



## Full Course of Study Requirement

The Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) requires all F-1 international students to enroll in a full course of study each semester. The summer semester is considered vacation so students are not required to enroll unless it is their first semester at A&M-Commerce. For more information go to <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2013/09/what-is-a-full-course-of-study>.

**Graduate student:** A full course of study is a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours each fall and spring semester for graduate students. Web enhanced “E” courses are considered face to face classes. *Only one (1) online “W” course (three 3 hours) will count toward this full course of study requirement.* Below are some examples to help clarify:

- Graduate student enrolled in 6 hours face to face and 3 hours online. Correct!
- Graduate student enrolled in 6 hours face to face and 6 hours online. Correct!

**Undergraduate student:** A full course of study is a minimum of twelve (12) semester credit hours each fall and spring semester for undergraduate students. Web enhanced “E” courses are considered face to face courses. *Only one (1) online “W” course (three 3 hours) will count toward this full course of study requirement.* Below are some examples to help clarify:

- Undergraduate student enrolled in 9 hours face to face and 3 hours online. Correct!
- Undergraduate student enrolled in 9 hours face to face and 6 hours online. Correct!
- Undergraduate student enrolled in 8 hours face to face and 6 hours online. Not correct!

**Full-time ELI student:** Students in the English Language Institute will enroll in a minimum of 21.5 hours and the ELI staff will report the enrollment to the ISSS each semester.

**Face to Face Courses:** A face to face course is a course that meets in person during the semester. In the [university schedule of classes](#) a face to face [course section number](#) will generally end in a number. In addition, courses whose section number ends with the following [letters \(suffix code\)](#) are also considered face to face courses: “E” web enhanced course and “L” lab courses. A hybrid “B” course is also considered face to face if it meets in person at least 50% of the time during the semester. For more information please see the Online or Distance Learning Courses section.

**Online or Distance Learning Courses:** F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. **A strictly online course is indicated by a “W” after the course section number on the [university schedule of classes](#).** A course must meet in person face to face on-campus (or an instructional site) at least 50% of the time during the semester or session to be considered a face to face course for visa purposes.

**Summer semester enrollment:** International students are not required to enroll in courses during the summer semester unless the summer semester is their first semester at A&M-Commerce. The

summer semester is considered vacation for students by SEVP and students may travel within or outside the U.S., enroll in courses (no restrictions for online or face to face), or remain in the U.S. and not study. **New international students** who begin their academic program at A&M-Commerce in the summer must enroll in at least six (6) credit hours for the summer semester with 3 hours face to face in summer session 1 and the remaining 3+ hours online or face to face in summer session 1 or 2.

**Final Semester:** Students in their final semester may enroll in less than a full course of study. *For reporting requirements see the How to Report Eligibility for an RCL section.* Students completing in the summer may take online courses. Please see below for guidance:

- Undergraduate student with only 9 hours remaining may take 6 hours face to face and 3 hours online
- Undergraduate student with only 6 hours remaining may take 3 hours face to face and 3 hours online
- ***Undergraduate student with only 3 hours remaining must be face to face (except summer)***
- Graduate student with only 6 hours remaining may take 3 hours face to face and 3 hours online
- ***Graduate student with only 3 hours remaining must be face to face (except summer)***

**Full-time Graduate Assistantship (FT GA):** Students with a full-time graduate assistantship may take less than a full course of study. Students who lose their FT GA during the semester and are enrolled in less than a full course of study for the FT GA may be in violation of their visa status. Students will also need to consult the [Graduate School](#) regarding any additional enrollments requirements for FT GA's. Student with a full-time GA may take 3 hours face to face and the remaining 3+ hours face to face or online. *For reporting requirements please see How to Report Eligibility for an RCL.* Please see below for more guidance:

- Three (3) hours face to face and three (3) hours online (W). Correct!
- Three (3) hours face to face and six (6) hours online (W). Correct!
- Three (3) hours face to face and nine (9) hours online (W). Correct!
- Final semester and three (3) hours online (W) only. Only allowed for summer!

**How to Report Eligibility for an RCL:** if you need to enroll in less than a full course of study you **MUST** have the permission of an international advisor at the ISSS **BEFORE** enrolling in less than a full course of study. Each section below explains the process for reporting to the ISSS.

- **Full-time graduate assistantship-** students with a full-time GA may enroll in 6 hours with 3 hours face to face and the remaining 3+ hours face to face or online. ***Students must submit the [Reduce Course Load Form](#) prior to the beginning of the semester.*** This form notifies the ISSS of a student's eligibility for the Reduced Course Load. No additional action is necessary.
- **Final semester-** students in their final semester may take less than a full course of study but there are still limits to the allowed number of online courses. Please see the section above regarding final semester enrollment. ***Students must submit the [Reduce Course Load Form](#) prior to the beginning of the semester.*** This form notifies the ISSS of a student's eligibility for the Reduced Course Load. No additional action is necessary.
- **Thesis/dissertation-** students completing their thesis/dissertation requirements may be only enrolled in the thesis/dissertation face to face class. Students will need to be enrolled in the thesis/dissertation course until graduation as the I-20 program end date (line 5 of I-20) is the last class day. Students who have completed their coursework but not graduated will need to consult

the ISSS for guidance on when to apply for OPT. *Students must submit the [Reduce Course Load Form](#) prior to the beginning of the semester.* This form notifies the ISSS of a student's eligibility for the Reduced Course Load. No additional action is necessary.

- **Concurrent enrollment-** students concurrently enrolled in courses at A&M-Commerce and another school may be granted a reduced course load if the combined hours between both schools meets the full course of study requirement. A&M-Commerce will require you to enroll in the majority of your courses (and the majority of the face to face courses) at A&M-Commerce. *Permission from the ISSS will be required and students may email [Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu](mailto:Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu) for more information.*

### **Other Full Course of Study Issues:**

- **Medical illness/condition-** Students with a documented medical condition *may* be granted permission to enroll in a reduce course load. For more information go to [Medical Reduced Course Load](#).
- **Academic difficulty-** New students to the U.S. or recent ELI or ESL graduates in their first semester at A&M-Commerce may be granted a reduced course load if they are experiencing difficulty adjusting to the American education system or experiencing difficulty with their English comprehension. In all cases the ISSS will first consult the student's instructor(s) regarding any interaction or assistance the student has sought from the instructor(s). Students experiencing these types of difficulties will need to be sure to communicate with their instructor(s) to make them aware of the difficulties and for assistance.
- **Course availability, transportation, and other issues-** Unfortunately SEVP does not permit students to enroll in less than a full course of study due to problems related to course availability, lack of transportation, or other issues (failing the course). Many academic programs provide a schedule of their courses for future semesters or what may be called a 1 or 2-year rotation of their course schedule. It is very important that students follow this guidance to avoid issues related to available courses for a semester. The ISSS cannot grant an exception to the full course of study requirement for students who have issues with courses availability, transportation issues, or other issues (failing a course).