

Reference Number: F19-284

Senate Approval Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2019

Presidential Approval Date: Monday, February 10, 2020

Policy#: Supersedes: Senate Approval:

Presidential Approval: Effective:

Last Review: Next Review:

F19-284 NIA 11/12/2019

2/10/2020

Fa/12020 Fa/12019 Fa/12024

Policy on Maximum Units in a Single Semester

Source Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Unit(s) Responsible for Implementation: All Colleges, Division of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning (DUEAP) and Graduate Division

Consultations: Associate Deans, Enrollment Management Committee, Student Affairs Committee, Dean of DUEAP, Dean of Graduate Studies

History

Version Approved Revisions(s)

1 2/10/2020 Original

Rationale

Too many students are attempting to take more classes than can be successfully completed in any one semester. In order to ensure student success, the maximum number of units that students may take in any one semester needs to be clarified for students.

Outline

I. Maximum Units for Undergraduate Students

- A. Fall and Spring Semesters
- B. Summer Sessions
- C. Procedures

II. Maximum Units for Graduate Students

- A. Fall and Spring Semesters
- B. Summer Sessions
- C. Procedures

I. Maximum Units for Undergraduate Students

A. Fall and Spring Semesters

For full-time undergraduate students, 15 units are considered an average semester course load.

- Undergraduate students in good academic standing (i.e., not on probation) can take a maximum of 19 units.
- The University reserves the right to limit the number of units for which a student can register in the initial registration period. Students should see the Registrar Office's website (<http://registrar.sfsu.edu/deadlines>) for unit limits during early or priority registration periods.
- Undergraduate students on academic probation may only enroll in a maximum of 13 units.
- For the purpose of determining the maximum number of units for undergraduate students taking graduate courses, each graduate unit should count as

the equivalent of 1.331 undergraduate course units. For example, a 3 unit graduate course would be the equivalent of a 4-unit undergraduate course.

B. Summer Sessions

There is a maximum of total units over all summer sessions of 14 units. In addition, the limits for each session are:

- R1: (5-week session; maximum of 7 units for this session)
- R2: (8-week session; maximum of 9 units for this session)
- R3: (5-week session; maximum of 7 units for this session)
- R4: (10-week session; maximum of 12 units for this session)

For the purpose of determining the maximum number of units for undergraduate students taking graduate courses, each graduate course should count as the equivalent of two undergraduate courses.

C. Procedures to Petition to Exceed the Number of Maximum Units

Petitions to approve exceeding the maximum cited here should be approved sparingly. Approvals should be based on assessments of a student's past academic performance and knowledge of the student's workload in and outside of the classroom.

More than the maximum units. Undergraduate students who want to enroll in more than the maximum units must have a cumulative SF State grade point average of 3.0 or higher and obtain a Petition to Exceed the Maximum Unit Policy for Undergraduate Students from the Registrar's Office website (forms).

- This petition must be signed by the student's major advisor, department chair, and college dean.
- The petition must be turned into the Registrar's Office at the One Stop Student Service Center before the add deadline for the semester.
- Undeclared and special majors must receive the approval of the Dean of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning. All other majors must receive the approval of their advisor and the dean of the college in which they are a major.

¹ This ratio is based upon the definition of full-time undergraduate (12 units) to full-time graduate status (9 units).

More than 25 units. Students who wish to enroll in 25 or more units in one semester must receive the written approval of their advisor, their college dean, and the Dean of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning.

- Courses completed in auditor status, or at another university or through SF State's College of Extended Learning, must be included on the Petition to Exceed the Maximum Unit Policy for Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning.
- Nursing majors who participate in the Advanced Placement Option for Registered Nurses are required to file a Petition to Exceed the Maximum Unit Policy for Undergraduate Students if their total unit load for any given semester exceeds 19 units, including all units earned through the advanced placement credit by examination option for that semester.

II. Maximum Units for Graduate Students

A. Fall and Spring Semesters

For full-time graduate students, 9-12 units are considered an average semester course load. The maximum unit load with permission of designated faculty advisor is 16 units. In general, a post baccalaureate student will not be given permission to exceed 18 units in any semester.

Students enrolled in doctorate, professional, blended, or cohorted master's and credential programs are exempt from the excess unit restrictions and should consult with their advisor.

The University reserves the right to limit the number of units for which a student can register in the initial registration period. Students should see the Registrar Office's website (<http://registrar.sfsu.edu/deadlines>) for unit limits during early or priority registration periods.

B. Summer Sessions

Graduate students may enroll in a maximum of 11 units in any combination of summer sessions (R1, R2, R3, or R4). In addition, the following are the limits for individual sessions:

- R1: (5-week session; maximum of 6 units for this session)

- R2: (8-week session; maximum of 9 units for this session)
- R3: (5-week session; maximum of 6 units for this session)
- R4: (10-week session; maximum of 9 units for this session)

Students in 12-month professional programs are excluded from this policy.

C. Procedures to Petition to Exceed the Number of Maximum Units

Petitions to exceed the maximum cited here should be approved sparingly. Approvals should be based on assessments of a student's past academic performance and knowledge of the student's workload in and outside of the classroom.

Graduate students seeking to take more than 16 units in a semester must have a minimum GPA of 3.25 overall or in any semester.

More than the maximum units. To petition to take more than 16 units, students must submit the Request to Exceed Regular Academic Unit Load form to the major advisor, college graduate coordinator, and dean of Graduate Studies. After appropriate signatures have been obtained, the form is forwarded to the Registrar's Office.

Summary Table: Maximum Units

	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students
Average course load	15 units	9-12 units
Fall and Spring maximum course load	19	16
- Students on Academic Probation	13 units	
Summer:		
Overall across all sessions	Overall across all sessions: 14 units	Overall across all sessions: 11 units
R1 (5-week session) R2 (8-week session) R3 (5-week session)	R1 maximum 7 units R2 maximum 9 units R3 maximum 7 units	R1 maximum 6 units R2 maximum 9 units R3 maximum 6 units
R4 (10-week session)	R4 maximum 12 units	R4 maximum 9 units
GPA Requirements to Petition to Exceed Maximum	3.0 grade point average	3.25 grade point average

(Sources: <http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/policies-procedures/>; [http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate education/registration/](http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate%20education/registration/); <http://registrar.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/Exceed%20Maximum%20Units%20Petitiona.pdf>)

Signed Memo:
F19-284 memo
