



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 64.02: Graduate Enrollment Policy

DATE: July 18, 2022

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to ensure that graduate enrollment corresponds closely with the use of faculty time and other university resources.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in March of even-numbered years by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Council with substantive revisions forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Full-time Study

Normal full-time enrollment varies between 9 and 13 hours for doctoral students and between 9 and 16 hours for other graduate students in the regular semester period. During a regular semester, more than 13 hours for a doctoral student or 16 hours for other graduate students requires special permission of the Graduate Dean. As of September 1, 2000, students who exceed the number of allowed semester credit hours for purposes of state funding will be charged non-resident tuition regardless of residency status.

Students must be enrolled full time to be eligible to hold fellowships, teaching assistantships, graduate part-time instructorships, research assistantships, or other appointments designed for the support of graduate study, as well as to qualify for certain types of financial aid. All international students are required by law to have full-time enrollment in every long semester. Graduate students designated **PGRD** (those who have earned an undergraduate degree but who will take only undergraduate courses) may not be appointed to teaching assistantships, graduate part-time instructorships, or research assistantships, as noted in the *Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog*.

If a student is devoting full time to research, utilizing university facilities and faculty time, the schedule should reflect at least 9 hours enrollment (6 hours in the summer session). Enrollment may include research, individual study, thesis, or dissertation.

Exceptions to full-time enrollment for employment purposes require approval by the Graduate Dean.

2. Continuous Enrollment

Each student who has begun thesis or dissertation research must register in each regular semester and at least once each summer until the degree has been completed, unless granted an official leave of absence from the program for medical or other exceptional reasons. At least 6 hours of 6000 or 12 hours of 8000 constitute minimum requirements. Off-campus students may register

for 1 hour of 6000 or 8000 with departmental approval until their final semester, at which time they must enroll in at least 3 hours.

3. Doctoral Residence

Each student fulfilling the doctoral residence requirements will enroll for at least 24 hours in one calendar year. The Dean of the Graduate School must approve in advance any other pattern of enrollment to meet the doctoral residence requirement. Students holding half-time assistantships or graduate part-time instructorships may satisfy the requirement by taking at least 9 hours in each long term and 6 hours in the summer. Students who are employed full time, and for whom completion of 24 hours in one calendar year would constitute unreasonable hardship, may submit proposals for consideration of alternate patterns of enrollment to complete the residence requirement with departmental support.

4. Other Considerations

Courses beyond the minimal requirements, including research and appropriate special studies courses, strengthen student programs and provide greater depth and specialization but should be carefully planned in order not to push the student beyond the maximum fundable hours. The Southern Association of Colleges & Schools (SACS) states that “a program leading to a doctor’s degree is normally the equivalent of at least three years of full-time graduate study” and “must require a period of residency after admission to the doctoral program,” as well as “appropriate and regular means for determining candidacy and the fulfillment of degree requirements.” Departments should strive for compliance with both the SACS requirements and the state’s maximum limit on fundable doctoral hours while providing the most strength and depth possible for the student within these limits.