

# Full-Time Status

A graduate (nondoctoral) student is considered a full-time student if they are enrolled in 9 quarter hours of graduate credit for the quarter. An exception is made for students matriculated in master's degree programs that only require 4-credit courses, in which case full-time student status is attained with enrollment in 8 quarter hours of graduate credit for the quarter.

A doctoral student's full-time status is determined by the structure of the program.

Note that full-time status may be defined differently for federal loan purposes. International students have other considerations/requirements to maintain their visa eligibility.

## Course Load

Federal financial aid recipients must be enrolled in and successfully complete a minimum number of credits each term to maintain eligibility. For more information, contact your financial aid counselor.

## Course Overload

A maximum course load (different from full-time status) for a graduate (nondoctoral) student is 16 credits taken across a 12-week term, with no more than 8 credits per 6-week session.

To be eligible for a course overload (greater than 16 credits per 12-week term or greater than 8 credits per 6-week session), a graduate (nondoctoral) student must:

- Have a record of successful study with 12 or more credits a term at Northeastern University
- Have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.500
- Provide a rationale to support the request

Students need to complete the appropriate form and return it to their career and academic advisor. Course overload is approved per term.

Each doctoral program has its own enrollment and course load requirements. Doctoral students who wish to seek a course overload must consult with the program director or designee.

## International Student Enrollment Requirements

### IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

International students studying at Northeastern are responsible for maintaining compliance with U.S. federal regulations. Failure to maintain full-time enrollment, in accordance with these regulations, can result in consequences. Regular consultation with college academic advisors, as well as Office of Global Services international student advisors, is required before taking any action that may impact immigration status and educational endeavors in the United States.

### ACHIEVING FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT STATUS

Full-time enrollment status must be maintained by F-1 students throughout the academic year. To achieve full-time status, graduate students must be enrolled in 8–9 credits throughout each academic term. Students can consult with their college academic advisor prior to each term to develop a course schedule to maintain full-time status. F-1 students are expected to study on-ground and cannot enroll in an online course without first speaking to a college academic advisor to confirm eligibility. If approved, F-1 students who need to withdraw/drop from a course must withdraw/drop from the additional online course first and not from any of the on-ground core courses in order to maintain full-time status.

### COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES ACADEMIC TERM

In CPS, each academic term in fall, winter, and spring is defined as a quarter term consisting of 12 weeks. Some courses are scheduled for the entire 12 weeks, while others are scheduled for either the first 6 weeks or the last 6 weeks (parts of a term). A full summer term consists of 8 weeks. Some courses are scheduled for the entire 8 weeks of a term, while others are scheduled for parts of a term.

### FINAL TERM

F-1 students are required to maintain full-time enrollment status, except in the final academic term of degree completion. If the course requirements for degree completion are less than 8–9 credits, they must be completed on-ground throughout the entire final term.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR SUMMER TERM OFF

All students, regardless of the term in which they begin studies, (e.g., CPS winter or spring quarter terms) are eligible to take the summer term off as their standard vacation term, as long as they confirm enrollment in the following fall term and they are not starting or ending their program of study in that same summer term.

## Directed Study

Directed studies are offered when a course is required for a student's program of study but said course is not available in a given academic term and there is immediacy for a student to complete said course. Academic deans/directors will make the decision if there is a compelling need to run a course as a directed study.

## **Independent Study**

Independent study is an opportunity for a degree student to work independently under the supervision of an instructor to undertake special research, literature review, or experimental study projects in areas related to their program of study that they cannot accomplish as part of a standard course in the curriculum. A degree student may take up to two independent studies. The work to be done for an independent study is usually crafted by the student, with faculty input. Independent studies are entirely optional and not needed to graduate. A completed Request for Independent Study form, signed by both the student and the faculty member, must be submitted to the academic program for review and approval.