Online Courses for F-1 Students

Federal Regulations State:
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. 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 a student's full course of study requirement. (Source: U.S. Code of Federal Regulation: [8 CFR § 214.2 (f)(6)(i)(G)])

F-1 students (physically in the United States) studying at DSU, MUST enroll in a full-time course load for fall and spring semesters only. During the fall and spring semesters, an F-1 student is limited to only one online or distance education course that can be counted towards a full-time course load, whether it is a DSU course or a course offered by another school. F-1 students can take more than 3 online credits as long as they meet the minimum traditional on-campus course requirement for their academic program.

There is no regulation that F-1 students be enrolled during summer sessions, which are optional. Thus, F-1 students can take as many online or distance education courses from DSU or from another institution as they wish (with DSU’s approval) during summer sessions.

F-1 students may take more than one online course however; he/she must take at least 9 credits that include meeting physically on campus.

Example 1:
An undergraduate F-1 student can take 16 credits, 9 of which are in traditional on campus classes and 6 online in the fall semester. Because fall is a required term for DSU, only one online course, or 3 credits, counts toward the full-time course load. The F-1 student is thus maintaining his or her F-1 student status because he has 12 credits (9 traditional plus 3 online credits).

Example 2:
A graduate F-1 student can take 6 credits, 3 of which are in traditional on campus classes and 3 online in the fall semester. Because fall is a required term for DSU, only one online course, or 3 credits, counts toward the full-time course load. The F-1 student is thus maintaining his or her F-1 student status because he has 6 credits (3 traditional plus 3 online credits).

Example 3:
An undergraduate F-1 student in his/her senior year wants to take three online courses during the summer term. Summer term is optional for F-1 students, and those who do enroll can take up to 10 credits during the summer terms (I & II). Therefore, they may take all three online courses in the summer terms (I & II) and still maintain their F-1 student status.

Example 4:
A graduate F-1 student in his/her senior year wants to take two online courses during the summer term. Summer term is optional for F-1 students, and those who do enroll can take up to 8 credits during the summer terms (I &
II). Therefore, they may take two online courses in the summer terms (I & II) and still maintain their F-1 student status.

Immigration regulations strictly prohibit students in their last semester of study from taking ONLY an online course. Even if F-1 students only need to take an online course, he/she must still take another traditional course that requires regular classroom meetings. It is best to consult with the International Student Advisor before making scheduling these plans.