



# NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

## Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

### POLICY: POLICY ON FULL-TIME STATUS

#### **Purpose:**

It is the policy of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences to restrict certain student benefits only to students who are pursuing a degree on a full-time basis. This requires a clear definition of what is meant by “full-time” status.

#### **Policy:**

Student status (full-time, part-time, half-time, leave of absence) is determined on a semester basis for the Fall and Spring terms. Registration is not required during the summer academic session. A student is considered to be in **full-time** status according to the following conditions.

**Ph.D. students** are full-time if registered for 12 credits or engaged in an equivalent level of approved academic activity, such as research training or dissertation research.

**M.S. students** are full-time under the following conditions:

- if registered for 8 credits.
- if registered for at least one academic credit for M.S. thesis research while engaged full-time in a research project as part of a Plan B Master’s program. This classification requires that all other program requirements have been or will be fulfilled at the successful completion of the semester’s program of study. This classification may be invoked for no more than two semesters per degree. *N.B. Independent study (library research) towards preparation of a Plan A Master’s Literature Review does **not** qualify for full-time status under this provision.*
- if registered for at least 6 credits, but for fewer than 8 because of a lack of course offerings appropriate to the student’s program of study, or for which the student has the appropriate prerequisites. Approved academic activity equivalent to the number of missing credits must be undertaken in order to qualify for full-time status under this classification. This is rarely granted.

The full-time requirement for international students on student visas may be waived because of language difficulties. The student may register for fewer than 8 credits and use the reduced load to undertake appropriate English language training. This waiver may be invoked only in the first semester of graduate study.

Students who are not full-time are considered part-time or half-time, based on the number of credits relative to the nominal full-time load of 12 credits for Ph.D. programs and 8 credits for M.S. programs.

Students must be matriculated in a degree program in order to be considered full-time.

#### **Policy put into effect:**

Spring 2011

**Discussion:**

This revised policy has eliminated our old “last semester” waiver for less than an 8-credit load. Under this new policy, students completing a standard 30-credit Plan A Master’s degree will need to register for 8 credits in their final semester in order to maintain full-time status, regardless of how many or how few credits they need to reach the minimum needed to fulfill their Master’s degree requirements.

In order to minimize the financial impact of this new policy on students, the credit value of course XXXX-9700 (*Master’s Independent Study*) has been changed to 4 credits. The tuition for this course, however, will be charged at the rate of only one credit. The academic interpretation of this is that we regard the effort required to research and write a Master’s Literature Review as the equivalent of a 4-credit course, or a half-time academic effort for one term.

There are implications, both financial and academic, that follow.

- Although XXX-9700 would be worth 4 credits, only one credit could be counted against the 30 needed to meet the Master’s degree requirements. That is, an additional minimum of 29 didactic credits, including all specifically required courses, will be required in addition to XXX-9700.
- Registration for XXXX-9700 will be limited to one-time only. Current grading is on an S/U basis. A grade of “U” would disqualify these credits from being counted towards degree requirements. The non-repeat rule means that the “U” would remain and would not be replaceable by repeating the course.
- Students entering their last semester with 26 or more didactic credits will need to register for at least 4 didactic credits in addition to XXXX-9700 in order to maintain full-time status. This might result in their accumulating (and paying for) more didactic credits than the minimum required. Students entering the last semester with 24 or 25 didactic credits would not be affected financially or in terms of course selection any differently than under our previous policy.
- Students who might have registered for XXXX-9700 in *both* of their final two semesters to maintain full-time status will no longer be able to do so. They would only be able to register for XXXX-9700 *once*, although not necessarily in their final semester. Because the new policy is being implemented in mid-year, any student who has enrolled in a one-credit version of XXXX-9700 prior to the Spring 2011 term will be allowed to register for the 4-credit version of XXXX-9700 one additional time.
- Course XXXX-9700 will require specific reporting requirements from the student’s primary Literature Review advisor. This report will document the student’s activity in the course throughout the semester.
- Students who complete their Literature Review prior to their final semester will need to register for 8 credits to be considered full-time in that final semester.

Full-time status may still apply to Master’s students pursuing a Plan B degree and actively engaged in laboratory research, even if they are enrolled for fewer than 8 credits, as specified under the second bullet of the policy.

International students (student visa) will be held to the same definitions standards for classification as full-time students as US students. It is a separate question whether their visa requirements are fulfilled with a less-than-full-time enrollment. Waivers for English language study or medical considerations may apply. These and similar exemptions are waivers of the full-time *visa* requirement, not additional categories of full-time status.

PhD students who have completed their dissertation research and are now off-site, needing only to write and defend their dissertation, should register for maintenance of matriculation, rather than XXXX-9900, and would not be considered full-time students.

**History:**

Approved by Graduate Faculty Council: September 21, 2010