

## Request for Reduced Course Load (less than full-time enrollment)

Federal regulations require F-1 and J-1 visa students to enroll full time during each fall and spring semester. Full time is defined as 12 credit hours for undergraduates and 9 credit hours for graduate students. Enrollment is not required during the summer semester unless it is their first semester (or first one after readmission, change of status, or first semester in a new academic program) or last semester in the current degree program.

F-1 and J-1 visa students cannot register or drop below full-time hours without prior approval by International Student Services. Dropping or registering below full-time hours without prior approval will be considered as a violation to the visa status.

F-1/J-1 students are permitted to enroll below full time only in certain specific circumstances which include:

- Student is in the **final** semester of the course of study and **does not need to enroll full time** to meet degree requirements.
- 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 **first semester** of the course of study and is having **difficulties with English language or reading** requirements or **American teaching methods**.
- Student is placed by the academic advisor into a course at an **improper course level**.
- Student has **an illness or medical condition** documented by a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist.

### Prior Approval

F-1 and J-1 students must obtain **prior approval** by International Student Services **before** registering for fewer than full-time hours or dropping a course or courses that put the semester hours below full time.

### Procedures

1. Before either dropping below full time or registering for less than full time, you must apply for a reduced course load with International Student Services.
2. After reviewing your request, International Student Services determines whether your request should be approved according to federal regulations.
3. International Student Services notify you by email of its decision. If your request is approved, your SEVIS record is updated accordingly, and you are issued an updated I-20.
4. After you obtain approval of a reduced course load, you can drop below full time or register for less than full time hours.

**Note:** Approval of a reduced course load is term-specific. If necessary, students must request approval each additional semester.

### Distance Education/Online Courses

The class is considered online or distance education since it does not require the student's physical attendance in a classroom for classes, exams, or other purposes integral to completion of the course. **Only one online course or distance education course** can be counted toward full-time equivalency **each semester**. Per federal regulations, if students only need one course to complete their program of study, the course cannot be completed through online or distance education.

### Request for Reduced Course Load Form

**Student Information**

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID @ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Apt number City State Zip Code

Have you ever requested reduced course load?  Yes  No If yes, when: \_\_\_\_\_ Results:  Granted  Rejected

Do you work on campus?  Yes  No If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

This request for:  Fall \_\_\_\_\_  Spring \_\_\_\_\_  Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Credit Hours to Register: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check one of the following reasons for your request of a reduced course load. Attach all the required documents.**

- Initial difficulty with the English language or due to the reading requirements (May only be used once during the first term)
  - Letter from the course instructor explaining student’s particular academic difficulties
  - Letter from your academic advisor recommending a reduced course load
- Initial difficulty with U.S. teaching methods (May only be used once during the first term)
  - Letter from the course instructor explaining student’s particular academic difficulties in the course
  - Letter from your academic advisor recommending a reduced course load
- Placed in an improper course level (May only be used once)
  - Letter from your academic advisor confirming that student is placed in an improper course level
  - Degree plan signed by the academic advisor
- Final semester before graduation
  - Degree plan signed by your academic advisor
  - Confirmation of graduation application: print out the confirmation email after applying for graduation. For more information about applying for graduation, visit the UTSA Office of the Registrar website.
  - Letter from your academic advisor recommending reduced enrollment hours for the final semester and specifying:
    - The semester and year that student will enroll below full time
    - The number of credit hours student has completed
    - The remaining academic requirements (specify the credit hours and course names if possible)
- Completion of all course requirements except for a thesis or dissertation (Must apply each additional semester)
  - Degree plan signed by your academic advisor
  - Letter from the academic advisor recommending reduced enrollment hours for this reason and specifying:
    - The semester and year that student will enroll below full time
    - The number of credit hours student has completed
    - The remaining academic requirements (specify the credit hours and course names if possible)
  - Letter from your thesis/dissertation advisor explaining progress in the thesis/dissertation toward completion and remaining requirements for thesis/dissertation completion.
- Medical reason
  - Letter from your physician 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.

**ISS ONLY** Previous approval for RCL:  Yes  No If yes, Semester & Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa Status Maintenance:  Address  Passport # of credit hours registered in Banner: \_\_\_\_\_

Approval:  Granted  Denied for \_\_\_\_\_ semester only DSO Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ISSM entry:  Custom  Note Email to student:  Done SEVIS Registration:  Done