A student is considered a full-time undergraduate student if he or she is enrolled in a minimum of 12 semester hours of undergraduate credit for the semester.

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 semester to maintain eligibility. For more information, contact your financial aid counselor.

Students who are not studying in F-1 or J-1 status and who are eligible to study in the United States may be enrolled part-time or full-time. Applicants in B-1/B-2 status cannot enroll part-time or full-time; however, they may choose to apply for a change to a status in the United States and may enroll only upon approval by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Course Overload

A maximum course load (not full-time status) for an undergraduate student is 18 credits taken across a 15-week semester, with no more than 9 credits per half-semester session.

To be eligible for a course overload (more than 18 credits per 15-week semester or more than 9 credits per half-semester session), an undergraduate student must:

- Have a record of successful study at Northeastern University—transfer students must wait at least one term to request an overload
- Have a minimum cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.000
- Provide a rationale to support the request

A student needs to complete the appropriate form and return it to his or her career and academic coach. If approved, the student is required to pay the normal tuition charges for all attempted courses. He or she is responsible for informing his or her financial aid counselor, if applicable, and for making the necessary arrangements to manage the increased workload. Should an approved course overload impact an international student’s degree completion date and his or her visa end date, the student is responsible for informing the Office of Global Services (OGS) (http://www.northeastern.edu/ogs).

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

To achieve full-time status, undergraduate international students in F-1 or J-1 visa classification must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits each semester. Students must be enrolled in fall semester and spring semester each academic year. For a 12-credit course load, the student must take at least 8 to 9 credits of on-ground courses that are held fully on campus or in the blended or hybrid format to remain in compliance with U.S. federal government regulations. Thus, students enrolled in a full-time course load of 12 credits per academic term may take up to one 3- or 4-credit course online or 3 credits online per term to count toward their full-time course load of 12 credits. J-1 students can only take on-ground courses to count toward full-time student status. Once students reach full-time enrollment status, they may take additional online courses if desired if allowed by their academic program. Students must have on-ground course presence throughout the entire academic term.

In the College of Professional Studies, many courses are offered for half of the academic semester (parts of term). Students in F-1 and J-1 status must be enrolled at all times during a full semester to remain in compliance with U.S. federal government regulations. Students who are enrolled in programs that include courses that are offered for half of the academic term should have on-ground course enrollment (which includes courses held fully on campus or in blended or hybrid format as explained above) throughout the entire academic term. Enrolling in only online courses for any part of the term will result in loss of F-1/J-1 status.

Full-time status must be maintained by students in F-1 and J-1 visa classification 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 12 credits if the student has fewer than 12 credits left to complete their academic program, but the student may not be enrolled in only online courses at any time during the academic term. The student must have on-ground course enrollment throughout the academic term.
- In the last term, a student must still adhere to the online course limitations explained above .
- Students may apply to the OGS for authorization for a reduced course load for a very limited number of reasons that are allowed for by U.S. federal government regulations. A reduced course load is allowed only once per degree level. Please see the OGS website or an advisor at the OGS for more detailed information.

Contact the OGS office (http://www.northeastern.edu/ogs/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.