Enrollment Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions
For F-1 Students

Overview
What is the minimum credit requirement for F-1 students?
Immigration regulations require F-1 students to be enrolled full time during the fall and spring semesters.

Are there any enrollment requirements for summer?
Summer is considered a vacation period for continuing F-1 students. However, F-1 students are required to enroll full time during the summer if:
- Summer is first semester at ISU (applies to both initial and reentry students)
- Summer is first semester in new academic level
- Summer is final semester in program (degree or non-degree)
- Spring II was first term at ISU (applies to IEOP students only)

Are there any exceptions to the full-time enrollment requirement?
A Reduced Course Load (RCL) is requested when a student wishes an exception for the full-time enrollment requirements. Review the Reduced Course Load FAQ on the ISSO website for more information on the RCL and eligibility requirements.

Full-Time Enrollment
How is full-time enrollment defined?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate without Assistantship</th>
<th>Graduate with Assistantship</th>
<th>IEOP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall/Spring</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
<td>Determined by department</td>
<td>20 clock hours*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
<td>4.5 credits</td>
<td>Determined by department</td>
<td>18 clock hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Regulations state 18 clock hours, but IEOP policy is 20 clock hours

Online Course Restrictions
How many online courses can I take each semester?
You may not have more than one online class count toward full-time enrollment, and no more than 3 credits of that course may count toward full-time enrollment.
- Undergraduate Scenarios (fall or spring semester):
  1. 9 credits on campus + one 3-credit online course = full-time enrollment.
  2. 11 credits on campus + one 1-credit online course = full-time enrollment.
- Graduate Scenarios (fall or spring semester):
  1. 6 credits on campus + one 3-credit online course = full-time enrollment.
  2. 8 credits on campus + one 1-credit online course = full-time enrollment.
**Other Course Restrictions**

Which courses are not included in determining full-time enrollment?

- Audited courses
- Courses dropped after the semester has begun
  - Receive a mark of an "X" or "W"
- More than one class (not to exceed 3 credits) taken online or through distance education for determining full-time enrollment

**Research Abroad Requirements**

What are the eligibility requirements for conducting research abroad while maintaining F-1 status?

- Must have completed all coursework for academic program
- Must be enrolled in ISU Health Insurance while doing research abroad
- Must be approved every semester to do research abroad
- Must receive a strong letter of support from Faculty Adviser

What are the requirements to maintain F-1 status while doing research outside of the U.S.?

- Register as a full-time student (or have an RCL approved) at ISU every semester.
- Obtain a travel signature on your I-20 before departing the U.S.
- Continue to check your ISU email while you are outside of the U.S.

After being approved to do research abroad, what must I do prior to my return to the U.S.?

- Contact ISSO at least 1 month prior to your return to let us know you are coming back
- Check your passport, F-1 visa, I-20, and travel signature for validity
- Present your immigration documents to ISSO for review upon your return to ISU

**Immigration Consequences**

What are the immediate consequences if I do not meet enrollment requirements?

- Violation of F-1 nonimmigrant status
  - Must apply for reinstatement or depart U.S. and return on new I-20 to regain F-1 status
- Must immediately stop working on campus
- Any authorized off-campus work will be automatically terminated
- Lose eligibility for all other benefits of F-1 nonimmigrant status
- Lose eligibility to change status, for example from F-1 to F-2, F-1 to H-1B, etc.

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**Disclaimer:** This *Frequently Asked Questions* document is intended for general information and guidance. Please consult with an International Student and Scholar Advisor in the International Students and Scholars Office regarding your individual request.