A graduate (nondoctoral) student is considered a full-time student if he or she is 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 twelve-week term, with no more than 8 credits per six-week session.

To be eligible for a course overload (greater than 16 credits per twelve-week term or greater than 8 credits per six-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 (http://cps.neu.edu/student-resources/academic-forms.php) and return it to their student success specialist (http://cps.neu.edu/student-resources/OAA-Staff.php). 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**

In order to maintain lawful student status in the United States, international students must be mindful of the rules and regulations that govern their nonimmigrant visa classification. Numerous U.S. federal regulations make it especially important for students in the "F" (student) and "J" (exchange visitor) categories to consult regularly with an international student advisor at the International Student and Scholar Institute (ISSI) before taking any action that might impact their immigration status and educational endeavors in the United States.

All international students in F or J status must register before each quarter starts. It is strongly recommended that international students register for an appropriate full-time course load at least two weeks before the quarter starts. Any exceptions from full-time registration requirements must be preapproved by the OGS in accordance with specified regulations.

In the College of Professional Studies, there are four quarters that make up each academic year. Each twelve-week quarter (term) in fall, winter, and spring is made up of Parts of Term (courses that are scheduled for less than twelve weeks). Some courses are scheduled for the entire twelve weeks of a quarter, while others are scheduled for either the first six weeks or the last six weeks. A full summer term is eight weeks with Parts of Term as well. Students in F-1 and J-1 status must remain registered at all times during a quarter to remain in compliance. International students are not allowed to take courses during only one-half of an academic quarter. Restrictions on course formats apply to international student enrollment requirements.

To achieve full-time status, graduate and doctoral international students must be enrolled in 8-9 credits each quarter. International students should consult with their student success specialist to develop a course plan to maintain their international student status.

For a 9-credit course load, international students must take at least 6 credits of courses that are held on campus, in the blended or hybrid format. Students may not take classes on campus for just the first or second six weeks of an eight or twelve-week quarter and then take only online courses during the other half of the term. For an 8-credit course load, international students must take at least 4 credits of courses that are held on campus, in blended or hybrid format. Students may not take classes on campus for just the first or second six weeks of an eight or twelve-week quarter and then take only online courses during the other half of the term.

Full-time status must be maintained for F-1 visa students throughout the academic year with the following exceptions:

- A student whose first term is not summer does not need to be enrolled in the summer term.
- If a student’s first term of enrollment is summer, he or she must be enrolled full-time that summer. For the second and subsequent summer terms, he or she does not need to be enrolled.
- In the final academic term of a student’s program of study, enrollment may be for fewer than 9 credits, but it must either be on campus or a combination of on campus and online throughout the entire term.
- Contact the OGS (http://www.northeastern.edu/issi/contactus.html) if you would like or need one-on-one guidance and assistance on the vast array of federal requirements and procedures related to immigration and maintaining your legal status throughout your studies.

**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 his or her program of study that he or she 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
Full-Time Status

studies are entirely optional and not needed to graduate. A completed Request for Independent Study form (http://www.cps.neu.edu/student-resources/academic-forms.php), signed by both the student and the faculty member, must be submitted to the academic program for review and approval.