

# ACADEMIC LOAD POLICIES

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## Full-Time Academic Load Definition for Graduate Students

Graduate students enrolled in nine or more credits during a regular semester or five credits during a summer session are considered full-time students. All students registered for fewer than those specified totals are classified as part-time students, unless they hold an assistantship position at UMKC.

Full-time enrollment for students holding at least a .50 FTE graduate assistantship appointment is six hours in a regular semester or three hours in a summer session. GTAs/GRAs are expected to make normal progress toward their degrees and should enroll in a minimum of six hours per semester (three credits in the summer session). However, GTA/GRA appointees who have completed all required coursework for the degree and who are working full time on research need only enroll for one credit hour.

These designations of full time are for academic purposes only and do not apply to assessment of fees or degree program residency requirements. Note that this policy in no way alters the residency requirements and criteria for doctoral degrees. Further, international students holding GTA/GRA appointments also must abide by requirements of the U.S. Immigration Service and should consult the international student advisor before reducing their course loads.

## Special Cases: Requests for GTA/GRA Appointments Greater than Half Time and Requests for Exemption from Social Security Withholding for GTAs/GRAs

GTA/GRA appointments are normally restricted to no more than 20 hours per week (.5 full-time employee). Requests for GTA/GRA appointments greater than .5 FTE must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies prior to the beginning of the appointment and must be accompanied by a statement from the student's major advisor that the additional work load will neither place the student at risk academically nor impede the student's academic progress.

Graduate students holding GTA/GRA appointments are automatically exempt from Social Security withholding tax as long as they are enrolled in at least six credit hours. If the student's enrollment falls below six credit hours, the student's academic unit may certify his or her eligibility for continued exemption for one of the following two reasons:

- The GRA is a doctoral student working in a research laboratory as a component of the educational requirement and is enrolled in the minimum number of research hours required for doctoral students who have passed comprehensive examinations.
  - The GTA or GRA is a graduate student enrolled in fewer than six credit hours because it is the student's exit semester.
- Certification forms are available in the School of Graduate Studies office. The form requires signatures from the student's major advisor and the principal graduate advisor of the student's academic unit. After these individuals have signed the form, it must be sent to the School of Graduate Studies for recommendation. The School of Graduate Studies forwards the completed request to the Payroll Office for final action on the request.

## Restricted Academic Loads

Limitation on the size of the academic load for which graduate students can register might be imposed by the dean or faculty advisor. Generally, students on probation are required to restrict the academic program to a minimum full-time load until they have returned to good standing.

## Interpretation of Full-Time and Half-Time Status of Graduate Students for Purposes of Certification to Lending/Funding Agencies

To be eligible for certification of full-time status as a graduate student, a student must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Enrollment in nine credit hours.
- Ph.D., D.M.A., D.N.P. and Ed.D. candidates who have passed their doctoral comprehensive examinations and are enrolled in at least one credit hour (not to exceed 10 semesters of certification under this category).

To be eligible for certification of half-time status as a graduate student, a student must be enrolled in at least five credit hours.

## Special Cases and Limitations on Registrar's Certification to Lending/Funding Agencies:

- Ph.D. D.M.A., D.N.P. or Ed.D. students who have not taken and passed their doctoral comprehensive examinations and who do not meet one of the other enrollment qualifications for certification (e.g., student has completed most/all coursework, is completing pre-dissertation work, but has not yet taken and passed comprehensive exams) may petition the principal graduate advisor in their academic unit for special consideration. If, based on a review of the student's petition, the principal graduate advisor believes the student for full-time or half-time status, the principal graduate advisor may submit a request to the Registrar's Office.
- Work to satisfy an incomplete grade or grades from a previous term or terms does not count toward certification. Therefore, a class may be used only in status calculation for one term. Since the hours are used in status calculation during the original term of enrollment, that is the only term that the hours may be counted.
- Status may not be calculated nor certified for future terms.