



SENATE ACTION FORM

Senate Action Number: 1276

Subject: Proposal to Adjust Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment in Graduate Programs

Reference to Senate Minutes Dated: 2/2/26

Senate Action

MOTION: Adopt the changes to the Graduate catalog outlined below.

VOTE: Motion approved unanimously

Response Requested:

- ☒ Approval for placement in University Catalog, Undergraduate and Graduate
- ☐ Approval for placement in University Regulations
- ☐ Recommendation to Board for placement in Board Policy Manual
- ☐ None (sent as information item)
- ☐ Other action requested/comments: _____

Harmony Newman

Digitally signed by Harmony
Newman
Date: 2026.02.03 10:22:49 -07'00'

2/3/26

Faculty Senate Chair

Date

Administrative Review of Senate Action (unnecessary for information items):

- ☒ Reviewed by VPAA/Provost. Check ☐ if comments are attached.
- ☒ Reviewed by General Counsel. Check ☐ if comments are attached.

Presidential Action:

- ☒ Approve
- ☐ Reject
- ☐ Return to Senate for discussion/modification (comments attached)

02/09/2026

President/Designated Administrative Officer

Date

Date of Board approval (if applicable): _____

**PLEASE RETURN SIGNED ORIGINAL AND ATTACHMENT TO THE FACULTY SENATE OFFICE:
CARTER HALL 2004, CAMPUS BOX 75.**

Faculty.Senate@unco.edu

FACULTY SENATE POLICY PROPOSAL/MOTION

Subject: Proposal to Adjust Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment in Graduate Programs

Originator/Date: Graduate Council, January 23, 2025

Placement(s): Graduate Catalog

Graduate Council sent to Academic Policies on 10/27/2025 - Approved

Reviewed and approved by Codification on 11/6/2025

Approved by Academic Policies on 11/10/2025

Motion: Adopt the changes to the Graduate catalog outlined below.

Purpose/Rationale:

- The change would allow more students to access financial aid. For example:
 - Dance Ed students typically take one 3-credit course each fall and spring and take 6 to 9 credits during their summer intensive. They cannot access financial aid when taking only 3 credits. (See also the Math Education MA for working teachers)
 - Math Education MA students tend to take 6 to 9 credits in the summer sessions. During the Fall and Spring semesters, they tend to take 3 credits because that is manageable while teaching full-time.
- The changes would discourage students from taking additional program credits to access financial aid, a common practice.
 - We see cases of students taking 797 or 799 credits early because they need one more credits for financial aid. Students in programs like the MA in Math Education attempt to take six credits in fall and spring semesters because they need financial aid. This puts them at academic risk because they find it difficult to work full-time and complete 6 credits.
 - A student runs into a scheduling problem that leaves them with one 3-credit course remaining in their program. They must pay for this course completely out of pocket. The student might not be able to complete the degree. (Cuts to Graduate School scholarship funding means that the Grad School has less money to assist students in such circumstances).
- Students in programs that are designed with two admission points during a 16-week semester and that have courses running on 7-week terms, can access financial aid for a 3-credit course load.
 - The MBA program runs courses on 7-week terms. Students in an intensive program should not attempt to take 9 credits in a 7-week term. Those who enter in the second admission term in a semester will be able to enroll in 3 credits and qualify for half-time financial aid.
- The change would benefit international graduate students who are required to register for 9 credits every term until they reach doctoral candidacy. If they run into a problem

with course scheduling and enrolling in 9 credits, they risk being out of visa compliance.

- The change might allow students at risk of program termination because of low GPA to take a lower course load while still qualifying for financial aid.
- More manageable course load for working professionals.
- Requiring 6 credits for full-time and 3 credits for part-time enrollment comes closer to matching the average number of credits in which students are enrolling (see table below):

Graduate CH Load Information (Based on "Final" Data)

		Spring 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Fall 2024
Masters/Specialist	Average CH Load	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.1
% of Total Headcount by CH Load	Less Than 6 Credits	22%	23%	21%	23%
	6 - 8 Credits	45%	41%	45%	42%
	9+ Credits	33%	35%	33%	35%
Doctoral	Average CH Load	6.6	6.5	6.7	7.0
% of Total Headcount by CH Load	Less Than 6 Credits	34%	35%	34%	27%
	6 - 8 Credits	27%	31%	28%	35%
	9+ Credits	39%	34%	39%	38%
Non-Degree	Average CH Load	3.0	3.6	3.3	3.8
% of Total Headcount by CH Load	Less Than 6 Credits	81%	73%	79%	70%
	6 - 8 Credits	18%	22%	17%	25%
	9+ Credits	1%	5%	4%	5%

65% of Masters/Specialist students take fewer than 9 credits.

62% of Doctoral students take less than 9 credits.

Cons

- If students take only 6 credits per semester, it could increase the time to degree completion. (This could be addressed proactively in program advising, program handbooks, and degree plans).
- If the time to degree completion lengthens, students could incur more debt.

Proposed Language:

Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment Status

Fall/Spring/Summer Enrollment Status:

Status	Credits
Full Time	9-6 Credits or more
Half-Time	5-8 3-5 Credits
Less than Half-Time	4-2 Credits or less (not including exceptions delineated elsewhere)

Per the Federal Financial Aid Handbook, “minimum standards for full-time enrollment. A student’s workload may include any combination of courses, work, research, or special studies that your school considers sufficient to classify them as full-time. This includes, for a term-based program, one repetition of a previously passed course that is not due to the student failing other coursework. The regulations specify a minimum standard for undergraduate students but not for graduate students.”

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/fsahandbook/1718FSAHbkVol1Ch1.pdf>

Note: For students enrolled in UNC’s [Intensive English Program](#) (IEP), please refer to the IEP guidelines pertaining to enrollment status.

Clean Copy:

Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment Status

Fall/Spring/Summer Enrollment Status:

Status	Credits
Full Time	6 Credits or more
Half-Time	3-5 Credits
Less than Half-Time	2 Credits or less (not including exceptions delineated elsewhere)

Per the Federal Financial Aid Handbook, “minimum standards for full-time enrollment. A student’s workload may include any combination of courses, work, research, or special studies that your school considers sufficient to classify them as full-time. This includes, for a term-based program, one repetition of a previously passed course that is not due to the student failing other coursework. The regulations specify a minimum standard for undergraduate students but not for graduate students.”

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