computer laboratories, OSU Library book check out, and Colvin Center access.

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Graduate College Calendar

The Graduate College maintains a calendar of important events available for download from its website. The calendar may be found at: http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/current_student/calendar.html

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Thesis/Dissertation Submission

Draft thesis/dissertation submissions are still required on paper and must be signed by the thesis/dissertation committee chair prior to submission to the Graduate College. Students are strongly encouraged to submit final copies of theses/dissertations electronically—the process is quick and easy. For information about thesis/dissertation submission, see the following webpage: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/student/thesis.htm>. Students may also contact Mr. Michael Hepler in the Graduate College at 405-744-4658 for additional information.

Due dates for draft theses/dissertations, final copies of dissertations, defense forms, and admission to doctoral candidacy change slightly from semester to semester. Current due dates may be found in the University Catalog or on the web at: http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/current_student/calendar.html

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Graduation Process

In preparation for graduation students are encouraged to follow the Graduation Checklist to ensure that all final tasks are completed. The Graduation Checklist may be picked up at the Graduate College or downloaded from: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/default.htm>.

To initiate the graduation process students need to complete two tasks.

1. Preferably in the semester prior to anticipated graduation, but no later than the first day of the fourth month of the semester of anticipated graduation (April 1 or November 1), students should submit a signed and completed **Graduation Clearance Form** to the Graduate College (202 Whitehurst). This requires a meeting with the advisor or department designate to ensure that all requirements will be met by the various deadlines. In order to address any enrollment-related issues that might arise, students are strongly encouraged to complete this form before the end of the first two weeks of the final semester. All graduate students are required to submit a signed, completed Graduation Clearance Form (including distance education students and students from OSU-Tulsa). The Graduation Clearance Form may be picked up at the Graduate College, the Registrar's office or on the web at: http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/gradcord/Grad_Clear_form.pdf
2. Before the end of final's week of the final semester students should submit a completed online Diploma Application form to the Registrar. Students must have a completed Graduation Clearance form on file at the Graduate College before they are enabled to submit this form. If the student desires to have their name printed in the commencement booklet, s/he should file the diploma application prior to November 1 for a Fall graduation and April 1 for a Spring or Summer graduation. The Diploma Application is submitted via the Registrar's website at: <http://www.okstate.edu/registrar/>

If a student puts him/herself up for graduation and does not complete all graduation requirements by the stated deadlines, the student must resubmit both the Graduation Clearance Form (sign at the top and resubmit) and the Diploma Application before s/he will be allowed to enroll in a subsequent semester.

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Responsible Conduct of Research

Oklahoma State University is committed to ensuring that our graduate students are fully aware of the responsibilities and ethical standards associated with performing research. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of the recently implemented University Policy 4-0201, all graduate students (both new and returning) are required to complete, **during the Fall 2009 semester**, an online module relating to the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Further, each student employed as a graduate research assistant (supported by an external contract or grant) or enrolled in thesis (5000) or dissertation (6000) courses should complete the module **by the end of October**. The

module, which we are confident you will find informative, may be completed in one session, or over an extended period of time. This is a one-time-only requirement. You can find the module by clicking on the “RCR for Graduate Students” link on the left panel of the Graduate College website at gradcollege.okstate.edu. After you have satisfactorily completed the module, please print the completion certificate and bring it to your department office for filing.

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Incomplete Grades

All students should be aware that any incomplete grades granted from Fall 2008 onward have “default” grades assigned to them (e.g., I/D). In the event that the student does not complete the missing work, the course grade will automatically default to the default grade (in the example above, a ‘D’) after one year. **Any incomplete grades outstanding from Fall 2008 will revert to the default grade at the conclusion of the Fall 2009 semester.** The new grade will be permanent – it can no longer be changed simply by completing the missing work, and it **will** be included in the overall GPA. Therefore, students are urged to review their unofficial transcripts and take steps to resolve any incomplete grades earned in Fall 2008. (Incomplete grades for Spring and Summer 2009 should also be addressed as soon as possible.) Incomplete grades from semesters prior to Fall 2008 are past the one-year time limit provided by university policy to replace the ‘I’ with a letter grade. These ‘I’ grades can no longer be changed and will remain as permanent ‘I’ grades on the transcript. While any such ‘I’ grade has no effect on your GPA, it will require you to take the course again if it is required on your Plan of Study.

For all questions regarding Graduate College policies and procedures,
check the OSU Catalog or contact the Graduate College at:
202 Whitehurst • gradi@okstate.edu • TEL: 405-744-6368 • FAX: 405-744-0355