



Policy Directory

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs
Responsible Office: Graduate Studies
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Policy Title: Distance Learning Policy on International Students

Policy: *The Graduate School policy on Distance Learning and International Students* contains the policies and regulations of the Alcorn State University Office of Graduate Studies. This policy has been established by Homeland Security, Academic Affairs and the Graduate Council to ensure consistent standards across Graduate programs.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: DISTANCE, ONLINE & HYBRID COURSE POLICY

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued important regulations particularly as to international students with F-1 visa status and their participation in registered classes. Alcorn must ensure compliance with the federal requirements, as well as applicable IHL and university policies (See the NAFSA and CFR below). This Provost Communication provides best practices and guidelines to assist valued faculty in the instruction and advising of international students with respect to (i) enrolling/registering in the correct course load requirements; (ii) maintaining international student's good-standing visa status; (iii) ensuring sufficient and adequate "physical presence" in the classroom; and, (v) facilitating timely progress towards degree completion.

3.20.7 Distance education limits (NAFSA manual)

No more than the equivalent of one on-line/distance education class or 3 credits per session may count towards the "full course of study" requirement, if the course "does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class." If the student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be counted toward the full course of study requirement.

8 C.F.R. § 214.2(j)(6)(i)(G)

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted if taken on-Line or through distance education in a course that does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward classroom hours or credit.

Distance Learning/On-Line Courses

A distance learning or on-line course is one that does not require a(n international) student's physical presence for classes, exams and/or other purposes integral to course completion. At Alcorn, International students may take online classes, but only a maximum of three-credit hours of these may apply to the international student's full-time status each semester. This means only one 3 credit online course per semester may count towards the student's full-time status. Therefore, undergraduate students who are enrolled in twelve credits must take nine of those credits in regular classroom-taught classes and graduate students who are enrolled in nine credits must take six of those credits in traditional classroom-based classes. Hybrid courses are exempt from this classification.

Hybrid Courses

A hybrid course is one that blends online and traditional instruction and requires international students to maintain "physical presence in the classroom," at least partially. At Alcorn, instructors may evidence that international students are meeting the "physical presence" threshold by (I) requiring in-class attendance (a) in the first and last classroom sessions, (b) during classroom examinations, and/or (c) in other specifically designated classroom sessions, such as a major projects or presentations; or (II) physically monitoring or assigning an approved Alcorn employee to proctor the hybrid class while international students are in the classroom. Hybrid classes where students have the option to either participate online or in-class will be considered 100% online classes if students chose not to be physically present in the classroom.

Summary

- F-1 students are required take the minimum credit requirements of full-time hours each semester, except in the final semester.
- An international student's lawful F-1 status will be terminated if s/he:
 - maintains a course load that falls below 12 undergraduate or 9 graduate credit hours;
 - fails to register for all class sessions during the first registration period;
 - fails to attend a registered class for which the student receives a UW grade; or,
 - withdraws from a semester.
- Grades which count towards satisfying the full-time enrollment requirement are A, B, C, D, F, P (Pass), and I(Incomplete* so long as completed within the Catalog-specified limitation period).
- Grades which do not count towards satisfying the "full-time enrollment requirement" are W, UW, audit, and an incomplete (I) grade which becomes an F.
- Failure to comply with the regulation [8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)] violates a student's F-1 status.

Major Take-Away: Registration and Completion is Key

International students must not only pay full-time tuition & fees and enroll in a full course of study at the beginning of each semester, but must also complete a full course of study at the end of each semester.

Alcorn State Universities offers distance-, on-line-, and hybrid-mediated courses to overcome time and geographical constraints while meeting the access, convenience, flexibility, and time demands of our ever diversifying community of evening, weekend, working, (non)traditional, digitally-oriented, rural, first generation, disadvantaged, and international students. Your cooperation with respect to the Homeland Security regulations is greatly appreciated.