

# ACADEMIC SCHEDULE AND LOAD

## Academic Schedule

Seattle Pacific University uses a quarter calendar system that spans three regular quarters (Autumn, Winter, and Spring quarters) and an optional summer term, used by most students as a vacation period.

Winter and Spring Quarters each consist of ten weeks of instruction. Autumn Quarter includes ten weeks of instruction preceded by September Session, an optional period of four-to-six weeks beginning after summer session ends and prior to start of the regular autumn term. September Session provides an opportunity for students to enroll in unique or specialty courses, including short-term study abroad Global Seminars.

Credits taken during September Session count toward students' Autumn Quarter credit load, and students are allowed to apply their financial aid toward these classes. (If students take more than a combined 18 credits during the September Session and Autumn Quarter, they will be charged for the overload.)

September Session allows flexibility and opportunity for our students who may want to catch up on credits, or move toward degree completion more quickly. Learn more (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/academic-calendar/september-session/>) about September Session.

## Block Schedule

Classes are arranged in a block-schedule (<http://spu.edu/depts/sas/forms/blkschedwksht.pdf>) format: 5-credit courses are generally offered in either 80-minute periods three days a week or 120-minute periods two days a week.

Except during Summer Session(s), there is an interval of 10 minutes between periods, and a Chapel assembly is scheduled at 11:10 a.m. on Tuesdays. SPU also offers a variety of evening and summer classes. Most summer courses take place over two four-week sessions and vary from traditional classes in length and structure.

## Final Examination Schedule

A special two-hour class meeting is scheduled for all 3-, 4-, and 5-credit courses during one of the last three days of every quarter. 1- and 2-credit courses may have a final meeting period at the discretion of the instructor. The final exam period is considered an instructional period; classes are expected to meet during the scheduled time whether or not a final exam is given.

If a student has more than two exams on any day, he or she may reschedule one of the exams with an instructor at a mutually convenient time. An instructor may refuse a student's request to reschedule a final examination. However, instructors may schedule an early final exam for a student under the following conditions:

- The student is able to demonstrate appropriate mitigating circumstances that, in the judgment of the instructor, warrant rescheduling the final exam.
- A rescheduled final exam is given no earlier than four working days prior to the last day of the final examination period.

- The student's request to reschedule a final exam is made at least two weeks before the regularly scheduled final exam period.

## Academic Load

### Definition of Academic Credit

One "credit" signifies the value toward graduation of a class meeting one period of approximately one hour each week for a quarter of approximately 10 weeks together with satisfactory completion of the assigned out-of-class work. Two (and sometimes three) 50-minute periods of laboratory work are regarded as equivalent to one such period of regular class work.

The SPU "credit" is a "quarter" credit and is equal to two-thirds of the "semester" credit in use at some institutions. (For instance, 45 quarter credits are equivalent to 30 semester credits.) It is expected that students will spend at least two 50-minute periods of work outside the classroom for each 50 minutes spent in class.

### Enrollment Status

Enrollment status for undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students is determined by the following:

- Full time: 12–18 credits
- Three-quarter time: 9–11 credits
- Half time: 6–8 credits
- Less than half time: 1–5 credits

### Permissible Academic Load

The term "academic load" refers to the schedule of studies for which a student is registered. Twelve to eighteen credits are considered a regular academic load for undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students. Although Summer Session consists of more than one session, to be considered full time a student must be registered for at least 12 credits within the entire Summer Session.

To foster academic success and aid in the transition from high school to college, freshmen are allowed to register for no more than 18 credits per quarter. Those who desire to exceed the 18-credit limit to participate in Music Ensembles or private instruction should submit a credit overload request in Banner. Questions about this form may be submitted to the Office of the Registrar ([registrar@spu.edu](mailto:registrar@spu.edu)).

By special permission from the Office of the Registrar, undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students who maintain a high scholarship standard may be permitted to register for as many as 20 credits. Only rarely, and through a petition process, are students permitted to register for more than 20 credits, including music, physical education, and all fractional credits. An example of "rare" circumstance warranting such a petition would be the need to take a few extra credits to complete the final quarter toward a degree.

In rare cases, some courses may be coded as "free overload" credits with the approval of the Chief Academic Officer. Free overload credits permit a student to take up to 21 credits in a single quarter when specific requirements are met, including meeting a GPA threshold. Courses coded as free overload credits are viewed as a service to the university. Some examples of approved free overload credits include choirs, ensembles, theatre practicums, NCAA athletics courses, and leadership courses for RAs and SMCs. The Office of the Registrar maintains the current listing of approved free overload courses.

It should be noted that there is an additional per-credit tuition charge for 19 or more credits.

Reduction or Limitation of Load

An undergraduate student’s academic load is subject to reduction or limitation from the University Registrar for low scholarship.

Experience suggests that most students should limit academic load in proportion to hours of employment outside of school hours. The following schedule suggests a relationship between the student’s academic load and outside work:

Outside work per week	Load recommended
14 or fewer hours	15-18 credit hours or fewer
15-20 hours or fewer	12-14 credits
21-30 hours or fewer	10-12 credits
More than 30 hours	6-10 credits

Concurrent Enrollment

Except when participating in approved study abroad, students may not take courses concurrently from SPU and another institution during the regular academic year (Autumn through Spring quarters).