

Title	Student Workload Policy
Overview	Describes the principles and practice for defining and managing workload in a course at the University of Melbourne
Key Words	Full-time, part-time, overload
Scope	All coursework degrees in the Melbourne Model
Related documents	
Approved by	Academic Board
Date approved	20 May 2008
Start Date	September 2008
Date for review	September 2009
Business Owner	Office of the Provost
Contact Name/extension/email	<hr/>

May 2008

Student Workload

Definitions: (NB. These are working definitions that may be changed to ensure consistency with terminology employed in the Student System).

Study load: the number of points in which a student is enrolled in a standard teaching period.

Full study load: Normally completion of 100 points within a calendar year but may be broken down by teaching periods (e.g. 50 points in semester 2).

Overload: study load of at least 12.5 points more than the full study load for any teaching period.

Full-time: Normally, a study load of at least 37.5 points in each of semesters 1 and 2.

Part-time: Determined on the basis of enrolment per semester for semesters 1 and 2. Less than 37.5 points in either semester would usually constitute a part-time enrolment.

Standard teaching period: a defined teaching period (may include semester 1, semester 2, or Summer semester) in which students in a particular course are expected to be enrolled.

Non-standard teaching period: a defined teaching period other than those defined as standard teaching periods.

Later-year student: a student who has completed one year of tertiary study.

Accelerated Program: an approved academic program for select students involving a specified overloaded program resulting in early completion of a course.

Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) 'course end date': A date provided to an international student when a student visa is granted that, based upon the full-time duration of the course, indicates when their student visa expires.

Fixed, full-time course: A course where a student must successfully complete all subjects of the course during a particular academic year and maintain a full-time enrolment. A student who fails a subject is not permitted to progress to the next year of the course without repeating the failed subject.

Policy: All coursework degrees in the Melbourne Model

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Course Duration and Enrolment policies.

The University is required to monitor the study load of each student to comply with Government reporting requirements, and to ensure that enrolled students undertake a workload that is likely to lead to successful completion of the course in which they are enrolled.

In addition the University strives to provide each student with a cohort experience particular to this institution. Study load impacts significantly on this experience.

It is expected that students will be able to manage their study load taking into account their capabilities, commitment to activities outside their studies and advice and guidelines provided by the University.

Ordinary Full study load

University of Melbourne degree structures, and published information about course duration, are based on the premise that a full study load will comprise 100 points undertaken within each calendar year, and usually undertaken as 50 points in each of semester 1 and 2 (based upon commencement at the beginning of a calendar year). Completion of fewer than 100 points per year (or by the anniversary of commencement for mid-year entry students), will on average will extend the duration of the course.

The University regulates the maximum number of points in which a student can be enrolled at any one time based upon the ordinary full-time workload, and students require permission to complete more than a specified maximum concurrent enrolment (see *Overloading* below).

May 2008

Ordinary part-time study load

Part-time programs usually define 25 points per semester (i.e. 50 points per year) as the 'ordinary' study load. A student with good reason, however, may vary this load, provided the student completes within the established duration of a course, and subject to co-requisite & pre-requisite requirements of subjects undertaken.

Full-Time status

Under Government legislation, some students may be required to maintain a full-time study load in order to maintain their eligibility for income support, or to be eligible for a transport concession card or other benefits available to full-time students. The University does not define full-time status, and students should seek advice from their Student Centre if unclear about whether their year's enrolment meets government definitions of full-time status.

Summer Term & intensive subjects

Ordinarily, subjects taken during the summer period do not count towards the calculation of a student's full or part-time status for an academic year¹. For workload calculations, subjects undertaken during the summer term, winter, or intensively, will be included.

Fixed, full-time Courses

In some postgraduate courses, students may be required to maintain a certain, defined full-time study load comprising specified subjects each semester (or term).

The University is obliged to make reasonable adjustments to allow the participation of certain students under the Disability Standards for Education 2005². An adjustment to the expectation that a student will maintain a certain study load in a particular degree is considered a reasonable adjustment, where such an adjustment does not compromise the academic integrity of the student's degree.

No subject enrolment

Students who are not enrolled in any points in a given standard semester must be on Leave of Absence from their course or, if withdrawn from all subjects after the census date in a semester, will be considered to be on unapproved leave.

Study Load for International Students

The National Code 2007 requires that international students must complete their course by the Course End date on their (last issued) Confirmation of Enrolment (COE). International students may be expected to maintain a full study load in order to meet this requirement.

¹ Enrolment is reported to the Commonwealth government on a half-yearly system, which only takes account of studies undertaken within the University's defined teaching periods of semester 1 and semester 2. This includes intensive subjects 'related' to either semester. For full-time / part-time purposes, a subject with a census date that occurs within the teaching or assessment period of semester 1 will be counted with semester 1 subjects, and subjects with a census date that occurs after the end of semester 1 until the end of the assessment period for semester 2 will be counted with semester 2 subjects.

Income support is paid for full-time students for the summer period regardless of summer enrolment, unless:

- A student commences in the summer period and is completing the equivalent of a full-time load for the summer term and may therefore be eligible for income support for the summer period;
- A student who was previously part-time is completing their degree in a summer semester with the equivalent of a full-time load for the summer term (25 points or more), who may be eligible for income support during the summer term.

² The Education Standards were formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Section 3.4 of the Standards describes 'reasonable adjustments'.

May 2008

Overloading

Students who are concurrently enrolled in 62.5 points or more for more than six consecutive weeks at any time, or students who are enrolled in more than 25 points during the Summer semester, are considered to be overloading³. Overloading may shorten the duration of a course, but may also have a significant impact on a student's capacity for academic success. Students must obtain permission before they are able to overload by submitting an application to the relevant Student Centre. Permission to overload is based on past academic performance and the student's particular circumstances.

Overloading in the first teaching period of a student's enrolment, or to make up for failed subjects is not normally permitted.

Students must continue to achieve good results to be able to continue with an overloaded program. An overloading student's performance monitored accordingly. An overload for future teaching periods will not be permitted in advance, and a student's results when overloaded reviewed prior to approval for a further overload.

Accelerated Course Programs

Some degrees, usually postgraduate professional degrees, but including other programs (for example, certain concurrent diplomas) may provide an enrolment option that involves a specified, overloaded program that enables a degree to be completed more quickly.

An accelerated option must be approved by the Academic Board.

Selection into an accelerated program involves consideration⁴ of a student's ability to complete successfully the required overload.

Students must continue to achieve good results to be able to continue in the accelerated program. A student's performance must therefore be monitored accordingly, and if a student fails to obtain satisfactory marks (as defined by the faculty) they should revert to an ordinary full-time load⁵.

Procedure and Practice: All coursework degrees in the Melbourne Model

1. Full and Part Time Enrolment

In most coursework degrees students may be enrolled either full-time or part-time depending on their own preference and compliance with the policy relating to course duration. Exceptions, where full-time enrolment is a course enrolment requirement, include intensive, integrated, professional postgraduate programs.

International students must complete their course within a defined period and can only reduce their study load from 50 points per semester (in semesters 1 and 2) if:

- i.* They have been granted advanced standing or have successfully completed subjects in Summer semester or non-standard teaching periods and are able to complete their course by the COE end date.
- ii.* Compassionate or compelling circumstances prevent them from enrolling in 50 points per semester.
- iii.* Having made unsatisfactory progress it is recommended or required that they enrol in fewer than 50 points per semester (for example in a fixed course to complete prerequisite study before advancing to the next year level).

³ This includes the full teaching period for the subject – pre-reading, teaching and assessment periods.

⁴ For concurrent diplomas, this is the faculty responsible for selection into the diploma.

⁵ For concurrent diplomas, this is the responsibility of the faculty with custody of the student's primary degree.

May 2008

- International students seeking to undertake a study load of fewer than 50 points in either semester 1 or 2 should submit a request to vary their study load, together with any relevant supporting documentation, to the Student Centre.
- Such requests will be assessed by a Student Adviser on the basis of the established guidelines mentioned above.
- A student who has requested a reduced study load may be asked to discuss their application with a Student Adviser before a final decision is made.
- A formal response will be provided to the student including instructions about what they need to do to complete their enrolment.
- The outcome of the request will be recorded on the student's file and, where appropriate, the expected completion date for their course will be adjusted.
- For approved requests that impact on a student's completion timeframe, copies of the request and supporting documentation will be provided to International Student Services, who will issue a new COE.

1.3 Scholarship holders: The terms of some scholarships provided by the University may require students to maintain a minimum study load in order to retain eligibility for their particular scholarship. Students should ensure that they are aware of the terms of their scholarship and should take appropriate action if they choose to vary their enrolment in any way. See Scholarships policy for more detail.

1.4 Some coursework degrees may require that a student maintain a minimum study load. Variations to study load within these degrees may only be approved on compassionate or other compelling grounds. Students within these degrees who seek to vary their study load should approach the relevant Student Centre to discuss their request with a Student Adviser, and may be required to provide supporting documentation.

1.5 Requirements of external organisations: Students may form connections with a range of organisations external to the University (e.g. Centrelink) that require them to maintain a minimum study load for various reasons. With the exception of international students (see above) the University does not have a responsibility to identify or monitor the study load of these students. However, when a legitimate request (i.e. on the basis of legislative requirements) for data relating to the study load of groups or individual students is made of the University, it does have a responsibility to provide accurate data. The University cannot be held responsible for changes to any student's circumstances resulting from the legitimate provision of accurate information to external organisations. For more details about what information the University collects and to whom it may be required to provide this information please refer to the Privacy policy.

2. *Overloading*

2.1 Eligibility: Applications to overload are normally only approved for later-year students if the student has:

- Successfully undertaken a full-time enrolment, normally of 50 points, within the previous six months of study; and
- Received no fails within the previous six months of study; and
- Achieved an average of at least H2B (i.e. 70% or more) for all subjects attempted within the previous six months of study; and
- In the case of an overload in Summer, demonstrated that the subjects they are planning to undertake have been timetabled without clashes.

The H2B requirement may be waived if an overload of 62.5 points will enable the student to complete the requirements of their degree at the end of the relevant teaching period or year.

In cases where a student was on leave of absence in the previous six months, consideration of their request will be based on their academic performance in the most recent six month period of study.

Approval to enrol in more than 62.5 points concurrently over a period of longer than six weeks (e.g. 75 points in either semesters 1 or 2) will normally be given only to very high

May 2008

achieving students who have demonstrated consistently excellent academic performance while enrolled in a full study load (but normally more) throughout their studies and can demonstrate that planned subjects can be timetabled without any clashes.

2.2 Overload application process:

Except for accelerated course programs, a student must apply for an overload on a semester-by-semester basis (an overload will not usually be approved for future teaching periods).

A student's performance when overloaded will be taken into consideration if they make future overload requests, however in general a student must maintain an H2B average to overload again.

- As requests to overload are considered on the basis of results in previous study, applications to overload will generally not be accepted until after results for all completed subjects have been released to students.
- Applications should be submitted online to the Student Centre.
- Such applications will be considered by a Student Adviser, in consultation with relevant academic coordinators if appropriate (e.g. where concerning clinical placements).
- A student who has requested an overload may be requested to meet with a Student Adviser before a final decision is made.
- A formal response will be provided to the student including instructions about what they need to do to complete their enrolment, and a warning about the possible implications of overloading.
- The outcome of the request will be recorded on the student's file.

2.3 Implications of overloading:

- Overloading may compromise a student's academic performance.
- Undertaking an overload is not grounds for special consideration or extensions of time to complete coursework or examinations.
- Overloading is not an adequate explanation for unsatisfactory progress.
- Increasing study load may have implications for other important life circumstances, such as paid employment, access to Centrelink benefits or caring responsibilities and these should be taken into account in any consideration of study load.
- An overload may increase the likelihood of timetable clashes.
- As tuition fees per teaching period are determined by a student's study load, an overload increases the fees payable for the teaching period in which the overload is attempted.

3. *Discretion*

3.1 Applications for variation to study load (international students) and overload should initially be assessed and processed by Student Advisers, in consultation with academic coordinators if appropriate, located in the relevant Student Centre.

3.2 Matters that fall outside established parameters should be referred to the Manager of the relevant Student Centre in the first instance. The Manager may endorse or override decisions taken by a Student Adviser or may refer the matter to the dean or custodial dean of the relevant course for final determination.

3.3 In deciding matters referred to them for final determination, or matters under appeal, the dean of the relevant course may endorse or override decisions taken by other staff members in respect to those matters.

4. *Appeals*

Students concerned about decisions made in respect to this policy should consult the Student Grievance Policy for information about how to conduct an appeal.