F-1 and J-1 Students: Full Course of Study

Full Course of Study

The “full course of study” requirement for degree-seeking and guest UA students in F-1 or J-1 status is as follows during the fall and spring semesters:

- 12 credit hours for undergraduate students,
- 12 credit hours for law students, and
- 9 credit hours for graduate students.*

*Per University Rule 3359-60-06.2, graduate students enrolled in at least one graduate credit hour are considered full time if they provide confirmation that they are:
  - A doctoral student in their final semester of study, who has completed all degree requirements except the dissertation, or
  - A student participating in an authorized Curricular Practical Training or Academic Training of 30 or more hours per week.

Summer enrollment: A student typically does not need to register during the summer semester, but the student must register for a full course of study if summer is the student’s first or final semester.

Exceptions:

- **Reduced course load** (RCL) may be authorized by a Designated School Official, on account of:
  - **Academic difficulties** during the first semester
    - Students must maintain a minimum of 6 undergraduate or law credits or 5 graduate credits; and
    - Academic advisor must recommend an RCL for one of the following reasons:
      - Initial difficulty with the English language and reading requirements,
      - Initial unfamiliarity with American teaching methods, or
      - Improper course level placement.
  - **Final semester** of the student’s academic program and fewer courses are needed to complete the program, as confirmed by the academic advisor.
  - **Medical reasons**, as recommended by an M.D., D.O., or licensed clinical psychologist.
- **Undergraduate full-time CPT**: student must be authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and registered for a co-op or internship course that the Registrar determines is equivalent to full-time enrollment.
- **Concurrent enrollment** at another institution may count toward the full course of study requirement if the student provides proof of enrollment at an SEVP-certified institution and an approved Transient Permission Form indicating the credits have been approved for transfer back to UA.

Online and Distance Learning Courses

J-1 students may not count any “online” courses toward their full course of study requirement.

F-1 students may count no more than one class or 3 credits per semester toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken “online.”
After an F-1 or J-1 student meets the “full course of study” requirement as set forth above, he or she may take additional online courses.

For purposes of this policy, an “online” course is defined as a course offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission, and which does not require the student’s physical attendance for classes, examination, or other purposes integral to completion of the class.

The International Center does not consider the following course categories to be “online” at this time:

- Web-enhanced – these courses are not offered “principally” through television, audio, or computer transmission because they are 30% or less online,
- Web-based – according to the course proposals, these courses have some physical attendance component integral to completion of the class, and
- Distance learning courses attended at the UA Main Campus, Wayne College, or a UA additional campus that is SEVIS-certified (Holmes, Lakewood, Medina, or Midpoint).

If a student is attending a distance learning course at an additional location, he or she should check with the International Center to see if the course may otherwise count toward the “full course of study” requirement as “concurrent enrollment” at another institution.

**Note:**

If the remaining courses a student must take to complete the academic program are only available online, the student must enroll in additional in-person courses to fulfill the “full course of study” requirement, even if the courses are academically unnecessary. The International Center recognizes this policy is not favorable to students, but federal regulations and Department of Homeland Security guidance do not allow for exceptions at this time. Students and academic advisors are encouraged to plan ahead accordingly.

**Withdrawal**

A student’s withdrawal from a course that results in the student dropping below a full course of study will be cause for termination of the student’s SEVIS record, unless the student has first received approval from the International Center for an RCL or Authorized Early Withdrawal.