



Office of International Students & Scholars

Reduced Course Load Form

ACADEMIC ADVISOR CERTIFICATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLED LESS THAN FULL TIME

International students who are in the U.S. on an F-1 or J-1 student visa classification are required by law to maintain full time enrollment during all normal enrollment periods. For undergraduate students, full time status is defined as 12 credit hours of course work per term. For graduate students, full time status is defined as 9 credit hours of course work per term. Students are allowed an annual vacation that is commonly taken during the summer term.

If you are considering dropping below full time enrollment, you must complete the form below and submit it to the Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS) with appropriate supporting documentation so that a qualified staff member can review and approve the form *prior to* dropping below full time enrollment. Failure to receive approval from OISS may jeopardize your legal status in the U.S. If you have any questions, please contact a staff member in the Office of International Student & Scholars.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and/or the U.S. Department of State (DOS) allows very limited reasons for a student to engage in less than full time enrollment. These reasons are listed below. If you do not meet one of these expectations, you may be out of legal status and deportable from the United States if you drop below full time enrollment.

Student Name: _____ "A" Number: _____

Degree Level: _____ Major: _____ Anticipated Graduation Date: _____

of Credit hours registered for: _____ Reduced Course Load Semester and Year: _____

Signature: _____ Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____ Date: _____

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY

- ____ Difficulties with the English language. (**Note:** May only be used during the first term.)
- ____ Difficulties with reading requirements. (**Note:** May only be used during the first term.)
- ____ Unfamiliar with U.S. teaching methods. (**Note:** May only be used during the first term.)
- ____ Placed in improper course level.
- ____ Final semester before graduation.
- ____ Medical reason for being enrolled less than full time.*

** If you are requesting authorization to drop below full time enrollment based on medical reasons, you must attach an official letter from a health care professional recommending the reduced course load.*

Name of Academic Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY

- ____ Has a graduate assistantship and is registered for at least six semester hours.
- ____ Is completing formal course work this semester and working full time on thesis or dissertation.
- ____ Completed formal course work and working full time on thesis or dissertation.
- ____ Final semester before graduation.

Name of Graduate School Signature _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Please return to Office of International Students & Scholars

OISS ONLY -- Authorization Granted: YES _____ NO _____

DSO/RO/ARO Signature: _____ Date: _____

Information on Enrolling for Less than Full Time Semester Hours

F-1 and J-1 students are required to be engaged in a “full-course of study,” which means **12 semester hours** each fall/spring semester for **undergraduates** and **9 semester hours** each fall/spring for **graduate students**. Enrollment is not required during the summer session, unless you plan to graduate during the summer. Students are permitted to enroll for fewer semester hours only in certain specific circumstances which include:

- **Graduate Assistantship** in which case **6 credit hours** will be considered full time.
- Student has **completed all required coursework** and is working on a **thesis/dissertation** and is considered to be making “normal progress” toward the completion of the degree.
- Student is in the **final semester** of the course of study and **does not need to enroll full time** to meet degree requirements.
- Student is in the **first academic year** and is having **difficulties with English language or reading** requirements or **American teaching methods** (note these reason can be used for only **ONE semester**, after which student is expected to enroll full time).
- Student is advised to drop a course because of enrollment at an **improper course level**.
- Student can show documentation of **medical illness** (see section below).

Prior Approval Required:

Previously students could get the academic advisor’s permission to be enrolled less than full-time, drop the class(es), and then later notify the OISS. Beginning with the spring semester 2003, students **must get prior approval** of an OISS advisor:

- **BEFORE** registering for fewer than full time semester hours in any spring or fall semester
- **BEFORE** dropping a class or classes which puts the semester hours below what is considered full time.

Procedure:

This means you will now be required to first have your academic advisor complete the Reduced Course Load Form, then bring the form to the OISS to get final approval from a Designated School Official (OISS advisor) before you can either drop below full time enrollment or register for less than full time for a fall or spring semester (latter permission should be granted before the first day of classes). Only after an OISS advisor approves your registration for less than full time can you actually drop the class(es). The new regulations state that **failure to obtain the permission of a DESIGNATED SCHOOL OFFICIAL prior to being enrolled for less than full time will cause a student to fall out of status**, and the student may have to apply for reinstatement- a procedure that will become much more difficult with the new regulations.

Medical Conditions:

Students can be enrolled less than full time due to certain medical conditions if your physician (Medical Doctor, Doctor of Osteopathy, or a Licensed Clinical Psychologist) submits a typed, dated and signed letter on his/her letterhead stating your medical condition, that it is impossible for you to enroll full time in a specific semester, and specifying the number of hours for which you can register. The letter must also specify the date by which you will be expected to return to full time studies.

- Enrollment below full time for medical reason cannot exceed a total of 12 months.
- If the condition prevents full time enrollment beyond one fall or spring semester, new documentation must be provided from your physician and authorization must be granted from the DESIGNATED SCHOOL OFFICIAL at OISS each subsequent fall or spring semester.
- If a student later moves to a higher degree level (such as from MA to PhD), the student receives an additional 12 month limit permitting part time enrollment due to medical reasons.
- If after 12 months the student is still unable to resume full time studies, the student must either leave the US and reapply when h/she is able to handle full time studies again or apply to change to another nonimmigrant status appropriate for continuing medical treatment in the US.

Long Distance Education/Online Classes:

Only **one** online or distance education class can be counted **each semester** toward full time equivalency. The class is considered “online” or “distance education” if it does not require the student’s physical attendance in a classroom for classes, exams, or “other purposes integral to completion of the class.” These include courses offered “principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission, including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing.”