

Overload Student Outcomes 2022-2025



GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Chris Byrd

Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

October 20, 2025

Contents

Introduction	2
Overview	2
Overload Process	2
Overload Status	3
Student Load	3
Units Above Full-Time Threshold	4
Overload Student Demographics	5
Gender	5
Race/Ethnicity	6
Age	7
Student Outcomes	8
Completion Rate	8
Success Rate	10
GPA	11
Analysis	12
Variables	12
Term of Overload	13
Overload vs. Excessive Overload	14
Cumulative GPA Prior Overload Term	15
Completed Units Prior To Overload Term	16

Introduction

Overview

This study examines the impact of overload units on student outcomes among students enrolled at Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (GCCCD) from Summer 2022 to Spring 2025. Overload units are units taken beyond the maximum number allowed for a given term. For the Summer term, this means any units above 8, while for the Fall and Spring terms (Winter Intersession excluded), it refers to any units above 18. To enroll in overload units, students must submit a petition and receive approval from counseling.

Overload Process

Students who wish to take overload units must submit a petition. This petition goes to a counselor who evaluates if they believe the student will be successful. Factors counselors often consider are course need, a student's employment load, the number of units the student has already completed, the student's GPA, the student's program, course availability, the course start time, and course workload. If the counselor believes the student can handle the additional units, the petition is approved. Excessive overload students may require additional approval from the Counseling Dean.

Overload Status

Student Load

Overload students are students who are enrolled in greater than 18 units during a Fall or Spring term, or greater than 8 units during a Summer term. Excessive Overload refers to a student who is taking more than 21 units during a Fall or Spring term, or more than 11 units during a Summer term. Full-time students are students taking 12 or more units during the Fall or Spring term or 8 units during the Summer term; overload students are excluded from full-time counts.

Based on the combined three-year totals, summer has the highest number and proportion of overload students (Table 1). The number of overload and excessive-overload students in the Fall and Summer terms grew by 35% and 42%, respectively. Despite a 14% increase in Spring enrollment between 2022 and 2025, the number of overload and excessive overload students decreased by 25%.

Table 1. Headcount by Student Load and Term

Term Session	Overload		Excessive Overload		Full-Time		Part-Time/Non-Credit		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Fall	544	1.0%	119	0.2%	23,262	41.1%	32,652	57.8%	56,577
Fall 2022	146	0.8%	35	0.2%	6,922	39.4%	10,451	59.5%	17,554
Fall 2023	191	1.0%	46	0.3%	7,843	42.1%	10,558	56.7%	18,638
Fall 2024	207	1.0%	38	0.2%	8,497	41.7%	11,643	57.1%	20,385
Spring	549	1.0%	122	0.2%	21,103	37.5%	34,578	61.4%	56,352
Spring 2023	198	1.1%	54	0.3%	6,448	36.7%	10,853	61.8%	17,553
Spring 2024	188	1.0%	42	0.2%	7,150	37.9%	11,496	60.9%	18,876
Spring 2025	163	0.8%	26	0.1%	7,505	37.7%	12,229	61.4%	19,923
Summer	632	3.0%	72	0.3%	713	3.4%	19,796	93.3%	21,213
Summer 2022	178	3.0%	18	0.3%	176	2.9%	5,615	93.8%	5,987
Summer 2023	207	2.9%	23	0.3%	250	3.5%	6,631	93.3%	7,111
Summer 2024	247	3.0%	31	0.4%	287	3.5%	7,550	93.0%	8,115

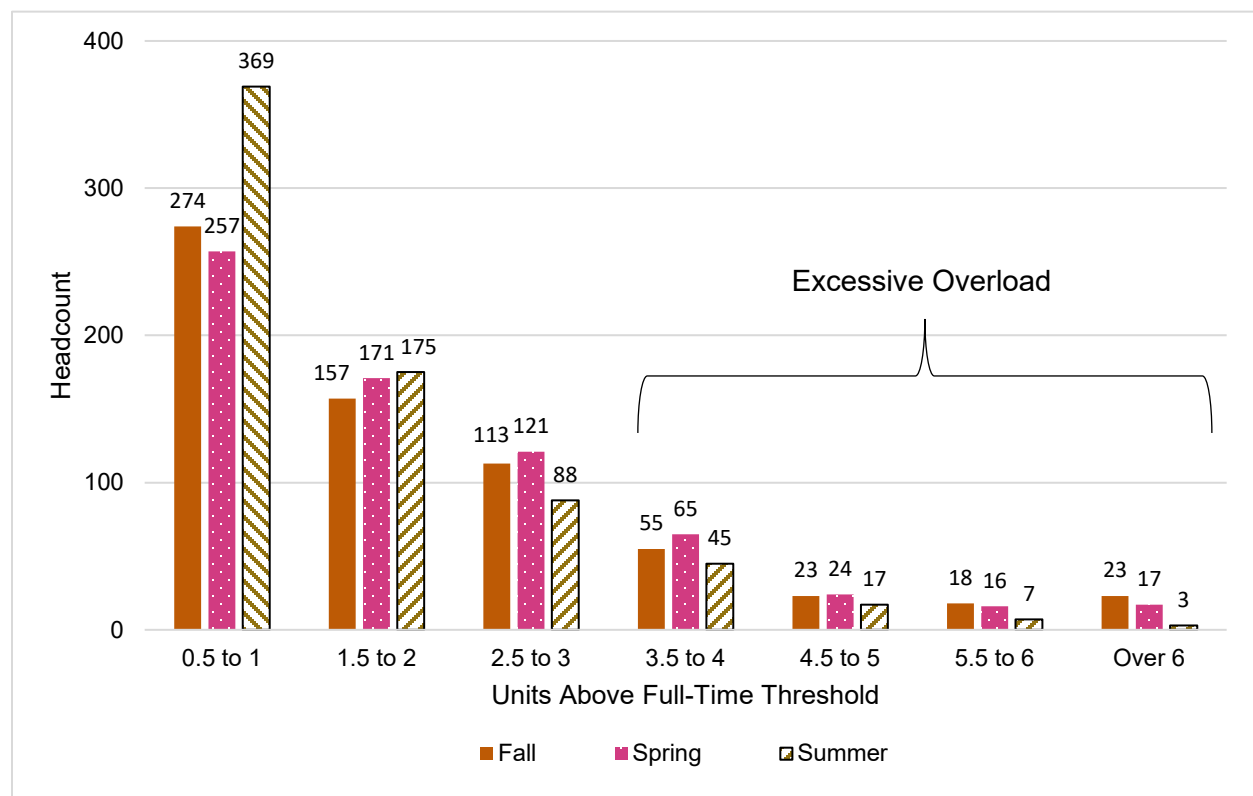
Note: Students may be duplicated across terms within the same term session.

Units Above Full-Time Threshold

Figure 1 shows the distribution of overload students by the number of units taken above the full-time threshold.

A larger percentage of students are in excessive overload during primary terms (Fall: 17.9%, Spring: 18.2%, Summer: 10.2%). Spring and Fall terms had the highest average unit amounts above full-time status, with summer session having the lowest (Fall: 2.3, Spring: 2.3, Summer: 1.8).

Figure 1. Headcount by Units Above Full-Time Threshold and Term



Overload Student Demographics

Gender

Female students make up the majority of overload students, but a smaller percentage of overload students than of the overall student population (see Table 2).

Table 2. Overload Student Headcount by Gender and Term

Gender	Fall				Spring				Summer			
	Overload		Districtwide		Overload		Districtwide		Overload		Districtwide	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	347	52.3	31,738	56.1	343	51.1	31,546	56.0	401	56.9	12,345	58.2
Male	310	46.8	23,842	42.1	314	46.8	23,757	42.1	296	42.0	8,541	40.3
Other/Unknown	6	0.9	997	1.8	14	2.1	1,049	1.9	8	1.1	327	1.6

Race/Ethnicity

Across terms, Hispanic/Latino and White students account for the largest shares of overload students; however, both groups are slightly underrepresented relative to their percentage of the GCCCD student population (see Table 3). Middle Eastern students are consistently overrepresented, showing the largest positive representation gaps (Fall 4.9%, Spring 4.6%, Summer 7.3%), while African American students show modest overrepresentation in Fall and Spring. Asian students are underrepresented in Fall and Spring, but near parity in Summer. Categories with small counts (African American, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Other/Unknown) should be interpreted cautiously.

Table 3. Overload Student Headcount by Race/Ethnicity and Term

Race/Ethnicity	Fall				Spring				Summer			
	Overload		Districtwide		Overload		Districtwide		Overload		Districtwide	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	56	8.5	3,210	5.7	47	7.0	3,160	5.6	45	6.4	1,283	6.1
American Indian	0	0.0	219	0.4	0	0.0	176	0.3	4	0.6	61	0.3
Asian	35	5.3	4,259	7.5	42	6.3	4,650	8.2	56	7.9	1,644	7.7
Hispanic/Latino	219	33.0	21,196	37.5	228	34.0	20,440	36.2	209	29.7	7,860	37.0
White	168	25.3	14,813	26.2	168	25.0	14,610	25.9	169	24.0	5,693	26.9
Middle Eastern	127	19.2	8,114	14.3	133	19.8	8,577	15.2	146	20.7	2,843	13.4
Pacific Islander	4	0.6	180	0.3	4	0.6	175	0.3	2	0.3	77	0.4
Two or More	40	6.0	3,368	6.0	37	5.5	3,295	5.9	62	8.8	1,348	6.4
Other/Unknown	14	2.1	1,218	2.2	12	1.8	1,269	2.2	12	1.7	404	1.9

Age

Younger students make up a larger percentage of overload students than the overall student population, while older students make up a smaller share (see Table 4). The largest representation gaps are among students <20 years of age (Fall: 19.8%, Spring: 13.4%, Summer: 2.2%) and those 30–49 years of age (Fall: -12%, Spring: -13.1%, Summer: -4.1%).

Table 4. Overload Student Headcount by Age Group and Term

Age Group	Fall				Spring				Summer			
	Overload		Districtwide		Overload		Districtwide		Overload		Districtwide	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<20	394	59.4%	22,376	39.6%	326	48.6%	19,910	35.2%	298	42.3%	8,500	40.0%
20-24	185	27.9%	14,550	25.7%	249	37.1%	15,678	27.9%	234	33.2%	6,284	29.6%
25-29	36	5.4%	5,888	10.4%	42	6.3%	6,046	10.7%	82	11.6%	2,390	11.3%
30-49	43	6.5%	10,449	18.5%	44	6.6%	11,106	19.7%	83	11.8%	3,364	15.9%
50+	5	0.8%	3,313	5.9%	10	1.5%	3,612	6.4%	8	1.1%	675	3.2%

Student Outcomes

Completion Rate

A course was considered completed if units attempted for the course were counted as completed by GCCCD. Units are considered completed if a student receives a D or higher in a course or a Pass. For calculations of completion rate, ungraded courses, military withdraws, and academic renewal are excluded from analysis.

During Summer terms, overload and excessive overload students have similar completion rates with a difference in completion rate of less than 2%. During primary terms, overload and excessive overload students have lower rates of unit completion when compared to their non-overload terms (see Table 5).

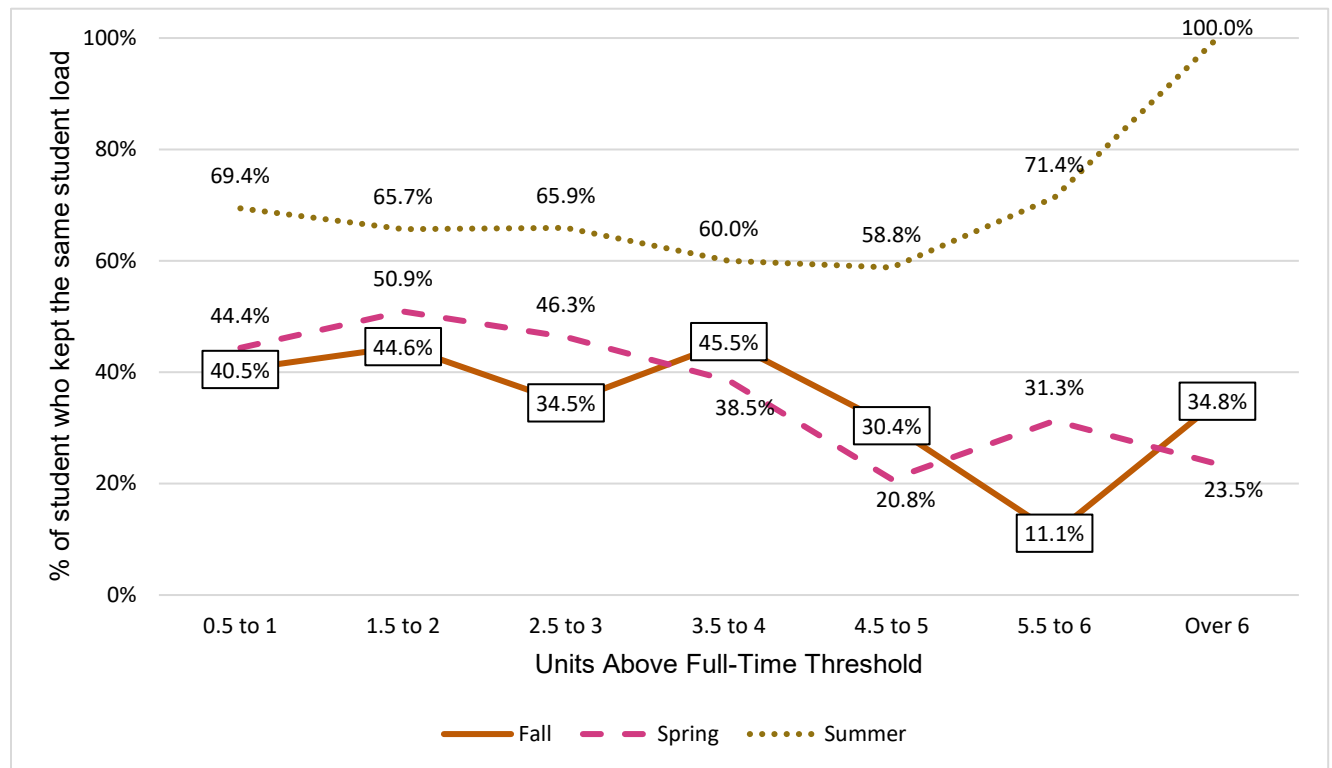
Table 5. Completion Rate by Student Load and Term

Term Type	Fall	Spring	Summer
	Completion Rate (Units)	Completion Rate (Units)	Completion Rate (Units)
All Overload	72.9%	75.4%	81.9%
<i>Excessive Overload</i>	65.9%	69.0%	81.3%
<i>Overload</i>	74.7%	77.1%	82.0%
Non-Overload	81.4%	80.4%	81.0%
Full-Time	77.5%	79.2%	76.5%

Figure 2 shows the percent of students who completed enough units to stay in the same student load status based on how many units they took above full-time status.

In general, the percent of students who keep their load status decreases as students attempt more units above the full-time unit threshold.

Figure 2. Percent of Overload and Excessive Overload Students Who Completed Enough Units to Stay at the Same Load Status by Units Above Full-Time Threshold



Success Rate

A student is considered successful in a course if they received an A+ through C, Pass, or an incomplete grade that would evaluate to one of the previous grades. For calculations of success rate, ungraded courses, military withdraws, and academic renewals are excluded from analysis.

Primary term overload and excessive overload students have a decrease in their success rate when compared to their non-overload terms (see Table 6). Summer overload and excessive overload students have less than a 2% difference in success rates when compared to their non-overload terms.

Table 6. Success Rate by Student Load and Term

Term Type	Fall	Spring	Summer
	Success Rate (Units)	Success Rate (Units)	Success Rate (Units)
All Overload	70.1%	72.6%	79.8%
<i>Overload</i>	71.9%	74.4%	79.8%
<i>Excessive Overload</i>	63.4%	65.8%	79.8%
Non-Overload	78.8%	77.8%	78.3%
Full-Time	73.9%	76.0%	73.8%

GPA

GPA is the average of your grades, adjusted for how many units each class is worth. To calculate it, each letter grade is turned into a number (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0). A plus adds 0.3 (e.g., B+ = 3.3), and a minus takes away 0.3 (e.g., A– = 3.7). Because the maximum GPA value is 4.0, A+ is only considered a 4.0. Pass/No Pass courses, withdraws, incomplete courses, and ungraded courses are excluded from calculations of GPA.

Overload and excessive overload students term GPAs are close to or higher than full-time student GPAs during the same term session. Excessive Overload students during spring terms have the largest decrease in average term GPA of .25. Overload students during non-overload terms complete less units than full-time students.

Table 7. GPA and Average Units Completed by Student Term Type

Term Type	Fall		Spring		Summer	
	Average Completed Units	Average Term GPA	Average Completed Units	Average Term GPA	Average Completed Units	Average Term GPA
All Overload	14.7	3.04	15.3	3.01	8	3.33
<i>Overload</i>	14.6	3.05	15.1	3.05	7.8	3.33
<i>Excessive Overload</i>	15.3	2.97	15.9	2.83	10.1	3.36
Non-Overload	10.1	3.09	9.6	3.08	3.9	3.31
Full-Time	10.5	2.88	10.7	2.93	6.1	3.12

Analysis

Variables

To better understand differences among overload students, several variables were analyzed to determine if there is a significant association between the variables and completion of all units attempted. The four variables analyzed are:

- Overload term (Fall, Summer, Spring)
- Overload status (overload vs. excessive overload)
- Overall GPA prior to overload term (equal or greater than 3.0 vs. less than 3.0)
- Completion of 12 units prior to overload term (equal or greater than 12 units vs. less than 12 units)

Term of Overload

A chi-square test of independence examined the association between academic term and completion of all attempted units among all overload students. The association was significant, $\chi^2(2) = 122.41$, $p < .005$. Relative-risk estimates based on observed counts indicated that overload students in Summer were approximately 1.5 times more likely to complete all attempted units as those in Spring, and approximately 1.7 times more likely as those in Fall.

Table 8. Expected vs. Actual Overload Students Who Completed All Units They Actively Enrolled in at Course Census Grouped by Term

Term Session	Completed All Units Attempted		Did Not Complete All Units Attempted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Fall	262	39.5%	401	60.5%
Spring	294	43.8%	377	56.2%
Summer	473	67.2%	231	32.8%

Overload vs. Excessive Overload

A chi-squared test of independence was conducted on Fall and Spring overload students to see if overload status (i.e., excessive overload or overload) impacted the completion of all attempted units. The association was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 8.71$, $p < .005$. Relative-risk estimates based on observed counts indicated that overload students were approximately 1.31 times more likely to complete all attempted units as were excessive overload students.

A chi-squared test of independence test found no significant association between overload status and completion of all attempted units for Summer overload students.

Table 9. Expected vs. Actual Overload Students Who Completed All Units They Actively Enrolled in at Course Census Grouped by Overload Status

Term	Completed All Units Attempted		Did Not Complete All Units Attempted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Fall and Spring				
Excessive Overload	80	33.2%	161	66.8%
Overload	476	43.5%	617	56.5%
Summer				
Excessive Overload	45	62.5%	27	37.5%
Overload	428	67.7%	204	32.3%

Cumulative GPA Prior Overload Term

A chi-squared test of independence was conducted on Fall and Spring overload students (i.e., excessive and overload) to determine if a cumulative GPA equal or greater than 3.0 prior to a student's overload term impacted the completion of all attempted units. The association was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 126.44$, $p < .005$. Relative-risk estimates based on observed counts indicated that students with GPAs equal or greater than 3.0 were approximately 2.4 times more likely to complete all attempted units than other overload students.

A similar analysis was conducted on Summer overload students. The association was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 48.45$, $p < .005$. Relative-risk estimates based on observed counts indicated that students with GPAs equal or greater than 3.0 were approximately 1.5 times more likely to complete all attempted units than other overload students.

Table 10. Expected vs. Actual Overload Students Who Completed All Units They Actively Enrolled in at Course Census Grouped by Cumulative Prior Term GPA

Prior Term GPA Group	Completed All Units Attempted		Did Not Complete All Units Attempted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Fall and Spring				
GPA ≥ 3.0	446	53.4%	389	46.6%
GPA < 3.0 or No GPA	110	22.0%	389	78.0%
Summer				
GPA ≥ 3.0	356	75.9%	113	24.1%
GPA < 3.0 or No GPA	117	49.8%	118	50.2%

Completed Units Prior To Overload Term

A chi-squared test of independence was conducted on Fall and Spring overload students to see if completion of 12 units at GCCCD prior to a student's overload term impacted the completion of all attempted units. The association was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 24.15$, $p < .005$. Relative-risk estimates based on observed counts indicated that overload students were approximately 1.6 times more likely to complete all attempted units as were excessive overload students.

A chi-square test of independence found no significant association between prior-term completion of ≥ 12 GCCCD units and completion of all attempted units among Summer term overload students.

Table 11. Expected vs. Actual Overload Students Who Completed All Units They Actively Enrolled in at Course Census Grouped by Cumulative Prior Term Completed Units

Prior Term Cumulative Completed Units	Completed All Units Attempted		Did Not Complete All Units Attempted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Fall and Spring				
Greater than or equal to 12	472	45.2%	573	54.8%
Less than 12	84	29.1%	205	70.9%
Summer				
Greater than or equal to 12	370	67.8%	176	32.2%
Less than 12	103	65.2%	55	34.8%

Findings

Through analysis on student overload, four key findings were discovered:

- Across the combined three years, Summer has the highest number and share of overload students ($\approx 3.0\%$ overload; $\approx 0.3\%$ excessive) versus $\approx 1.0\%/0.2\%$ in Fall and Spring.
- The combined count of overload + excessive-overload students rose in Fall +35% (181→245) and Summer +42% (196→278), but fell in Spring –25% (252→189) even as overall Spring enrollment grew $\approx 14\%$.
- Overload students in Summer are significantly more likely to complete all units than in Spring ($\approx 1.5\times$) or Fall ($\approx 1.7\times$); in primary terms (Fall/Spring), overload students were ≈ 1.3 time more likely to complete all attempted units as were excessive-overload students, while that status gap isn't significant in Summer.
- A prior GPA ≥ 3.0 is associated with higher completion ($\approx 2.4\times$ in Fall/Spring; $\approx 1.5\times$ in Summer); completing ≥ 12 units in the prior term(s) is associated with higher completion in Fall/Spring but not in Summer.