

# EXCESS CREDIT HOURS POLICY

## UNIVERSITY DECISION

The Texas Education Code §54.068 and §61.0595, as well as Texas Administrative Code Chapter 13, Subchapter F, §13.102 through §13.108, indicates that the State of Texas will not provide funds to state institutions of higher education for excess semester credit hours earned by an undergraduate resident student. The Texas Education Code §54.012 specifies that doctoral students who exceed the critical number of semester credit hours are also not funded by the state. Therefore, it is the University's decision to charge non-resident tuition to any undergraduate or graduate student who has excess credit hours regardless of the student's residency status, appointment, fellowship or any other circumstance that would normally entitle the student to resident tuition rates, including tuition waivers.

## PERTINENT INFORMATION

### Undergraduate Students

If a student began undergraduate course work before Fall 1999, the student is exempt from excess hours legislation.

Undergraduate students who enrolled in Fall 2006 or subsequent semesters are considered to be in excess hours if their total attempted semester credit hours exceed more than 30 credit hours beyond the required number of hours for the completion of the degree program in which they are enrolled.

The following courses are exempt from calculation in semester credit hours towards the limit:

- Remedial or developmental courses
- Workforce education courses
- Dual credit courses (as in taken during high school), as well as Advanced Placement credits
- Hours for special topics and seminar courses
- Independent study courses
- Hours for courses that involve different or more advanced content each time they are taken, including but not limited to, individual music lessons, Workforce Education Courses, Manual Special Topics courses (when the topic changes), theater practicum, music performance, ensembles, certain physical education and kinesiology courses, and studio art
- Continuing Education Courses that must be repeated to retain professional certification
- Courses earned as part of a student's progression towards and completion of a previous bachelor's degree
- Hours earned by students at private or out-of-state institutions
- Hours earned by examination or similar method by which credit is earned without registering for a course for which tuition is charged

### Graduate Students

Hours taken at the Health Science Center (other than those taken for the M.D./D.D.S. professional programs) that exceed the 99-hour or 130-hour limits at the doctoral level may not be reported by the Health Science Center for state funding. As such, all doctoral students exceeding this limit will be assessed the non-resident tuition rate regardless of their

residency status or any appointment, fellowship, or other circumstance that would normally entitle them to resident tuition rates.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### Attempted Credit Hours

For doctoral students, attempted credit hour calculation includes all enrolled courses at the Health Science Center regardless of grade assignment. For example, if a student takes a course and receives a grade of "incomplete" or "unsatisfactory," the hours for that course count towards excess hours limits. If a student takes a course and drops it after the Census Date, the hours for that course will also be applied towards excess hour limits. If a student is registering for a dissertation course and gets a grade of "IP" (In Progress) at the end of the term, the hours associated with that course will also be counted towards excess hours limits.

### Critical Number

For doctoral students in nursing the number is 99 credit hours; for other basic sciences, the number is 130 credit hours.

### Semester Credit Hours

A semester credit hour is defined as nominally one hour of classroom time per week per semester. Thus a class which is held for three hours a week for one semester is a three semester-hour course. However, although most of the courses taken at university are of three semester hours, some may involve more contact time, as in the case of laboratory courses, and some less time, as may be the case in some seminar courses. Such courses carry the three semester-hour weight, but regardless of actual class time, should be considered as comprising one-fifth of the student's course load.

### 30-Hour Rule

Undergraduate students initially enrolled as undergraduates in an institution of higher education beginning the 2006 Fall semester and subsequent semesters may not exceed 30 hours more than the minimum number required for the completion of their degree program.

### 45-Hour Rule

Undergraduate students initially enrolling as undergraduate in an institution of higher education beginning the 1999 Fall semester, but no later than the 2006 Summer semester, may not exceed 45 hours more than the minimum number required for completion of their degree program.

### 99-Hour Rule

Graduate students enrolled in the Nursing Ph.D. program may not exceed total of 99 attempted hours (including earned) in pursuit of the degree. Hours beyond that critical number are unfunded by the state, and so the Health Science Center assesses non-resident tuition to recuperate the loss of funds and costs associated with educating these unfunded students.

### 130-Hour Rule

Graduate students enrolled in other Ph.D. programs, including those under The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, may not exceed total of 130 attempted hours (including earned) in pursuit of the degree. This includes dissertation and research hours, among others. Hours beyond that critical number are unfunded by the state, and so the Health Science Center assesses non-resident tuition to recuperate the loss of funds and costs associated with educating these unfunded students.

## UNIVERSITY PROCEDURE

### Students' Responsibilities

- Undergraduate students must submit all official transcripts from previously attended institutions as excess hours are not based on Health Science Center data but on statewide data. (Doctoral students must also provide transcripts although inter-institutional hours are not calculated. Rather, this is to meet other rules and regulations. See the Admissions Policy for more information.)
- To avoid being charged nonresident tuition, resident students must be aware of the number of credit hours required for their degree and avoid taking more than the maximum hours above the program requirement.
- Students should seek advisement from their respective department so that they may be assisted in creating a plan for degree completion, considering the impact of previous coursework, current semester credit hours attempted, and total allowable semester credit hours for attainment of the degree.
- If receiving Financial Aid, the student should seek advisement from The Office of Veteran Services and Financial Aid, as they have a separate hour limit for funded hours.

Students are encouraged to use the table below to identify the maximum number of hours that they can take based on the hours required for their degree. The hours required for the degree can be found in the appropriate program section of this Catalog. Students should use the 45-hour enrollment cap (second column) if they first attended college between fall 1999 and summer 2006. Students should use the 30-hour enrollment cap (third column) if they first attended college beginning fall 2006. Graduate students should refer to the fourth and fifth columns based on their program of study.

### Undergraduate

Hours Required for Degree	45 Hr. Enrollment Cap	30 Hr. Enrollment Cap	99 Hr. Enrollment Cap	130 Hr. Enrollment Cap
120	165	150	X	X
123	168	153	X	X
124	169	154	X	X
127	172	157	X	X
132	177	162	X	X

### Ph.D.

Hours Required for Degree	45 Hr. Enrollment Cap	30 Hr. Enrollment Cap	99 Hr. Enrollment Cap	130 Hr. Enrollment Cap
99	X	X	99	X
130	X	X	X	130

### Excess Hours Appeals

Students have the right to appeal decisions that place them under penalty of non-Texas resident tuition rates following review of their coursework. Students must request an appeal in writing to the Registrar; a paper letter or email is sufficient. The Registrar and/or Associate Registrar will conduct a course-by-course review of the student's college coursework from all institutions previously attended and/or those taken at the Health Science Center and seek opportunities for reconsideration of credit counted towards excess hours based only on those exemptions noted above. The decision of the Registrar and/or Associate Registrar is

final. Documentation related to the appeal, including the original request, will be scanned into the student's electronic record.