

March 3, 2017

Sponsoring Constituent: Undergraduate Enrollment and Academic Policy Committee

Statement of the Issue: The statements on Student Academic Load in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins need to be updated to reflect current practices and ensure compliance with Higher Learning Commission standards.

Rationale for Proposal: In preparing for the Higher Learning Commission Review, the Office of Admissions, Records, and Registration reviewed current practices and policies regarding undergraduate and graduate student academic load. The preliminary review revealed that current practices do not match bulletin statements. In order to update the bulletin to reflect current practices the Undergraduate Enrollment and Academic Policy Committee proposes the following updates to the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council reviewed their respective documents and provided their support to the proposals.

Type of Review: Expedited

Please see the following pages for recommended changes to the bulletins. Proposed changes appear in red print.

Please address questions to Gina Hogue at [ghogue@astate.edu](mailto:ghogue@astate.edu).

**Current**

**STUDENT ACADEMIC LOAD**

Academic load is the sum total of credit hours for all traditional and online coursework taken in a given term. In a semester, this includes all half-semester (i.e. first session, second session) and full-semester coursework. In the summer term, academic load is calculated for the entire term, including all two-week, five-week, seven-week, ten-week, and full-term courses.

The minimum credit hour load for classification as a full-time student in any term is 12 credit hours.

The maximum academic load for students with less than a 2.00 semester or cumulative GPA shall not exceed 12 credit hours per semester or summer term. Student enrollment may not exceed seven (7) credit hours per five-week summer session.

The maximum academic load for students with less than a 3.50 semester or cumulative GPA (but at least a 2.00 for both the semester and cumulative GPA) shall not exceed 18 credit hours per semester or 14 credit hours per summer term. Student enrollment may not exceed seven (7) credit hours per five-week summer session.

Students holding a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or above may request permission of the dean of their college to schedule up to 21 hours in a semester and 17 hours in the summer term. If permission is granted for enrollment in 17 hours in the summer term, student enrollment may not exceed nine (9) credit hours per five-week summer session.

A one hour overload is permitted during a student's last enrollment period (semester or summer term) if the one hour overload will complete graduation requirements.

For all students, the maximum academic load in the December interim term is three (3) credit hours.

The total academic load resulting from concurrent enrollments at Arkansas State University and other institutions shall not exceed the maximum loads stated above.

Students who receive an Institutional Scholarship should consult their individual scholarship guidelines for minimum credit hour requirements.

## Proposed Revision with Changes

### STUDENT ACADEMIC LOAD

Academic load is the sum total of credit hours for all traditional and online coursework taken in a given term. In a semester, this includes all half-semester (i.e. first session, second session) and full-semester coursework. In the summer term, academic load is calculated for the entire term, including all two-week, five-week, seven-week, ten-week, and full-term courses.

The minimum credit hour load for classification as a full-time student in any term is 12 credit hours.

\*\*\*The maximum academic load for students with ~~less than a 3.50 semester or cumulative GPA (but~~ at least a 2.00 for both the semester and cumulative GPA) ~~shall not exceed is~~ 18 credit hours per semester or 14 credit hours per summer term. Student enrollment may not exceed **ten (10) credit hours of half-semester courses (i.e. first session, second session) or** seven (7) credit hours per five-week summer session.

\*\*\*The maximum academic load for students with less than a 2.00 semester or cumulative GPA ~~shall not exceed is~~ 12 credit hours per semester or summer term. Student enrollment may not exceed **seven (7) credit hours of half-semester courses (i.e. first session, second session) or** seven (7) credit hours per five-week summer session.

Students holding a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or above may request permission of the dean of their college to schedule up to 21 hours in a semester ~~and-or~~ 17 hours in the summer term. If permission is granted ~~for enrollment in 17 hours in the summer term~~, student enrollment may not exceed **ten (10) credit hours of half-semester courses (i.e. first session, second session) or** nine (9) credit hours per five-week summer session.

A one hour overload is permitted during a student's last enrollment period (semester or summer term) if the one hour overload will complete graduation requirements.

For all students, the maximum academic load in the December interim term is three (3) credit hours.

The total academic load resulting from concurrent enrollments at Arkansas State University and other institutions shall not exceed the maximum loads stated above.

Students who receive an Institutional Scholarship should consult their individual scholarship guidelines for minimum credit hour requirements.

\*\*\* - paragraphs reordered

## **Proposed Revision – Final Version**

### **STUDENT ACADEMIC LOAD**

Academic load is the sum total of credit hours for all traditional and online coursework taken in a given term. In a semester, this includes all half-semester (i.e. first session, second session) and full-semester coursework. In the summer term, academic load is calculated for the entire term, including all two-week, five-week, seven-week, ten-week, and full-term courses.

The minimum credit hour load for classification as a full-time student in any term is 12 credit hours.

The maximum academic load for students with at least a 2.00 for both the semester and cumulative GPA is 18 credit hours per semester or 14 credit hours per summer term. Student enrollment may not exceed ten (10) credit hours of half-semester courses (i.e. first session, second session) or seven (7) credit hours per five-week summer session.

The maximum academic load for students with less than a 2.00 semester or cumulative GPA is 12 credit hours per semester or summer term. Student enrollment may not exceed seven (7) credit hours of half-semester courses (i.e. first session, second session) or seven (7) credit hours per five-week summer session.

Students holding a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or above may request permission of the dean of their college to schedule up to 21 hours in a semester or 17 hours in the summer term. If permission is granted, student enrollment may not exceed ten (10) credit hours of half-semester courses (i.e. first session, second session) or nine (9) credit hours per five-week summer session.

A one hour overload is permitted during a student's last enrollment period (semester or summer term) if the one hour overload will complete graduation requirements.

For all students, the maximum academic load in the December interim term is three (3) credit hours.

The total academic load resulting from concurrent enrollments at Arkansas State University and other institutions shall not exceed the maximum loads stated above.

Students who receive an Institutional Scholarship should consult their individual scholarship guidelines for minimum credit hour requirements.

## REAL-TIME COURSE LOAD MAXIMUM - WEIGHTED UNITS

A student's real-time course load may not exceed specified weighted units during any part-of-term based on the academic load limitations stated above. Real-time course load is determined by assigning a number of weighted units to each course based on the scale below. A student's real-time course load is defined as the total number of weighted units the student is carrying at any one time. In calculating a student's real-time course load for a part-of-term, both full-term courses (e.g. full semester, full summer, etc.) and part-of-term courses (e.g. half-semester, five-week summer session, seven-week session, etc.) shall be included. In other words, all overlapping (i.e. simultaneously occurring) courses will be part of the calculation. For example, the maximum weighted academic load for students with at least a 2.00 for both the semester and cumulative GPA may not exceed 20 weighted units during any part of term.

Real-time course loads will be calculated for the following parts-of-term:

First Half Semester — Fall and Spring

Second Half Semester — Fall and Spring

May Interim Period — Summer

First Summer Term (i.e. Summer I) — Summer

Second Summer Term (i.e. Summer II) — Summer

August Interim Period — Summer

Students who exceed the university's real-time course load maximum will be required to reduce their class schedules accordingly.

### Weighted Units Scale (common conversions)

Term/Part-of-Term	Duration	Credit Hours	Weight	Weighted Units
Full Semester	15 weeks	1.0	1	1.0
Full Semester	15 weeks	2.0	1	2.0
Full Semester	15 weeks	3.0	1	3.0
Full Semester	15 weeks	4.0	1	4.0
Half-Semester	7/7.5 weeks	1.0	2	2
Half-Semester	7/7.5 weeks	2.0	2	4
Half-Semester	7/7.5 weeks	3.0	2	6
Half-Semester	7/7.5 weeks	4.0	2	8
Full Summer	10 weeks	1.0	1.5	1.5
Full Summer	10 weeks	2.0	1.5	3.0
Full Summer	10 weeks	3.0	1.5	4.5
Summer I, II	5 weeks	1.0	3	3.0
Summer I, II	5 weeks	2.0	3	6.0

Summer I, II	5 weeks	3.0	3	9.0
14-Week Summer	14 weeks	3.0	1	3.0
7-Week Summer	7 weeks	3.0	2	6.0
Interim	2/3 weeks	1.0	7	7.0
Interim	2/3 weeks	2.0	7	14.0
Interim	2/3 weeks	3.0	7	21.0

Click on the following link to calculate real-time course load for fall and spring semesters.

[https://www.astate.edu/\\_training/work-folder/blakesimmons/courseload-calc.dot](https://www.astate.edu/_training/work-folder/blakesimmons/courseload-calc.dot)

## Graduate Bulletin, pages 31-32

**NOTE: Any “Grade Change Report” form will be accepted only if submitted prior to the close of the semester immediately following the one in which the original grade was recorded. However, the “WN” grade may not be appealed.**

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR DEGREE**

A cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher on all coursework used toward the graduate degree is required and a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher on all coursework taken from the academic college of the graduate degree sought is required before a graduate degree can be awarded.

### **PROBATION**

Any graduate student whose cumulative GPA on all courses taken for graduate credit falls below 3.00 at the end of a semester will be placed on probation. Students may be removed from probation by raising their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or better at the end of a semester. Failure to make a grade of “B” or better in each course taken while on probation will result in suspension from further graduate work. A graduate student on probation may not hold an assistantship and is not eligible for graduation.

### **SUSPENSION**

Any graduate student who receives a grade of “F” in any graduate-level course will be ineligible to register for further graduate work. A grade of “I” will be converted to “F” if it is not removed before the last day to withdraw during the next semester in which the student is enrolled at the university or within one calendar year if the student does not enroll.

### **READMISSION OF SUSPENDED STUDENTS**

After one regular semester or full summer in suspended status, students may be readmitted on probation, but only upon recommendation of their adviser and department chair and with the approval of the dean of the Graduate School. Readmission to Graduate School does not imply readmission to a particular degree program. The student must reapply to the program.

### **DROPPING INDIVIDUAL COURSES (OTHER THAN ONLY ENROLLED COURSE)**

The final date for dropping individual courses is the last day of the 10th week of classes in a semester, the 38th class day in a ten-week term (class that spans two five-week terms), the 26th class day in an eight-week term, the 17th class day in a five-week term, the 10th class day in a three-week term, and the sixth class day in a two-week term.

Students who drop individual courses will receive a grade of W in the courses. Students enrolled in only one course cannot drop that course, rather they must withdraw from the university.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY (INCLUDING DROPPING ONLY ENROLLED COURSE)**

Students withdrawing from the university during a session must obtain a withdrawal card from Advisement Services. Approval must be secured from the individuals and offices listed on the withdrawal card. This process must be completed two business days prior to the beginning of the final examination period in order to have the official date of withdrawal recorded on the permanent record. Grades earned in courses completed prior to official withdrawal from the university (i.e., short courses) will not be affected by that withdrawal.

Students who cease to attend classes without processing an official withdrawal automatically receive an F in all courses in which they were enrolled.

### **GRADUATE STUDENT LOAD**

The load of full-time graduate students may not exceed 15 semester hours, including any undergraduate courses, per regular semester or the full summer term (which includes May and August interim) without special overload permission. The total academic load resulting from concurrent enrollments at Arkansas State University and other institutions shall not exceed the maximum loads stated above.

*The bulletin can be accessed at <http://www.astate.edu/a/registrar/students/>*

Nine graduate hours or more for Fall and Spring terms are considered full-time; six hours or more cumulative over all summer terms are considered full-time. Graduate students enrolled in an accelerated on-line degree program are considered full-time when enrolled in at least three graduate hours. **Graduate student academic load may vary by program. Please consult official program handbooks or guidelines to determine approved course loads per semester or part of term.**

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Students admitted to the Graduate School may be eligible to receive financial support in the form of an assistantship. The primary purpose of graduate assistantships is to promote the student's successful completion of an academic program while giving them experience working in an academic environment. Graduate assistantship assignments provide support of the university's teaching, research or service missions for the benefit of the student in an area closely related to the student's chosen field of study.

There are three types of graduate assistantships at Arkansas State University: graduate teaching assistants (GTA); graduate research assistants (GRA); and graduate administrative support assistants (GSA).

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** A graduate teaching assistant (GTA) works with a supervising faculty member to gain instructional skills and an increased understanding of the discipline. The GTA's primary responsibilities are to support the university's instructional mission. Services provided by a GTA may include some or all of the following: classroom or laboratory teaching; advising and mentoring of students; proctoring examinations; grading papers, homework, and/or projects; accompanying/coaching musical or vocal performances; providing artistic instruction or assisting with preparation and management of materials and programs that are utilized in imparting knowledge or in the instructional process; or providing other general assistance in the instruction process.

**Graduate Research Assistant:** A graduate research assistant (GRA) works with a supervising faculty member to provide general support to the university's research mission. These responsibilities may or may not relate directly to the student's thesis or dissertation. Duties of the GRA primarily involve applying and mastering research concepts, practices, or methods of scholarship. Services provided by a GRA may include some or all of the following: assisting faculty members in a research or creative activity; performing degree-related professional or administrative services that support research, instruction, professional development, or outreach missions of the university; developing and evaluating instructional materials or curricula; or assuming responsibility for designated scholarly endeavors.

**Graduate Administrative Support Assistant:** A graduate administrative support assistant (GSA) works with university administrators to gain leadership and administrative/program management skills and an increased understanding of the administrative aspects of the discipline. The GSA's primary responsibilities are to provide general services to administrators in support of the university's mission. These responsibilities may or may not be directly related to the student's chosen field of study. Services provided by a GSA may include some or all of the following: assisting with the development of program materials, planning and co-hosting special events, gathering information and generating reports, office correspondence, program promotion, general public administration duties, and other essential functions of the discipline or program.

**Student Workers:** A student worker is different from a graduate assistant. A student worker is an employed student who may not meet some or all of the above criteria pertaining to graduate assistants. Student workers must be paid based on actual time worked as assigned. Documentation of hours worked via a time sheet and an hourly wage of at least the minimum wage are required.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANT LOAD**

Master and Specialist level graduate assistants must complete a minimum of six hours of graduate credit during a regular semester and will not be permitted to enroll for more than 12 hours of credit including both graduate and undergraduate courses. Students enrolling for fewer than six hours of graduate credit in a regular semester are not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship. Graduate assistants will be permitted to enroll in a maximum of seven semester hours at the graduate level in a five-week summer term. They must complete at least three semester hours at the graduate level in the combined summer terms if they hold an assistantship during any summer term. All Doctoral level graduate assistants are required to take a minimum of nine credit hours during the regular semester and three credit hours during each summer term an assistantship is held.