5.2.1 Part-Time Enrollment: Policy

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Summary

In special circumstances, matriculated graduate students may petition to enroll for less than full-time study.

Rationale

In order to make appropriate academic progress, matriculated graduate students are expected to successfully complete at least eight units during the academic year (considered full-time enrollment); degree programs may set a higher minimum. All students are strongly advised to consider the effects of reduced enrollment on their degree progress and on such factors as financial aid, visas, deferment of student loans, and residency requirements. Requests to enroll for fewer than eight units during the academic year are approved only in specific circumstances.

Policy

Under some circumstances, graduate students who do not have Terminal Graduate Registration (TGR) status may request enrollment for less than eight units in a quarter by submitting a Part-time Enrollment Petition for Graduate Students to the Office of the Registrar at the Student Services Center. Coterminal students with an active undergraduate degree program are not eligible to file this petition. The petition must be submitted prior to the beginning of the quarter for which the request is being made.

Authority:
- Committee on Graduate Studies (policy)
- Office of the Registrar via Stanford Services & Support (implementation)

Applicability:
To all matriculated graduate students and the programs in which they are enrolled.

Jump To:

1. Reasons for Requesting Reduced Enrollment (Graduate Tuition Adjustment)
2. Program Exceptions

1. Reasons for Requesting Reduced Enrollment
Graduate students who need only a few remaining units to complete degree requirements or to qualify for TGR status, may register for one quarter on a unit basis (3 to 7 units) to cover the deficiency. This status may be used only once during a degree program. For example, on a one-time basis, students may file a Part-time Enrollment Petition for Graduate Students [1] in the following circumstances:

- to complete course requirements for the degree in the final quarter of a degree program
- to complete residency requirements for the degree in the final quarter of a degree program
- to qualify for TGR (Terminal Graduation Registration) status (not available for students on an F-1 or J-1 visa).

In addition, students may request reduced enrollment as needed in the following circumstances: for an approved accommodation of a documented disability, or for an approved Childbirth Academic Accommodation (see GAP 5.9 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Adoption, and Lactation [3]).

Disability Accommodations

A request for reduced enrollment to accommodate a disability requires a statement of support from the Stanford Office of Accessible Education (OAE). This statement of support must be sent directly from the OAE to the Office of the Registrar. Students should consult the OAE for additional guidance and instructions [4].

Childbirth Academic Accommodations

In the event of an approved childbirth academic accommodation, a woman graduate student will be eligible for up to two consecutive academic quarters around the time of the birth, during which the student may postpone course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements. As part of this accommodation, the student may request up to two quarters of part-time enrollment (see GAP 5.9 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Adoption, and Lactation [3]).

Approvals of childbirth academic accommodations are made by the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and communicated to the Office of the Registrar. Students with an approved childbirth academic accommodation, who wish to reduce their enrollment during this period, will also need to complete and file the Part-time Enrollment Petition for Graduate Students [1].

Graduate students who have not reached TGR status, and who are enrolled for less than 8 units in any quarter, cannot be certified by the Office of the Registrar as being in full-time enrollment in that quarter (see GAP 3.1 Registration, Enrollment, and Academic Progress [5]). This may be a factor to consider when enrollment is required for such purposes as car insurance, loan deferments, medical coverage, scholarship eligibility, and so on.

2. Program Exceptions

The following two graduate degree programs, designed for working adults, are the only programs permitting part-time enrollment on a regular basis.

Honors Cooperative Program

The Honors Cooperative Program (HCP) is a part-time graduate program offered by Stanford University. It allows working professionals, who may be eligible for tuition support through their employer, an opportunity to earn a graduate degree in any of the engineering programs, applied physics, statistics, or biomedical informatics, on a part-
Prospective HCP students apply to their prospective graduate degree program through the normal graduate admissions process, and compete with all other applicants for admission to the program. Once admitted, HCP students arrange their part-time status and tuition payment options through the Stanford Center for Professional Development [6] (SCPD). Courses are delivered online and broadcast locally. HCP students are also welcome to attend classes on campus, and some on-campus attendance may be required depending on the degree track.

To participate, HCP students must have the support of their employer as a participating company of the Stanford Center for Professional Development. For more information, see the SCPD [6] website.

**Master of Liberal Arts**

The Masters of Liberal Arts (M.L.A.) program provides the opportunity to complete this degree by attending seminars taught in the evening. Students should expect to complete the Master of Liberal Arts in four to five years. Prospective M.L.A. students apply to the Master of Liberal Arts program through the normal graduate admissions process. Students are expected to make steady progress toward their degree, which normally means at least five M.L.A. seminars within two academic years. M.L.A. students must enroll for each academic year from the time of original matriculation until conferral of the degree. For additional information about admission and enrollment requirements, see the M.L.A. [7] website.

Back to top

**Related Content:**

Related Policies
- GAP 3.1 Registration, Enrollment, and Academic Progress [5]
- GAP 5.9 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Adoption, and Lactation [3]
- GAP 6.1 Graduate Tuition Categories [8]

Related Bulletin Sections
- Graduate Petition for Part-time Enrollment [9]
- Honors Cooperative Program [10]

Related Information and Forms
- Part-time Enrollment Petition for Graduate Students [1]
- Office of Accessible Education [4] (student information)
- Stanford Center for Professional Development [6]
- Master of Liberal Arts program [7]

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**Links**