



F-1 Rules for Taking Online Learning Courses

Online learning courses have become increasingly popular for students; however, the U.S. Federal Government limits the number of online courses that an F-1 student can count towards a full-time course load.

Here is the text of the federal regulation:

8 CFR § 214.2(f)(6)(i)(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 toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and 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.

What does this mean?

F-1 students at Mt. SAC are required to maintain 12 units every Fall and Spring semesters. If you wish to enroll in an online course, only one (or three units) class may count towards your full course of study requirement.

This is not to be confused with the number of online courses you can take; but rather, on the number of units that *count* towards your full course of study requirement.

For example, you may register in 6 units of online courses; however, you must enroll in 9 more units that are not online courses to count towards your 12-unit requirement.

Winter and Summer Terms

Unless Winter or Summer is your first term at Mt. SAC, you may register in as many online courses allowed.

Final Semester

If you need only one course to finish your program of study in the final semester, it cannot be taken through online/distance education. There must be a physical presence requirement for the course. If you remain in the United States without reporting to any class, it becomes a security issue and cannot be allowed.

Confused? Don't be. Send your questions regarding F-1 rules for taking online courses to the International Students Program at f1visa@mtsac.edu.