Full-Time Equivalency for PhD Students taking Preliminary or Qualifying Exams

If a graduate international student will not be enrolled full time during an academic term yet the academic department considers him/her to be full time, while the student prepares for or take preliminary or qualifying exams, the U-M International Center (IC) may authorize a Full Time Equivalency (FTE) for this student. This FTE allows the U-M International Center (IC) to report full-time enrollment to SEVIS to maintain the student’s F1 status.

- Full Time Equivalency is for the purpose of maintaining immigration status only. You may not be considered an active student for other purposes, such as loans, for example.
- Rackham requires that all students register for at least one credit.

Who Can Qualify

An FTE may be granted in the following circumstances:

- A graduate student completing all formal course work during the current term. Upon completion of formal course work, the student will prepare for or take the preliminary exam or qualifying exam.
- A graduate student has already completed all formal course work but is currently preparing for preliminary exam or qualifying exam.

Requirements

A signed letter from the academic advisor or department is required. The letter must be on letterhead and must state the following information:

- That the student is considered to be full time by the department.
- What the student will be doing during the term of FTE authorization.
- The number of credits for which the student will register during the term of FTE authorization.

Please be advised that the Full Time Equivalency Request Form along with the required documents listed on the request form must be submitted to an International Student Advisor during advising hours.

The FTE must be received by the U-M International Center (IC) by the end of the drop/add period of EACH TERM. A student who drops below a full course of study without prior approval of a Designated School Official (DSO) is considered out of status.