



## ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

February 5, 2020

**TO:** Lynn Mahoney, President  
San Francisco State University

**FROM:** Nancy C. Gerber, Chair *NCG*  
Academic Senate

**RE:** Senate Policy F19-284 Policy on Maximum Units in a Single Semester

**SOURCE COMMITTEE:**

Academic Policy Committee

**SENATE ACTION:**

At its meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 the Academic Senate approved **Senate Policy F19-284 Policy on Maximum units in a Single Semester**

We solicit your concurrence. Thank You.

cc: Jennifer Summit, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Alison Kleaver, University Council  
Sophie Clavier, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Lori Beth Way, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning  
Beth Hellwig, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs & Title IX Coordinator  
Maria Martinez, Associate Vice President Enrollment Management

ec: The Deans and Associate Deans of the Colleges  
Kim Altura, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education

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**PRESIDENTIAL ACTION**

APPROVED: *Lynn Mahoney* Date: *2-10-2020*



# SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy #: F19-284  
Supersedes: N/A  
Senate Approval: 11/12/2019  
Presidential Approval: 2/10/2020  
Effective: Fall 2020  
Last Review: Fall 2019  
Next Review: Fall 2024

## *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 1.33<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  | <b>Undergraduate Students</b>         | <b>Graduate Students</b>              |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Average course load                            | 15 units                              | 9-12 units                            |
| Fall and Spring maximum course load            | 19                                    | 16                                    |
| - Students on Academic Probation               | 13 units                              |                                       |
| Summer:<br>Overall across all sessions         | Overall across all sessions: 14 units | Overall across all sessions: 11 units |
| R1 (5-week session)                            | R1 maximum 7 units                    | R1 maximum 6 units                    |
| R2 (8-week session)                            | R2 maximum 9 units                    | R2 maximum 9 units                    |
| R3 (5-week session)                            | R3 maximum 7 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://registrar.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/Exceed%20Maximum%20Units%20Petitiona.pdf>)