



VISITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM (VISP)

VISP News:

Your connection to VISP and to UW- Madison

Special Issue: Course Enrollment

Course enrollment can be confusing...but we're here to help!

Resources for You

Course enrollment in a new academic system can be overwhelming. Use this guide, our [VISP online enrollment orientation](#), and your [VISP coordinator](#) to help you succeed.

Course Enrollment Step-by-Step

Step 1: Review [courses with limited access](#) for VISP students.

Step 2: Log in at my.wisc.edu. Select the **Academic Navigator** widget, then select the **Course Search & Enroll** widget. Search by keyword or department to find courses. Pick out many options, as some courses might fill before you enroll.

Step 3a: Add courses to your shopping card, and watch for validation issues like unmet prerequisite requirements.

Step 3b (optional): If you see any validation issues in step 3a, contact professors / departments to ask for permission to enroll (see below).

Step 4: Begin enrolling at your enrollment time (listed in [Madison time](#)).

Full-time Enrollment Required

Unless otherwise authorized, F-1 and J-1 students must enroll fulltime per visa requirements. **Undergraduates are fulltime at 12 credits; graduates at 8 credits;** dissertators at 3 credits during the fall or spring terms. **F-1 students** can take a maximum of [3 credits of online coursework](#) per term.

Course Flexibility is Essential

Americans value a [liberal education](#), meaning students take courses in many academic areas—not just their majors. Even as [seniors](#), undergrads do not enroll exclusively in one area. We encourage our students to explore courses in a variety of departments and colleges to get a deeper understanding of our educational system.

COHORT / THEMATIC TRACK STUDENTS

[Cohort or Thematic Track VISP](#) students will have already received information about their unique course enrollment procedures that differ from that of regular VISP students. Ask your VISP coordinator for details if you are unsure.

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- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Enrollment

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Activate your NetID
- ✓ Search for courses
- ✓ Review validation issues and ask for permission to enroll, if required
- ✓ Complete visa process
- ✓ Secure housing
- ✓ Attend orientation
- ✓ Begin your new classes, and finalize your course enrollment

Connect with VISP!

E-mail: VISP@dcs.wisc.edu Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VISPatUW> Instagram: https://instagram.com/uwmadison_visp
Offices: [21 North Park Street, Suite 7101, Madison, WI 53715](#) Phone: 001 + 1 (608) 263-6960 VISP Office Hours: M-F, 7:45am – 4:30pm

Enrollment Troubleshooting: I got an error message!

MOST COMMON ERROR MESSAGES & WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET ONE

Because our enrollment system was created to facilitate degree student enrollment, there may be additional steps necessary for nondegree University Special Students like you to successfully enroll.

Course enrollment failed: You were not enrolled. This course is full. Check section level to see if a wait list is available and resubmit your enrollment request.

• Course is full

- **What to do?** Use the wait list for those classes that have it available.

Course validation failed: You will need to obtain permission to enroll in this class. If you have a permission number, enter it in the course section details.

• Class requires permission to enroll

- **What to do?** Read the course description and course notes, as these often include instructions of whom to contact to request permission. Follow those instructions by contacting the [professor](#), or [the department](#) regarding permission to enroll in classes.

Course validation failed: Enrollment requisites not met. Review the course requisites and course details before contacting the department offering the class.

Course validation failed: Enrollment requisites not met. Review the course requisites and course details before contacting the department offering the class.
– Sr/Graduate/professional standing

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– MATH 222 or 276

• Enrollment requisites not met

Note: The courses you took at your home university are not transferred into our system. While you may have taken a prerequisite for a course back home, **our online system cannot verify this and therefore you might receive an error message when you try to enroll.**

- **What to do?** Contact [the department](#) only after verifying you have met course requirements.
- **Note about standing: You are considered a University Special Student** at UW-Madison. This means that you are not considered a graduate/professional standing even if you are a graduate-level VISP student. Requirements of freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior, or even exchange student will prevent your enrollment and will necessitate requesting permission.

• **Other error?** Follow the directions in the error message. If you need other help, please contact the [VISP Coordinators](#).



Asking for Permission to Enroll

If you need to ask a professor or departmental advisor for permission to enroll, be sure to give him/her the information they need as well as a recent copy of your university transcripts (if available) to make a decision regarding your potential enrollment. You can find appropriate contact information using the links above.

Sample message to professor:

Dear Professor __ (Last Name) __,

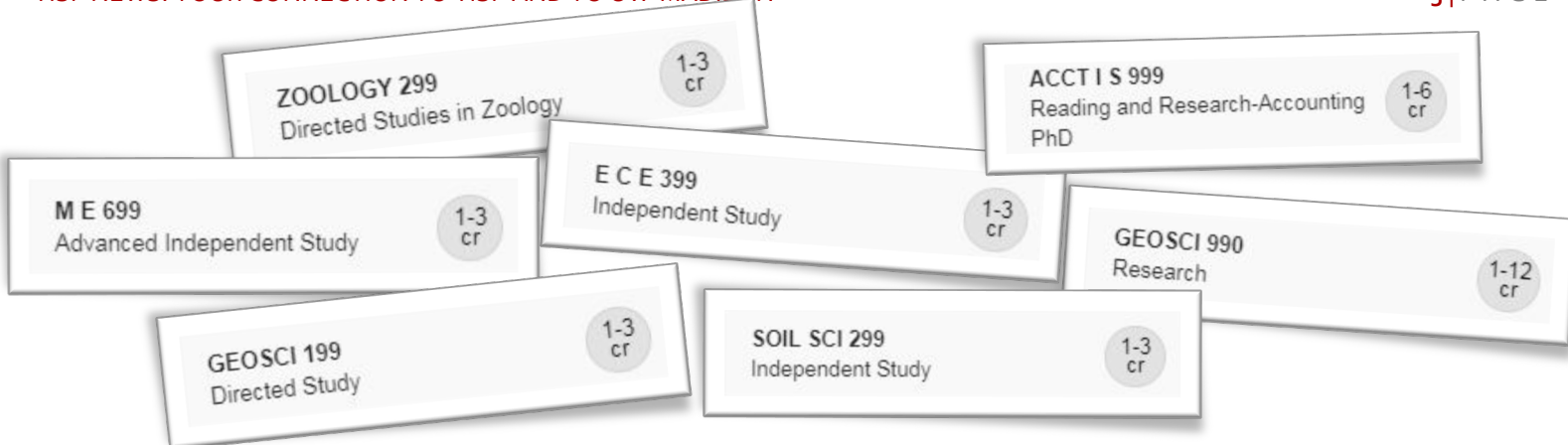
My name is _____ (campus ID# _____) and I will be participating in the Visiting International Student Program (VISP) next semester. I am currently a 3rd (4th, etc.) year student at (Home University) studying _____. I am interested in taking your class (eg. MATH XXX). Because I am a nondegree student, I received an error message when I tried to enroll for this course. At (Home Institution), I have taken the following courses that I feel prepared me to take a course like yours: (include list of relevant course titles taken at home university, and attach a recent copy of your transcripts). May I have your permission to enroll in your class?

If so, I'll need a permission number to allow me to enroll in the class. If you have any questions about the VISP program, please feel free to contact the [VISP coordinators](#). Thank you for your assistance. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Student Name

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Grading Options

STANDARD GRADING SCALE

Most courses default to the [standard grading scale](#) at the time of enrollment.

A (Excellent)	C (Fair)
AB (Intermediate grade)	D (Poor)
B (Good)	F (Failure)
BC (Intermediate grade)	*C / NC (Credit/No Credit)

*Only certain courses such as ESL are graded C / NC. This information is noted in the class details. C / NC grades do factor into student grade point averages (GPAs).

PASS / FAIL

Students electing to take a course pass/fail will earn credit and receive a grade of 'S' for satisfactory or 'U' for unsatisfactory in lieu of the traditional A-F grading scale. Grades of S & U do not factor into student grade point averages (GPAs). **Note:** a grade of D or lower is considered unsatisfactory.

The deadline to declare pass/fail for a course is generally the end of the **4th week of the semester**.

For more information, please read [Pass/Fail Guidelines](#) and for deadlines please see the [Deadlines at a Glance](#) for your enrollment term.

AUDITING

With your professor's permission, VISP participants may audit a course during their time at UW-Madison. Auditing a course means that you do not earn credit or receive a grade. You **attend lectures** but **do not complete homework or take tests**. Audited courses do not count towards minimum enrollment requirements for F-1 and J-1 visas. Regular tuition & fees will be assessed for audited courses. Please contact your [VISP coordinator](#) with any questions.

Directed Study / Independent Study / Research / Thesis:

What are these classes and may I take them?

As you search through available courses, you will come across a number of upper-level courses with titles like those pictured above such as:

- Directed Study
- Independent Study / Reading
- Research
- Senior Thesis, etc.

Policies differ by department, but generally these are not traditional courses that a nondegree student may join or request enrollment permission. Most courses of this kind typically do not have scheduled meeting times, textbooks, or syllabi. Rather, these are usually placeholders that are mechanisms of delivering academic credit to students with previously-arranged independent projects such as senior or master's thesis work or laboratory arrangements.

Visiting students are often not on campus long enough to join in on ongoing projects, although you are welcome to contact a professor to inquire about such a possibility. Participating in research is entirely up to you to arrange and is in no way a guaranteed part of VISP.

How Can I work with a Professor on Research?

Many former VISP participants have successfully engaged in research at UW-Madison. Instead of only looking for courses to enroll, look at [departmental websites](#) and find a professor who has an ongoing research project of interest to you. Then contact that professor to inquire if a research project with them is possible for your enrollment term. We recommend starting this communication the semester before you plan to arrive in Madison for VISP.

The professor or department will tell you which course to enroll in to receive academic credit for the research opportunity.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Enrollment

- ✓ Look on the [campus map](#) to see where courses are physically held—this is a big campus!
- ✓ Don't take courses that meet at the same time or overlap even by 5 minutes.
- ✓ Enroll in up to 18 credits and attend many courses the first week. You can drop the ones that you don't like.
- ✓ Don't enroll only in your minimum enrollment requirement, as courses may be cancelled or might not meet your needs.
- ✓ Be flexible!

Q: Is my enrollment date the only day to enroll?

A: You do not need to have your course enrollment finalized on your enrollment date. Students continue to add, drop, and swap classes into the second week of courses for the fall or spring. However...

Q: Can I wait until I arrive to enroll in courses?

A: You may, but it is not recommended. It's best to add courses as soon as you can just so that you have something to work with, even if they aren't your first choice. As the days pass, more and more students gain enrollment access. Many of you will be waiting to hear back about permission to enroll in courses for several weeks following your enrollment time. If you wait until you arrive in the U.S. to enroll, there may only be spots in courses you don't want to take. Adding a class now does not require you to take it—you can drop unwanted courses as you find others to replace them.

Q: Why is the class I want already closed (filled)?

A: Course enrollment happens in stages depending on university standing. Since degree students have course requirements that would prevent them from

graduating, they have priority enrollment over most visiting nondegree students. Degree graduate students enroll first, followed by degree-seeking seniors, and juniors, etc. This is why some courses fill before VISP enrollment takes place.

Q: If the class is already closed does that mean I can't take it?

A: Not necessarily. If a class that you really want to take is already full, you can try to enroll in the Wait List function. Remove the course from your shopping cart and re-add it to see if the Wait List function is available. As enrolled students add and drop, spaces may open in the course.

Q: Can I only attend the lecture section if I'm not interested in the discussion component of a course?

A: Some courses have only lecture (LEC) sections that students must enroll in; others have discussion (DIS) sections and/or laboratory (LAB) components that are also required. Many larger courses will have 2-3 Lecture sections for 10-20 Discussion and/or Lab sections, meaning that you will meet as a large group in the lecture and then break into smaller groups for discussion. Assume all components of the course are required unless otherwise stated.

Q: I want to take a course that's offered online. Is that okay?

A: Students on F-1 visas can take up to 3 credits worth of online coursework each fall or spring semester. Students on J-1 visas cannot take classes online. Read more on the [ISS website](#).

Q: I want to take an English as a Second Language (ESL) course. Can I do that?

A: Yes, if space allows. ESL regularly offers a course designed for VISP students-ESL 328 (section 005). The course helps develop the skills and confidence needed to actively participate in class discussions and produce work that meets the expectations of UW professors. The course helps students with important skills such as making formal presentations, critical reading, and academic writing. Additionally, it includes an orientation to Madison and provides an opportunity to increase cultural proficiency and boost comfort with English conversation. Other ESL enrollment may be possible, but we do encourage you to try 328-005 if it is offered this semester. Email askesl@english.wisc.edu for permission to enroll.

Q: A course I want has prerequisites. Do I have to take those before I can enroll in my desired course?

A: Many upper-level courses have prerequisite requirements. Courses might require a certain class standing (Jr. or Sr.) or require a student to have taken a class (Comp sci 302, Math 222). These do not necessarily mean that you cannot take the course; it just means that you might have to ask for permission to enroll in the course from the instructor if you are blocked from enrolling on your own.

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