

# 3.14 Minimum Enrollment Requirements

## A. Requirements of Continuous Enrollment

After students are admitted to the Graduate School and enroll for the first time, they are required to maintain continuous enrollment. This mandates that students enroll each Fall and Spring semester, excluding Summer terms, until they graduate. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment results in termination of academic program. To re-enroll following termination, students must reapply for admission, pay the admission fee, and be granted admission by the program and the Graduate School (see Readmission, Section 2.3 (<http://catalog.ncsu.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/admissions/>))

### Exceptions

#### 1. Leave of Absence

Students who must interrupt their enrollment may, with a strong justification, request a leave of absence from graduate study for up to two semesters within a given graduate degree program. Students should initiate the request with their advisor and have it approved by their DGP before its submission to the Graduate School. The time spent on an approved leave of absence will be included in a degree's time limit; i.e., the degree "clock" does not stop, nor is it reset.

#### 2. Withdrawal

- Withdrawal prior to Census. An approved Leave of Absence is required of any graduate student who withdraws prior to Census.
- Withdrawing after Census. Withdrawal following Census constitutes continuous enrollment; therefore, a Leave of Absence is not required.

## Required Summer Enrollment

All students who take their final oral examination or submit their thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School during the Summer must be registered for at least one of the two summer sessions.

## No Registration Requirement related to ETD Submission

To be eligible for no registration, students must have been registered in the preceding semester or Summer term. Furthermore, they must have unconditionally passed their final oral exam and submitted their ETD for review prior to the first day of a subsequent term (inclusive of Summer) are not required to register for that semester/term (see the Table below for more details).

| Term Enrolled | Last Date for ETD Submission                                      | No-Registration Semester <sup>1</sup> |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Fall          | The last business day prior to the start of Spring semester       | Spring                                |
| Spring        | The last business day prior to the start of the first Summer term | Summer (either I or II)               |

|                |   |      |
|----------------|---|------|
| Summer I or II | The last business day prior to the start of the Fall term | Fall |
|----------------|---|------|

\*If students do not complete the ETD process by the term denoted here, they will be required to register for additional coursework to graduate.

## Graduation without Registration

Students who complete all degree requirements prior to the first day of the Fall or Spring semester or the first Summer term may graduate during the next semester or Summer term without being registered provided:

1. they were registered in the immediately preceding semester or summer session; and
2. they apply to graduate during that subsequent term.

Students whose only remaining requirement for graduation is removal of an "IN" (Incomplete) grade are not required to be registered in the following semester or term to complete the work and graduate; however, only one registration-free semester or term is allowed. See Section 3.18 for more details.

## B. Requirements for Full-/Half-Time Registration

### Fall and Spring Semesters

#### Thesis master's or doctoral students

- Full-Time: To be full-time, students must be enrolled in at least 9 hours per semester. If they have accumulated or will accumulate sufficient hours to meet the degree requirements (a minimum of 30 and 72 for master's and doctoral degrees, respectively), they will be considered full-time until they complete their thesis or dissertation provided they enroll for at least 3 credit hours.
- Half-Time: To be half-time, students must enroll in a minimum of 4.5 but not more than 8.5 hours a semester unless they have fulfilled the hours required for program (see details above).

### Master's students enrolled in a program not requiring a thesis

Master's students enrolled in plans allowing both a thesis and a non-thesis option will be classified as "non-thesis" students and subject to these rules until such time as a graduate Plan of Work designating the thesis-option is approved by the Graduate School.

- Full Time: To be full-time, students must be enrolled in at least 9 hours per semester.
- Half Time: To be half-time, students must enroll in a minimum of 4.5 but not more than 8.5 hours a semester.

### International Students

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (<https://www.uscis.gov/>) requires international students on F-1 or J-1 visas to carry a full-time course of study to remain in status. Students in their final semester who have completed the minimum hours required for a degree can use the Reduced Course Load form to enroll in fewer hours.

### Co-op Students

Co-op students registered for COP 500 will be considered full-time. Students registered for only COP 501 will be considered half-time.

## Waiver of Hours

Graduate students who meet certain prescribed special conditions, may be certified as either a full-time or half-time in cases where they do not meet the requirements for such as outlined above. A waiver of the uniform academic load rules requires attestation on behalf of the student by their committee chair, academic advisor, or their Director of Graduate Program and approval by the University.

## Summer Terms

- Graduate students are not required to register during the summer.
- Students not enrolled in the Summer maintain their access to the library, but other facilities that are funded by students fees, such as the gym and Student Health Services, cannot be accessed without paying for a summer membership.
- Students who are employed as Graduate Research Assistants, but who are not enrolled in the University during a period of at least five weeks, are subject to Social Security tax withholding. Specifically, given Federal tax law as it relates to employment outside of student status, Social Security taxes will be withheld in June for RAs who are not registered in Summer Session I and in July for RAs who are not registered in Summer Session II. The source of funds that pays the stipend must pay the same amount of Social Security tax as is withheld from the student's paycheck during these months.
- Two special registration categories are available for Graduate Research Assistants who would not otherwise take courses in the summer: XXX 696 (Summer Thesis Research) and XXX 896 (Summer Dissertation Research), where XXX represents the course prefix of a specific department/program. Each of these courses is for 1 hour of credit, which is considered full-time enrollment for tax purposes, for the Summer and which run for 10 weeks, beginning the first day of Summer Session I and extend into Session II. Social Security taxes will not be withheld from the June or July paychecks of RAs who register for either 696 or 896.
- Please note that students who are not registered at least half time during the Summer are ineligible for Financial Aid during that period.