



University Community (faculty, staff and students)

SUBJECT (R*)	EFFECTIVE DATE (R)	PROCEDURE NUMBER
FULL-TIME COURSE LOAD FOR GRADUATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN MASTER'S THESIS OR DISSERTATION SEGMENT	November 2006	2513.005m

PROCEDURE STATEMENT (R)

International graduate students must be enrolled full-time each Fall and Spring semesters with enrollment for at least 9 graduate-level credits. Summer enrollment is optional unless student is completing his/her degree in a Summer term.

Full-time enrollment is required for graduate international students admitted for Summer terms in which case, the students will be subject to enrollment for at least 6 graduate-level credit hours. Enrollment for subsequent summer terms is optional.

Students in their Thesis or Dissertation segment of the program may comply with the full-time enrollment as follows:

- A student is subject to course load of 9 credit hours until his/her Master's Thesis proposal is approved or until he/she reaches candidacy (usually determined by successfully passing qualifying exams).
- Thereafter, student may register for 3 credit hours of Thesis or Dissertation each Fall and Spring semester to maintain legal status until he/she successfully defends Thesis or Dissertation and completes his/her degree. During the Summer semester, student may register below 3 credits only if he/she is completing degree by end of Summer OR if he/she is continuing attendance in Fall semester.
- Graduate students who wish to avail of this registration option must file an "Advancement to Thesis of Dissertation Segment" form with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and get an approval from an ISSS advisor before he/she is confirmed as maintaining legal status.
- An Approved "Advancement to Thesis/Dissertation" is valid for the duration of research period stated on the form.

IMPORTANT: Above full-time course load provision applies only to graduate students who are not being funded by FIU or University Graduate School (UGS).

Effective Fall 2004, UGS amended the University policy requiring all graduate students receiving tuition waivers, presidential fellowships and/or grant contract funding to register for at least 9 Thesis or Dissertation credits, whichever applies each Fall and Spring semester and at least 6 Thesis or Dissertation credits, whichever applies, during the Summer term in order to meet full-time enrollment requirement. This requirement supersedes SEVIS regulations.

A. Procedures Three (3) credit option:

- Student must complete and submit an "Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment" to ISSS.
- ISSS Advisor will review student's record, enrollment summary and ISSS file. If all is in order, ISSS Advisor will approve the request and do the following:
 - Update PASS under "Full Course Exception" enter credit hours and Remarks: "RCL Thesis (or Dissertation, if appropriate)" include last term indicated by academic advisor on form.
 - Advisor will sign form and make comments in remarks section: "Student must resubmit this form each fall."
 - Make form available to student for pick up.
 - Write clear and appropriate notes in student's ISSS file.
- Student picks up copy of the approved "Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment" form.
- The student provides UGS copy of the form.

- e. Graduate students who fall under this category and are approved for RCL are precluded from enrolling for any other courses (i.e., related/unrelated or special interest courses), except for non-credit Seminar courses as may be required by academic department.

B. Procedure for One (1) Credit Defense Option:

- a. Students who are defending their thesis or dissertation may opt for one credit of enrollment if authorized by academic advisor on “Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment” of form.
- b. ISSS Advisor inputs authorization in PASS under Full Course Exception. Indicate Term and credits.

Graduate students who fail to defend or must extend may request a second RCL under this provision if they notify ISSS prior to program end date on I-20:

- 1. Student submits additional form to ISSS.
- 2. Advisor inputs authorization into PASS F/M Alerts and indicates remarks: “Last Term RCL student must complete program or fall out of status.”
- 3. New I-20 is issued to student.

Students who fail to meet the full-time enrollment requirement as detailed above will be out-of-status and ineligible for any F-1 benefits.

REASON FOR PROCEDURE (O*)

To assist students in compliance with the full-time enrollment requirement under immigration regulations. This procedure was created pursuant to 8 C.F.R. §§ 214.2(f)(6)(iii) and 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(C); Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP); U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE); University Graduate School; ISSS.

RESPONSIBILITIES (O)

ISSS retains the original copy of the approved (or denied) “Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment”.

HISTORY (O*)

Effective Date: January 2003; Revision Date(s): November 2006.

RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT (R*)

Division of Student Affairs
Florida International University

RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT (R*)

International Student and Scholar Services
11200 S.W. Eighth Street, GC 355
Miami, Florida 33199
Telephone Number (305) 348-2421

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For any questions or comments, the “Document Details” view for this procedure online provides complete contact information.

R = Required *O = Optional