

Overview

Reduced Course Load (RCL) authorizations must be approved and updated in SEVIS by the Designated School Official (DSO) prior to the reduction in course load. A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval will be considered out of status. This is an exclusive list. There are no exceptions to the below list. Dropping a class because it is "too hard" (outside of the reasons given below) or because failure may adversely impact your GPA or a scholarship is not a valid use of the RCL option. The immigration regulations allow F-1 students to take less than a full course load under extremely limited circumstances. These circumstances are limited to the following situations:

=Medical RCL=

Under the medical RCL authorization, students with documented medical conditions can take a reduced course load or no course load at all. A medical reduced course load must be approved by a medical doctor and requires an explanation of the specific number of courses the student can take. The documentation must be from a licensed medical doctor, psychiatrist, doctor of osteopathy, licensed psychologist, or clinical psychologist. RCLs for medical conditions can be granted for no more than 12 months in the aggregate during any one course of study.

=Academic Difficulty RCL=

Academic difficulty RCL can only be used for the student's first semester of a new program level (transfer-in students may not be eligible), and it can be approved only once per program level. A student previously authorized to drop below a full course of study due to academic difficulties is not eligible for a second authorization due to academic difficulties while pursuing a course of study at that program level. The student must resume a full course of study at the next available semester, excluding a summer session, in order to maintain student status. Students with this RCL need to carry at least 6 credit hours for both undergraduate and graduate students. In-person classes enrollment is still required as no more than 3 online course credits will count towards their credit hours requirement. Academic difficulty RCL can be provided only on the basis of the following reasons specified in the regulations:

Initial difficulties with the English language

For example: Student is having trouble in a course/courses due to English language difficulty.

Initial difficulties with reading requirements

For example: Student is having trouble in a course/courses due to reading requirements.

Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods

For example: Student is having trouble in a course/courses due to unfamiliarity with American teaching methods.

Improper course level placement

For example: Student being misadvised to take a particular course; student is enrolled in a course for which they have not met the prerequisites; student is struggling in a class where the level of course material is beyond their academic ability.

=Final Semester RCL=

Final semester is the completion of program that determines when the course of study ends, student receives a diploma, and the 60-day grace period begins. Students must inform DSO of their final semester before their final semester starts if students are taking fewer courses needed to complete the academic program. Students should consult with the DOS if they fail a course in their final semester.

Reduced Course Load (RCL) Request Form

The academic advisor is not required to sign an RCL request form if a student does not provide sound reasoning or explanation of how their situation qualifies for an academic difficulty RCL; Designated School Official (DSO) also reserves the right to deny an RCL request submitted by a student.

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISOR AND STUDENT

Academic Advisor Information

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Academic Advisor Name (in print): | |
| Department: | Title: |
| Email: | |
| Student's expected date of degree completion (MM/DD/YY): | |
| Academic Advisor Signature: | Date (MM/DD/YY): |
| <small>*I acknowledge that I have met with the student and discussed possible available academic options.</small> | |

Student Information and RCL Request

*** Do not drop your class until you have received the RCL authorization from your DSO.**

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|--|------------------|
| Student Name (in print): | R number: |
| Program level: <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate | |
| Requesting a reduced course load for: <input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Year: _____ | |
| Reason for reduced course load (please only select one): | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Medical RCL *a medical doctor's official letter recommending RCL is required <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Academic Difficulty RCL (select only one reason for the academic difficulty RCL) *initial semester ONLY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Initial difficulties with the English language <input type="checkbox"/> Initial difficulties with reading requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods <input type="checkbox"/> Improper course level placement <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Final Semester RCL | |
| Student Signature: | Date (MM/DD/YY): |
| <small>*I acknowledge that I have met with the academic advisor and discussed possible available academic options.</small> | |