

# Reduced Course Load Request Form

Procedure for F-1 international students wishing to apply for a reduced course load

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## What is a reduced course load?

A student enrolled in less than a full-course of study. Federal regulations allow for a reduced course load (RCL) in limited instances if approved by a Designated School Official (DSO).

## What is full-time enrollment status?

An international student on an F-1 visa is legally required to maintain full-time enrollment during the fall and spring semesters. F-1 students are not required to enroll in classes during the annual summer break or scheduled college recesses. However, if a student starts in February, March, or April, they must enroll as a full-time student (6 credits or equivalent in the Intensive English Program). Please note that students may only count a maximum of one online, distance education or telecourse toward full-time enrollment. Full time at ECC is defined as:

- 12 semester hours minimum per semester for college-level classes
- 20 clock hours per week per session for the Intensive English Program

## What are the consequence of dropping below a full course load?

An F-1 student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the DSO will be considered out of status pursuant to 8 CFR 214.2 (f)(6)(iii). Falling out of F-1 status is a very serious violation of your responsibilities as an international student, and it can have long-term consequences on your immigration benefits in the U.S. A student who is out of status is no longer eligible for benefits such as practical training, on-campus employment, and travel signatures to re-enter the U.S. If a student fails to rectify their status, they are at risk of being deported and/or being unable to secure visas to enter the U.S. in the future.

## Prior Approval Requirement

Reduced course load requests must be received at least two weeks before you anticipate reducing your course load. You must verify that your RCL request has been approved prior to registering for less than a full course load and/or before dropping a course that will result in less than a full course load. Submission of this form does not guarantee a RCL request will be approved. Please note that a reduced course load based on financial need is not a qualifying reason.

## Special Documentation Required

1. Students seeking an RCL during their final semester must submit a verification letter and education plan from the International Academic Advisor.
2. Students seeking an RCL for academic difficulty must present a typed letter from the International Academic Advisor verifying the need for an RCL. Students enrolled in the Intensive English Program who request an RCL based on initial difficulties with the English language must submit a letter from the Director of the Intensive English Program verifying this need.
3. Students with a temporary, serious medical condition may apply for an RCL based on medical necessity provided they submit a letter recommending an RCL from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist, to the DSO to substantiate the illness or medical condition. The letter cannot be dated more than 30 days before the start of the semester for which the RCL is requested. All letters must days adhere to the following:
  - Typed on physician's letterhead, dated, signed by the physician and clearly state the physician's contact information.
  - State that full-time enrollment is not advisable due to a medical condition for a specific semester.
  - Specify a recommended number of enrollment hours for the semester the RCL is requested.
  - Indicate a date the student is expected to resume a full course load. Please note an RCL for medical reasons cannot exceed an aggregate of 12 months while the student is pursuing a course of study at a particular program level. If an RCL is requested beyond one semester, a student must submit a new request form and updated medical documentation.

## Reduced Course Load Request Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last*                      *First*                      *Middle*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester for RCL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Program of Study: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date at ECC: \_\_\_\_\_

I anticipate being enrolled in a total of \_\_\_\_\_ credit/clock hours during the semester I am requesting an RCL. I certify I have read this form and the instructions and certify that all information is correct to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please indicate which reason you are requesting an RCL and attach all required documentation.

### 1. Final Semester

\_\_\_\_\_ I am in my final semester and need fewer than 12 semester hours to complete the course of study. *You must attach a verification and education plan from the International Academic Advisor.*

### 2. Academic Difficulty

Students may only be approved for one semester of a reduced course load per program level. Minimum enrollment must equal a total of six semester hours in credit classes or 12 clock hours in the Intensive English Program. *You must submit a letter of verification from the International Academic Advisor or the Director of the Intensive English Program if you are studying ESL.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Improper course level placement  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial difficulties with the English language (first semester only)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial difficulties with reading requirements (first semester only)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods (first semester only)

### 3. Medical Reasons

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a temporary, serious illness that requires less than full-time enrollment. Approval for an RCL based on medical reasons cannot exceed 12 months, and I must obtain permission each semester. I cannot receive an RCL based on academic difficulty if I have already been authorized for an RCL of 12 months. *Current medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist must be attached. Please follow the guidelines as outlined above.*

**This information is subject to change without notice. For individual questions, please contact the Center for International Education and Programs for an appointment.**

For office use only:

Approved:  Yes  No

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Documentation Attached:  Yes  No

DSO Approval Signature: \_\_\_\_\_