UNC Charlotte Policy on Continuous Registration for Graduate Students

There is often confusion about when/why students must register for courses after they have completed the required 36-credits for the MS Earth Sciences program. Here are the guidelines taken directly from the Graduate Catalog:

Students in graduate degree programs are required to maintain continuous registration (fall and spring semesters) for thesis, dissertation, project, or directed study until work is completed. Students are not required to enroll in any summer term unless they are using campus facilities or they are completing degree requirements in that term. The continuous registration requirement begins with the semester in which the student first registers for his/her thesis, dissertation, project, or directed study. Students who must remain continuously enrolled but are not using University resources should apply for a leave of absence. Students choosing this option must file a Special Request for a leave of absence that states they will not use University resources during the leave period. If the leave of absence extends beyond one calendar year, the student’s matriculation is closed and the student must re-apply for active status in the graduate program.

International students on F-1 visa/status must remain continuously enrolled until the thesis, dissertation, project or directed study is completed. Those international students who wish to apply for a leave of absence are advised to consult with the International Student/Scholar Office prior to filing the Special Request for leave of absence.

Note: Students must be enrolled during the term (semester or summer) in which they graduate from the University.

Important: Effective 1 July 2012, the university changed its policy regarding the residency courses for continuous registration. The departmental residency courses (formerly ESCI 7999 and GEOL 7999) have been replaced by a university-wide residency course (GRAD 7999), which can only be used in specific circumstances:

1. If a student has completed their coursework, **but has NOT completed AND defended their thesis/project**, then the student must now register for at least 3-credits in the coming semester in order to comply with the university’s policy on continuous registration. There are no formal guidelines as to which course. Thus, the student could take another “traditional” course at the graduate level for a letter grade, or they could register for another three credits of the graduate research course (ESCI 6900). The latter is recommended so the student can focus on completing their thesis/project.

2. If a student has completed their coursework, **AND has successfully defended their thesis/project**, but cannot graduate until the end of the upcoming semester, then the student can register for GRAD 7999. Students who need to register for this residency course will find the course listed under “Graduate School” in the course catalog. Students do not need a permit from their department to register for this course. Students may repeat this course **one** time. If a student needs to take this course for a third time (or more), they need to file a special request.

Please register accordingly! We recognize that this places a greater financial burden upon the student by requiring you to pay for 3 credit hours instead of 1 credit hour – view this change as additional motivation to finish and defend your thesis/project in a timely manner.