



TO: Council on Graduate Studies
Coordinators of Graduate Study
Chairs of Graduate Programs
Graduate Student Advisory Council
Academic Leadership Team

FROM: Robert M. Augustine, Dean

RE: Change in Full Time Status for Graduate Students for Financial Aid Purposes

DATE: March 4, 2014

History

The Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC) has been working with the University to align Eastern's full-time graduate student financial aid policy with other institutions in Illinois. While the definition of full-time for enrollment reporting and determining graduate assistantship eligibility was approved at 9 semester hours for graduate students in 1997, the full-time requirement for financial aid remained at 12 semester hours or the equivalent of the undergraduate requirement. Fees per credit hour were also assessed based on a 12 credit-hour model.

Issue

The 12 credit hour model results in disadvantages for graduate students. First, many take heavier loads than their counterparts at other institutions in order to be eligible for financial aid as a full-time student. Second, those who wish to remain below the 12 hours to preserve scholarly endeavor must accept aid as a part-time student and in some cases may not be eligible for aid. To address these disadvantages, GSAC worked to change the full-time definition from 12 credit hours to 9 credit hours. As of this date, GSAC has successfully earned tentative approval for a July 1, 2014 implementation date.

Fee Changes

As noted above, fees are currently assessed on a per credit hour basis using a 12 credit hour pro-rated model. Changing to a 9 credit hour model will increase the percentage of a fee that will be assessed. For example, if a student is enrolled for 1 credit hour the current pro-rated cost of a \$100 fee will be $1/12^{\text{th}}$ or \$8.33. In contrast a student enrolled for 1 semester hour in a 9 credit hour model will pay a pro-rated cost of $1/9^{\text{th}}$ or \$11.10.

Comparison Chart

The chart on page 2 of this memo provides a comparison of pro-rated fees that graduate students will pay based on the new 9 credit hour model and compares these to the current 12 credit hour model. This issue will be reviewed with the Council on Graduate Studies during their regular meeting at 2:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 18, 2014, in 3108 Blair Hall. Let me know if you have questions.

Table 1 Comparison of 12 Hour Model to 9 Hour Fee Assessment Model

Credit Hours	12 Hour Model Fee Assessment	9 Hour Model Fee Assessment	Difference
1	95.81	113.66	17.85
2	191.62	227.32	35.7
3	287.43	340.98	53.55
4	383.24	454.64	71.4
5	479.05	568.3	89.25
6	574.86	681.96	107.1
7	670.67	795.62	124.95
8	766.48	909.28	142.8
9	972.24	1138.08	165.84
10	1057.95	1170.03	112.08
11	1143.36	1201.98	58.62
12	1233.93	1233.93	0