

Maximum Credit Load – Undergraduate

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Academics / Academic Standards Policies

Policy Owner: Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Effective date: Fall 2021

Approval date: August 31, 2021

Schedule for Review: Fall 2026

Policy Statement:

No bachelor's degree candidate may register for more than 22 credits at Fort Lewis College in a Fall or Spring semester or 16 credits at Fort Lewis College in a Summer Semester (any combination of terms 1 to 5). Likewise, no bachelor's degree candidate may register for more than 8 credits in any ONE Summer term. Exceptions to this policy will be granted for internships only - students should submit a Credit Overload Petition through the Registrar's office.

Implications:

This policy will delay graduation for students planning on taking more than 22 credits in a regular term or 16 credits in a summer semester.

Consideration of Appeals and Petitions:

The Maximum Credit Load policy may not be appealed or waived.

Reason for Policy:

Higher Learning Commission: HLC monitors the number of students who take more than normal credit loads. HLC also verifies that the amount of in-class and out-of-class work required per credit follows good practice.

Institutional: Fort Lewis strives to offer rigorous courses. Rigor requires, among other things, a serious level of student engagement outside of class. The standard benchmark for rigorous courses is two hours outside of class for every hour inside of class. A 15-credit load, therefore, should require approximately 45 total hours of work per week. Given this assumption, it is unreasonable to expect a student to complete more than 22 credit hours in a fall or spring semester (i.e. 66 total hours each week) or 16 credits in a summer semester.

This information was provided by Karen Solinski, VP for Legal and Governmental Affairs for HLC at a session entitled "Preparing for the Credit Hour Review," on April 9, 2013 at a Higher Learning Commission conference.

Responsibilities:

For oversight of the policy: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

For procedures for implementing policy: Policy Librarian

For enforcement of the policy: College Registrar

For notification of the policy: College Registrar

Definitions:

Bachelor's Degree Candidate: Undergraduate students pursuing their first bachelor's degree and post-baccalaureate students pursuing a second or subsequent, non-duplicative, bachelor's degree who are attending less than half time, half time, three quarters time, or full time.

Review and Revision History:

This policy revises the Maximum Credit Load policy approved by Faculty Senate on March 14, 2014 by eliminating the need for advisor approval if a student would like to register for 19 to 22 credits in a Fall or Spring semester or 13 to 16 credits in a Summer semester. It also establishes a maximum load limit of 8 credits in any ONE Summer term.

August 2021 revision - eliminates the need for advisor approval between 19 and 22 credit hours and establishes a maximum credit hour load limit of 8 credits in any ONE summer term