

International Student Full Time Enrollment Policy



All students on F-1 and J-1 visas are required to pursue a “full course of study” each spring and fall semester to maintain their visa status. For undergraduates, a minimum of 12 units are required. For graduates, a minimum of 8 units are required. Graduate students who are enrolled in adjunct status and working on thesis, project, or other culminating activity are considered to be full-time students. Likewise, students authorized for full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are considered to be full-time students. Taking a reduced courseload may be authorized based only on one of the following circumstances:

A. Illness or Medical Condition

Reduced courseload or no courseload may be authorized based on recommendation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist. No more than 12 months in total of reduced courseload based on medical reasons may be granted during a single program level (ie. bachelors or masters).

B. Initial Difficulty with English Language/ Reading Requirements/ U.S. Teaching Methods

During a student’s first semester in the U.S., a student who experiences difficulty based on language or teaching methods, may apply for permission to take less than a full course of study. This condition may also be used if a student attempts to take a full courseload and for one of these three reasons, wishes to withdraw from some classes. If the application for reduced courseload is granted, both graduate and undergraduate students may take as few as 6 units that semester. During the next semester, students must resume taking a full courseload. If this condition is used, the student may not make an application based on improper course placement during that program level (such as bachelors or masters).

C. Improper Course Level Placement

If a student is placed in a course that is too easy or too difficult, the student may withdraw from the course after receiving permission from an International Student Advisor. A letter from the course professor or department explaining the improper placement must be submitted first. A student may withdraw from more than one course for this reason, but must maintain enrollment in at least 6 units. This condition may be used during only one semester and may not be used if the Initial Difficulty condition (see above) has been used.

D. Teaching/Research Assistantship

A graduate student may take a minimum of 6 units, or an undergraduate may take a minimum of 9 units, if an assistantship has been offered and the demands of the assistantship make taking a full course of study infeasible. A letter from the department verifying the assistantship offer and demands of the position must be submitted.

E. Concurrent Enrollment

A student may take less than a full course of study at CSU, Chico, if classes are being taken elsewhere which add up to a full course of study. Only one online course each semester may count toward the full course of study requirement. Proof of concurrent enrollment must be submitted to the International Student Advisors by the end of the add/drop period.

F. Last Semester of Degree

During the last semester of earning a degree, students may need only a few courses to graduate. Under these conditions, students may take less than a full courseload after notifying an International Student Advisor.

For permission to take less than a full courseload, applications must be submitted to an International Student Advisor by the end of the second week of classes. Students considering taking online courses are recommended to review the International Students Online Course Policy.