



Office of the University Registrar

The City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10017
www.cuny.edu/registrar

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 28, 2018

To: **Presidents, Provosts and Deans of Professional Schools**

From: University Executive Registrar, Vivek Upadhyay

Subject: **Change in Definition of Full-Time Enrollment Status for Graduate Students**

This memorandum is intended to inform you that effective Fall 2018 semester **all graduate students registering for a minimum of nine credits may be certified as full-time students.**

Currently, the U.S. Department of Education has not established a standard for full-time student definition at the graduate level, leaving it to each institution to create its own definition. The New York State Department of Education defines full-time status for graduate students as “a student enrolled for nine or more semester credits, nine or more quarter credits, or a student involved in thesis or dissertation preparation that is considered full-time by the institution.” However, the state DOE retains twelve credits as their definition for eligibility for financial aid for graduate students (currently there is no state sponsored graduate financial aid).

As per CUNY’s longstanding policy, graduate students have been required to register for twelve credits to be certified by the college or school as full-time unless an academic program at the institution has been approved to require fewer credits. Nationally many universities define nine credits as full-time, and thus requiring twelve credits gives us a competitive disadvantage. International applicants, who are required to maintain full-time enrollment status as part of their visa conditions, may also be discouraged from choosing CUNY for this reason. In addition, many CUNY graduate students opt to register for nine credits due to family and work obligations. This change will also allow more students to remain on their family’s health insurance plans and be eligible for private scholarships that require full-time attendance.

For all these reasons it makes sense to revise our full-time status definition. At this time, we will retain a flat rate tuition for students who choose to take twelve credits. We do not expect the colleges to experience any negative financial consequences of this change in definition.

While nine credits will make the student eligible to be certified by the college or school as a full-time student, this in no way precludes an individual program, for purposes of cohort design, professional licensing, program accreditation or any other legitimate academic reason approved by the campus curriculum governance, from requiring students to register for more credits in one or more semesters.

Please disseminate to all interested parties on your campus. If you have any questions, please email our@cuny.edu.

Cc: Office of the Chancellor
Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost
Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance
Office of Enrollment Strategy and Management
Office of Student Financial Assistant
Office of the University Controller