

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
POLICY ON HOUR LOADS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

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The following general policies are provided to serve as guidelines for determining the hourly work loads of students who are pursuing graduate degrees.

1. Full-time graduate students are expected to give primary attention to the pursuit of their degrees.
2. Graduate students are expected to take semester work loads which will contribute to substantial progress toward a degree.
3. Graduate students shall register for a number of hours of research which is consistent with a realistic appraisal of the amount of work to be done on a project, thesis, or dissertation, and the amount of faculty involvement and use of Institute facilities required.
4. Realistic accounting for graduate student credit hours helps support a quality graduate program.

Transcript Recognition of Teaching and Research Activity

Students holding graduate teaching or graduate research assistantships may register for courses in recognition of teaching (8997) and research (8998) activities if these courses are available for their school. The 8997 and 8998 courses are audit-base courses. A student may not register for more than a total of 9 of 8997 and 8998 during any semester.

Course Load Requirements

The following regulations shall govern the semester registration requirements for students who are pursuing graduate degrees:

1. Full-time students must be enrolled for at least 12 credit hours on a letter grade or pass-fail basis. As an exception, the advisor and school chair may allow up to 3 hours out of the 12 minimum to be taken on an audit basis in Fall and Spring semesters; in Summer semesters the advisor and school chair may allow up to 6 hours out of the 12 minimum to be taken on an audit basis. Hours in excess of the required 12 may be taken on any basis. Full-time students working exclusively on thesis research should be registered for 18 or more hours of 7000 or 9000 (Master's or Doctoral Thesis) in Fall and Spring semesters, and for up to 16 hours during Summer semesters.
2. The following students must register on a full-time basis as defined above:
 - (a) graduate research and teaching assistants;
 - (b) students supported by fellowships, traineeships or individual grants;
 - (c) students with out-of-state tuition waivers;

- (d) students assigned to the institute by the Armed Forces for the purpose of pursuing a degree;
 - (e) students on student visas;
 - (f) graduate co-op students on non-work semesters.
3. Students involved in thesis research must register for an appropriate number of 7000 or 9000 hours.
 4. The minimum load for part-time students is 3 credit hours.
 5. A student may register for only one hour of Master's or Doctoral Thesis (7000 or 9000) during the semester of graduation. This exception may be used once for each degree.
 6. The maximum allowable semester load for employed students other than graduate assistants is reduced as a function of the number of hours employed per week as follows:

<u>Work load per week</u>	<u>Maximum semester hour load</u>
Full time (40 hours)	6
3/4 of full time (30 hours)	9
2/3 of full time (27 hours)	10
1/2 of full time (20 hours) 12	12
1/3 of full time (13 hours) 15	15
1/4 of full time (10 hours)	18 (16 for Summer semesters)

The minimum load for these students is three hours, except as described in Course Load Requirement #5 above, but such students should be encouraged to take the maximum load they can handle in order to progress toward completion of the degree.

Course Selection

Full-time students are expected to enroll for a letter grade in regular courses and thesis hours whenever possible. Registration loads should reflect, as much as possible, the student and faculty efforts involved in the program of study. Registration loads each semester should be comprised of various hours from the areas listed below:

- Regular courses; letter-grade, pass-fail and in special cases, audit;
- 7000 or 9000 courses for thesis students;
- Special problem or research project courses;
- Specific courses for teaching or research education;
- GTA/GRA courses 8997/8998 (up to a maximum of 9) if available in the student's major school and the student has an assistantship.

Guidelines for Registration of Doctoral Dissertation Hours

- a. Beginning full-time doctoral students, especially those who are research assistants, are encouraged to register for at least 3 hours of

9000. This would allow, and encourage, such students to maintain a lighter academic load to begin laying the groundwork for Ph.D. research.

- b. Advanced full-time doctoral students who are working primarily on their dissertation research should register for 18 or more hours of 9000 in Fall and Spring semesters, and for up to 16 hours of 9000 for summer semesters. If they are taking other coursework, the number of 9000 hours would be reduced by the number of formal coursework hours. Students who are required by their schools to register for 8997 or 8998 would further reduce the number of 9000 hours, so that the total number of hours is at least 18 (no more than 16 in Summer). The advisor and/or school determines whether the total is above 18 for Fall and Spring semesters.
- c. Part-time doctoral students engaged in research for the Ph.D. should register for the number of 9000 hours consistent with their and their faculty advisor's activity on the dissertation research.
- d. All full-time students coded as Master's students but involved in preparation for the Ph.D. are encouraged to register for 9000 hours consistent with the amount of work involved.

Academic units are encouraged to remove any in-school restrictions on registering for 9000. For example, some schools will not allow a graduate student to register for 9000 until after the student has become a candidate for the Ph.D. degree. The reasoning behind this restriction is not clear unless one takes a very restrictive interpretation of what registering for 9000 means. Academic units are encouraged to adopt a broader interpretation, so that dissertation hours reflect all stages of the doctoral dissertation--literature research, topic selection, experimental/theoretical preparation, research performance, writing and presentation. All of these stages require institute facilities and faculty involvement.

Responsibility

The responsibility for advising graduate students properly, not only in regard to programs of study, but also in regard to minimum and maximum semester course loads, rests solely within the chain from advisor/graduate coordinator to school chair to college dean. Although each graduate student is responsible for knowing the requirements for his or her degree and for insuring the appropriate, steady progress is being made toward that degree, each graduate student must have access to fair and equitable advisement. Responsibility for scheduling the proper requirements for a particular program of study and an appropriate course load per semester rests with the student and advisor alike.