Online Programs and Online Courses

There are many visa types that allow international students to study while they are in the U.S. The regulations below only apply to those whose visa status will be F or J.

Full Time Enrollment Requirement

The U.S. Government has very strict guidelines for online courses and international students. It's important to keep in mind that international students who are in the U.S. on an F or J visa must be enrolled full time unless granted permission through the Center for Global Engagement office. Undergraduates must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 hours and graduate students must be enrolled in 9 hours OR the equivalent of full-time enrollment as designated by the Baylor Registrar’s Office (dissertation hours, 5VXX, 6VXX, etc.)

Online Courses

The regulations below outline parameters for online courses for F and J international students.

“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.” 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)

It is important to note that once the full-time requirement is met, additional courses that are online would be allowed. For example, an undergraduate that is required to register for 12 credits per semester to maintain a "full course of study" could take 3 of those credits through an on-line class each semester. If the student chose to take an overload of 15 credits, 6 of which were done on-line, all 6 credits might be counted towards the student's degree requirements, although only 3 of those credits are actually serving to maintain the student's F-1 "full course of study." On the other hand, an undergraduate student who is registered only for 12 total credits, 6 of which are done on-line, would be considered as being below a "full-course of study," since only 9 of the total credits would count towards the full-course of study requirement.
Online Programs

Academic Programs whose creation, curriculum, and marketing are primarily intended for online degree completion are not allowed for students in F or J status. This does not prevent an international student from enrolling in an online program at Baylor and completing that study from his or her home country. That student, however, may not travel to the U.S. to work on any facet of the degree without acquiring the appropriate student visa. Students in other visa categories may be allowed to be in the U.S. and complete online programs. Those students should check with a qualified immigration attorney.