Distance Education Policy for F-1 Students

> Do International Students have any special Distance Education requirements?
Yes they do.
Due to Homeland Security requirements, F-1 International Students are limited in the number of hours they can take through online, tape and broadcast distance education each semester.

> What are the Distance education limits for F-1 International Students?
No more than the equivalent of one online, tape or broadcast distance education class or 3 credits per session may count towards the "full course of study" (12 hours per semester) requirement. If the student's course of study is in a language study program, no online, tape or broadcast distance education classes may be counted toward the full course of study requirement.

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 online, tape or broadcast class each semester. If the student registers for an overload of 15 credits, 6 of which were done online, all 6 credits might be counted.

Authority cite
8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)

(G) 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 if taken on-line or through distance education in a course that 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 classroom hours or credit.

> How many online, tape or broadcast classes can an International Student apply toward their degree?
The distance education provision does not limit the number of distance education credits that can be used towards a degree's requirements, but rather the number of such credits that can be used to satisfy the "full course of study" requirement.

> What if the "one class" is more than 3 credits? What if a student wants to take two classes of 1 credit each?
The regulation's term "the equivalent of" does give some room for interpretation, but the "3-credit" limit is the way University of Houston chooses to interpret the restriction.

> What if the student has only one class left in their course of study? Can they take an online, tape or broadcast distance education class as their only course in the final semester of study?
If a student needs only one course to finish his or her program of study, it cannot be taken through online/distance education. There must be a physical presence requirement for the course. If a student remains in the United States without reporting to any class, it becomes a security issue and cannot be allowed.

For further question regarding this issue, please contact the office at:

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Resources www.distance.uh.edu