

Duke Kunshan University Overload Policy

Many of our students would overload every semester if we let them. In general, we do NOT recommend that students take overloads.

We discourage overloads for the following reasons:

1. Our 7-week courses are quite intense. Most students are better off taking fewer courses and focusing on really mastering the material. Students should be encouraged to do suggested readings, work more practice problems, and do a deeper dive rather than spread themselves too thin.
2. Many of our students are already under a lot of stress due to the intensity of our courses and the pressure they (and sometimes their parents) place themselves under to get good grades. Stress can manifest itself in ways that are not always reflected in their grades. Even a student with a stellar academic record might be suffering from anxiety, depression, an eating disorder, or any other number of mental health concerns. While this certainly does not apply to every student, this is also something that many students are able to hide and may not be apparent to those of us who are evaluating the request.
3. We want to encourage students to take full advantage of all the co- and extra-curricular activities available on campus that will greatly enhance their DKU experience. These include participating in research activities, sports, student clubs and activities, community service, campus speakers and colloquia, etc.
4. Our course offerings, staffing plan, and budget (field trips, class activities, classroom supplies, etc.) are all based upon the assumption that students will take a normal course load. From a practical standpoint, students who take above the normal course load put great stress on our already limited resources. Furthermore, an increased number of overloads results in more competition for seats in classes and larger class sizes, diminishing the academic experience for all students and faculty.

Overloads will only be approved under exceptional circumstances, and advisors are asked to be the primary gatekeepers in enforcing this policy. Overload permission will not normally be granted just because a student wants to take an additional course. Students who are behind in credits should not expect to be permitted to overload for multiple semesters. Below are some examples of the kinds of exceptional cases in which an overload *might* be granted.

- Courses that are credit-bearing co-curricular activities:
 - For example, MUSIC 210 Orchestra and other performing arts courses offered for 2 credits over 14 weeks. These are very different from most of our other kinds of courses. The logic in allowing an overload is that such courses are similar to PE in that they provide students a break from their other academic coursework and contribute to wellness.
 - Research independent study. In many cases, this should be done within a normal load. But for strong students, there might be cases in which an overload to accommodate the research might be appropriate. Overloads are not authorized to accommodate Signature Work capstone courses.
- A one-time overload for student who is behind in credits (for example, due to leave of absence, failed course work, course withdrawal, CR/NC option, or underload in a previous semester). This would require careful consideration of the reasons the student is behind and whether the current semester is the appropriate time to overload or if delaying to a later semester would be better for the student.

- A one-time overload for a student who is behind on graduation requirements (for example, due to change of major, need for additional Duke credits while completing other requirements, etc.). This type of overload would be more likely to be granted for a junior or senior.
- An audited course. However, students and advisors should read the audit policy very carefully. There are only a few circumstances in which an audited course would be advisable.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies will not approve an overload that has not already been approved by the academic advisor. The advisor is in the best position to consider a student's full academic and personal circumstances and to discuss the pros and cons of the overload with the student. Please note that overloads should typically only be considered for students who have a GPA of 3.0 or above (with the exception of first-term first year students who wish to take MUSIC 115 or MUSIC 210).

Course load information can be found starting on page 44 of the 2023-24 Bulletin. The overload policy is as below:

Overload

Only in exceptional cases and with special permission of both the academic advisor and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or designee could a student enroll in an overload (defined as more than 10 credits in a 7-week session or more than 20 credits in a term, exclusive of PE) with the maximum not exceeding 24 credits. In determining whether to approve an overload, the academic advisor and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or designee will carefully consider the student's academic history, including grades and the number of courses taken in the past, along with other factors. Students should not count on an overload later to compensate for a previous underload.