

# Enrollment & Registration

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Policies regarding enrollment for graduate students differ significantly from those for undergraduate students. This section defines and details policies and procedures regarding requirements for part-time, full-time, required enrollment, continuous enrollment, and graduate assistantship enrollment.

## Continuous Enrollment

Students are required to remain continuously enrolled from the start of their program. Continuous enrollment is defined as enrollment in two of three semester terms (Fall, Spring, or Summer) with Fall enrollment required. Except in cases wherein students secure an official leave of absence, students who fail to meet these requirements will be deemed inactive after the second semester. To be readmitted, students must apply for readmission to the program in which they were enrolled and to the Graduate School. Readmission is not guaranteed and must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), Academic Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School. In order to fulfill the continuous enrollment requirement, students who are readmitted must register retroactively and pay tuition and registration fees at current rates for all semesters that have elapsed since they were last enrolled, up to a maximum of two semesters per academic year, and a total of eight. Note: This policy does not apply to select programs in which students only enroll during the summer (e.g., Master of Music Education) or to MSU benefits-eligible employees.

## Readmission

Once enrolled in graduate study, a student who fails to meet the continuous enrollment requirement must complete an Application for Readmission to register for classes. If the student has attended another college or university during the absence, the student must submit an official transcript from that institution. Approval for readmission must be obtained from the program Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), and Academic Dean. The readmission decision is forwarded to the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will review these cases and may consult the Academic Dean and program before a final readmission letter is sent to the student. Academic departments may set higher standards for readmission to specific programs. A student seeking readmission to an academic program should contact the Graduate Coordinator for specific departmental requirements prior to completing an application.

Students who have not been enrolled for a period of three years or longer and are in good academic standing, are eligible to reapply to through the Lapsed Student Program. Readmission is not guaranteed and must be approved by the Department Head, Academic Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School. Interested students or academic departments should contact the Graduate School for more information.

## Leave of Absence

A student may be granted a leave of absence for medical reasons, family necessity or dependent care, military service, or other approved personal reasons. Students planning to discontinue enrollment for a semester or more must request approval for a leave of absence. Students may petition the Graduate School for a leave of absence for a maximum of twelve months during the entire program by submitting a Leave of Absence form; however, the Graduate School may approve extensions to the twelve month maximum leave of absence (e.g., for military service obligations extending beyond twelve months).

A petition for a leave of absence, signed by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), and Academic Dean is forwarded to the Graduate School. The Graduate School may request appropriate documentation. The request must be filed and approved before the anticipated absence, unless the event occurs in the course of a semester in which case a student may apply as soon as possible. An approved leave of absence will enable students to re-enter their program without applying for readmission or owing retroactive tuition and registration fees. Students may return to their program prior to the anticipated return date if desired.

A student on a leave of absence is not required to pay fees, but in turn may not use Mississippi State University facilities, resources, or services intended only for enrolled students; receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship or financial aid from the University; or take any MSU courses.

## Full-time Course Load

### Fall and Spring

A full-time course load in fall and spring semesters is enrollment in 9-13 credit hours. A student may register for additional hours only by submitting to the Registrar's Office a Request for Scheduling Overload Form approved by the student's Graduate Coordinator, Department Head, and Academic Dean and sent to the Registrar for processing. *This form must be sent to the Office of the Registrar and does not require Graduate School approval.*

### Summer

A total of 6 credit hours is considered full-time summer enrollment. The maximum summer course load is as follows:

- 3 credit hours for Maymester;
- 7 hours for a 5-week summer session;
- 13 hours for the 10-week term, and;
- a total of 13 hours for the entire summer semester.

Audit hours may not be used to satisfy the full-time enrollment requirement in any semester. Students must be aware of the financial implications of overload status or not being enrolled full-time.

A student holding a half-summer graduate assistantship must be registered for courses scheduled during the term of the assistantship.

## Graduate Assistantship

A student holding an assistantship appointment is required to maintain full-time enrollment throughout the full appointment period. A student holding a half-summer graduate assistantship must be registered during the term of the assistantship. *Audit hours cannot be used to satisfy the full-time enrollment requirement.* See the Graduate Assistantship (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/archives/2020-21/graduate/graduate-assistantships/>) section of this publication for a description of enrollment and all requirements for holding an assistantship.

## Required Enrollment

In addition to meeting continuous enrollment requirements, a graduate student must enroll at MSU for at least one graduate credit hour in the semester that he/she meets any of the following degree requirements:

- Sits for an oral and/or written comprehensive examination;\*
- Defends a thesis/dissertation;\*
- Submits the initial or final thesis/dissertation to the Library; and/or
- Applies for graduation.

A student who holds a graduate assistantship is required to maintain full-time enrollment. Other students may be required to be enrolled full-time for different reasons.

\*Academic semesters are defined as the first day of classes through the last day of final examinations for each term. Students defending a thesis or dissertation should review the Graduate Academic Calendar for deadlines. Comprehensive examinations must occur on or prior to the last day of final examinations. Comprehensive exams cannot be scheduled outside of the academic semester time frame (as defined above) and cannot be administered during interim sessions.

## GRD 9011

Graduate students who pass the thesis/dissertation defense by the end of a semester (defined as the date/time grades are due to the Registrar's Office) and meet all other graduation requirements except the deadlines for thesis/dissertation submission to the Library may adhere to the following procedure so as to graduate the next term:

- Defend their thesis/dissertation no later than the end of the semester. End of semester is defined as the last day of final examinations. This date is posted each semester of the Graduate Academic Calendar and the University Calendar.
- Ensure that all degree audit documents have been received by the Graduate School. Graduate School staff will verify eligibility for the course, and enter an override to permit qualified students to register.
- Enroll in the one-credit hour course (GRD 9011 Graduate Degree Completion) for the semester following the defense. The course holds an associated fee of \$100. Students are allowed to enroll in the course only one time.
- Students enrolled in the course must meet all of that semester's Library submission and graduation application deadlines.

## Registration

When a student is admitted into a degree program or as an Unclassified graduate student, the following steps are followed to register for classes:

1. **Graduate student admitted to a degree program:** the student must confer with his/her advisor or the Graduate Coordinator to determine courses for the subsequent semester and receive a release for online registration.
2. **Unclassified graduate student:** in order to enroll in a course, the student must request permission from the academic department offering the course. If permission is granted, the department will enter a major override in Banner for each approved course and will release the student for registration.

To register, the student accesses the Registration menu on MyBanner for Students and selects "Register for Classes" to enroll.

Registration for Directed Individual Study (DIS) courses requires: (1) approval from a faculty member to offer that course and (2) that the course be developed by the department offering the course before a student can enroll.

When registering for thesis/dissertation hours, students must enroll in the campus and section of their major professor. The research hours *must* be in their major program area. Students who have not yet selected a major advisor should consult the program Graduate Coordinator for assistance in registering for thesis/dissertation hours.

## Obtaining a Registration Release following Non-Registration Semester(s)

An admitted student who began a graduate program but did not meet the definition of continuous enrollment (failure to enroll in Fall and Spring or Summer) will not automatically have a Registration Release. The student's major professor must contact the admissions staff ([gradregistration@gradmsstate.edu](mailto:gradregistration@gradmsstate.edu)) in the Graduate School by email to request the student be eligible to be released.

## Audit a Course

Upon recommendation from the course instructor, subject to approval by the student's advisor/major professor and the instructor's Dean, and notification of and review by the Registrar, a student may enroll to audit a course. The approval to audit must occur prior to the official enrollment count day (tenth class day for spring and fall semesters; third class day for summer school sessions). A student may not change from credit to audit or audit to credit status after the official enrollment count day. Students auditing a class are not required to take tests and/or examinations or to prepare other written assignments. Otherwise, conformity to regular classroom rules, including attendance requirements, is the same as for students taking the course for credit. At the time the request for audit is approved, the course instructor will inform the student auditing the class of attendance expectations. Failure to meet any or all of these requirements may result in an auditor being administratively dropped from the class roll. No audited course may be counted as part of the required hours of any degree or program requirements.

A student who must be enrolled full-time **cannot** count an audited course as part of full-time enrollment. This is especially important for students holding a graduate assistantship.

## Add/Drop

Consult the Registrar's Calendar or the Graduate Academic Calendar for add/drop dates for each term.

## Withdrawal (Drop entire current semester schedule)

To drop an entire current semester schedule, the student accesses the Withdrawal Request found on the MyBanner for Students Registration Menu. See the dates for withdrawal with tuition and fee charges at <https://www.registrar.msstate.edu/students/withdrawal-from-the-university/>. *Unless the student CANCELS THEIR SCHEDULE BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES, they will follow the prorated refund schedule as outlined at the link above.* By completing this process, the student avoids the automatic assignment of grades of F. Following the outlined procedure also avoids future difficulties in obtaining transcripts or reentering the University. Note: for the purposes of the withdrawal schedule, class days refer to the number of days any class is held (5 in a typical week), not the number of class meetings for a particular course.

A summer semester student uses the Withdrawal Request when dropping the entire schedule for Maymester or either of the 5-week terms or the full summer term. Withdrawing from one summer term (e.g., Maymester) does not affect the student's schedule for another summer term (e.g., 2nd 5-week).

The withdrawal approval date will be effective the date the student submits the withdrawal request, except in documented cases of serious illness or extreme hardship, in which case an earlier withdrawal date may be approved by the student's Academic Dean. It is the student's responsibility to provide that documentation to the Dean.

## Retroactive Withdrawal (Drop entire prior semester schedule)

In rare and unusual circumstances, a student may request a retroactive withdrawal for a previous semester by submitting a completed petition. A copy of the Petition for Retroactive Withdrawal ([https://www.provost.msstate.edu/resources/students/forms/forms/2016/Petition\\_for\\_retroactive\\_withdrawal.pdf](https://www.provost.msstate.edu/resources/students/forms/forms/2016/Petition_for_retroactive_withdrawal.pdf)) form can be obtained online on the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President's webpage. The student must also submit all required documentation. The student's Major Professor/Advisor, Department Head, Academic Dean, and the Provost must approve the request for retroactive withdrawal. Financial implications for a retroactive withdrawal will be handled on a case-by-case basis.