ENROLLMENT AND TIME LIMITATIONS

- In general, graduate students are expected to be enrolled in consecutive long semesters (i.e., fall and spring) until the degree is completed and awarded. If you cannot enroll in a given semester, then you must apply by general petition through your department for a leave of absence. The five-year rule on master's coursework still applies.
- Full-time enrollment means that you must enroll and complete the minimum number of hours each semester as outlined below. We expect supported graduate students to progress toward their degrees at a reasonable pace. This means that dropping of courses by full-time graduate students is discouraged. Requests for full-time graduate students to drop courses below full-time status must have the approval of the Departmental Graduate Advisor, Chair and the Graduate Associate Dean and will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
- Students must obtain information on the number of hours for enrollment from their major department or the Dean's Office, not from the International Student Services and Scholars Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supported (RA/GA/GA-NE/TA/IA or Scholarship-Fellowship)</th>
<th>Unsupported Temporary Visa (F-1, J-1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Full-time enrollment is expected of the following categories of graduate students:
  1. Masters students who receive in-state tuition waiver based on a scholarship are required to enroll full-time.
  2. PhD students who are on Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) are required to enroll full-time.
  3. Students who are meeting Ph.D. residency requirements.
  4. Visa-holding students (F-1, J-1, or other temporary visas).
  5. Students during their last semester can enroll for the hours required to meet their degree requirements by filing a petition for a reduced course load (RCL).

Thesis/Research Enrollment

Master's degree with thesis requires 6 hours of thesis (6399 and 7399 course number) and 3 to 6 hours of Masters Research (6x98 course number). Typically, Masters students first enroll for Master Research as soon as they begin work on their research. They can also enroll in the thesis course during the semester they submit their proposal and complete committee appointment.
Master's students are awarded a final thesis grade in 6399 and 7399 from their thesis chair after successfully defending their thesis.

If you expect to graduate in a given semester, you must enroll in and complete that semester at the University of Houston.

**Dissertation/Research Enrollment**

Doctoral degrees require 12 hours of dissertation (8399, 8699, 8999 course number) and Doctoral Research (8x98 course number) which varies for BS to PhD and MS to PhD and from department to department within the College of Engineering.

Doctoral students first enroll in the 8x98 as soon as they begin work on their Doctoral research. The students must be continuously enrolled in research until they graduate, including summers if they are working on their research with their advisor.

Doctoral students are allowed to enroll for doctoral dissertation after they have submitted their committee appointment page to their department and submitted their proposal.

Doctoral students continue to enroll in Doctoral Research and/or Doctoral Dissertation each semester until they graduate (including the semester of graduation).

Doctoral students are awarded a final dissertation grade in 8399, 8699 and/or 8999 (12 hours of dissertation courses) from their dissertation chair after successfully defending their dissertation.

If you expect to graduate in a given semester, you must enroll in and complete that semester at the University of Houston.

**Time Limitation**

The following comment is taken directly from the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog[2]: The university has a five-year time-limit rule for Master's degree programs. Students who enroll at the University of Houston must complete the usual master's degree program within five years of the date of admission to the master's program at the University of Houston. Any exceptions to this policy will require a petition approved by the department advisor, chair, college dean, and The Graduate School. Students who are in the joint MIE/MBA program have 7 years in which to complete this joint-degree program.

No course over five years old at the time of graduation can be used to satisfy the master's degree course requirements. This includes courses taken as Non Degree seeking and transfer courses approved for graduate credit.

Students who enroll as doctoral candidates must complete their degree requirements within 10 years of the date of first enrollment with a doctoral degree objective. Failure to comply will result in the candidate being ineligible for that doctoral degree.

Doctoral students must complete their dissertation within five years after completion of the comprehensive/qualifying exam. Otherwise, the exam must be repeated.

The following comment is taken directly from the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog: Students entering a doctoral program with a Master's degree qualify for up to eight (8) semesters of GTF funding. Students entering a doctoral program directly from a baccalaureate program qualify for up to twelve (12) semesters of GTF funding. This means that financial aid is not available when the assistantship limit is exceeded. Normally, no individual may hold an assistantship at the University of Houston for more than a total of six years. Any
exception to this policy must receive the approval of the dean of the college and the senior vice president for academic affairs.

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Links: