

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

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REDUCED COURSE LOAD OVERVIEW

Student visa rules require F-1/J-1 students to study at all times on a full-time basis. Full-time status is defined as:

Undergraduate students:	12 credits	LLM/SJD students:	9 credits
Graduate students:	9 credits (without an assistantship)	JD students:	12 credits
	6 credits (with an assistantship)	UCAELI students:	22hours/week

Sometimes ISSS may authorize international students to study less than full time. **International students must have authorization from ISSS prior to dropping below a full time course load** (exception: reduced course load for last semester may be approved *after* enrollment, up to the 10th day of the semester).

Reduced Course Load Eligibility

Reduced Course Load for Last Semester:

You may take a reduced course load if you are in your final semester of study and you need less than full time registration to complete your degree requirements. Students who will complete their degree during summer term are not eligible to take a reduced course load during spring semester. **ISSS will adjust your Form I-20/DS-2019 program end date to the expected date of degree completion indicated by your advisor on this form.** You will be required to complete all requirements for your degree by the date on your new Form I-20/DS-2019.

How to apply: Submit this application to ISSS by the 1st day of the semester in which you are completing. It is ok to enroll for only those courses you need, before getting a new I-20 from ISSS. Your RCL must be approved by ISSS by the 10th day of the semester you are completing.

Reduced Course Load for Academic Difficulty:

All students must attempt a full time course load before requesting a Reduced Course Load for Academic Difficulty. Applications to take a Reduced Course Load for Academic Difficulty will be accepted starting the Monday of the second week of classes. You must enroll and attempt a full course load prior during the first week of classes, and until you have otherwise received a new I-20 from ISSS granting authorization to drop below full time. ISSS may authorize you to take a reduced course load if you are having academic difficulty in one or more courses related to your **initial adjustment to English language, U.S. teaching methods, or reading requirements, or improper course level placement.** In general, you must be in your first academic year of your program to qualify for a Reduced Course Load for these reasons. Some exceptions apply. You may only have a reduced course load for academic difficulty **one time per program level** (i.e. Bachelor's, Master's, etc.) Changing schools or changing majors does not make you eligible for a new period of reduced course load. If you are authorized to take a Reduced Course Load for academic difficulty, you must maintain at least half-time enrollment, and you must resume full time study in the next available semester.

How to apply: Enroll and attend courses on a full time basis. If you are experiencing difficulties keeping up with the full course load, visit ISSS during walk-in advising hours, and be prepared to talk about why you are having academic difficulties this semester, and which courses you would like to drop in order to meet your academic goals. If we feel your situation qualifies, we will complete the Reduced Course Load application form with you, and intake your application for processing. We will issue a new Form I-20 within one week, which authorizes you to drop below full time. You must wait to get the new Form I-20 before withdrawing below full time status. **Remember that you must also meet the University deadlines for dropping a course, and follow academic procedures with your academic advisor, after receiving authorization from ISSS.**

Reduced Course Load for Illness or Medical Condition:

International students who have an illness or medical condition (physical and mental health) may be given permission to drop below full time. To qualify, your condition must be confirmed in writing by a **licensed medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathy (DO), or licensed clinical psychologist (including Phd or Psy.D).** If your medical documentation does not meet the above criteria, you may not qualify to drop below full time. If approved, you may drop to as few as 0 credits. Students are restricted to 12 months cumulative of authorized reduced course load for illness or medical conditions per degree level.

How to apply: Visit ISSS during walk-in advising hours, or by appointment with your international advisor, and bring your medical documentation. If approved, ISSS will complete the Reduced Course Load application form with you, and within one week, issue a new Form I-20 with your medical reduced course load approval. The deadline to apply is flexible, but when medically possible, you must apply before you stop attending classes. **Remember that you must also follow University procedures for dropping a course, and follow academic procedures with your academic advisor, after receiving authorization from ISSS.**

REDUCED COURSE LOAD AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FORM

SECTION A: *To be Completed by Student*

Name: _____
Family Name First Name

UConn ID: _____

Academic Major: _____

Email Address _____

Phone: _____

Visa Status: F-1 J-1

Program: Bachelor's Master's Doctorate Exchange Student Other _____

I am requesting a Reduced Course Load because:

I will graduate this semester and I need less than full time coursework to complete my degree. *Please ask your academic advisor to complete Section B before submitting this form to ISSS.*

I am experiencing academic difficulties

Have you ever been authorized to take a reduced course load for **academic difficulty** in the past (including other schools attended in the U.S.)? Yes No

I have a documented **illness or medical condition** (can be mental health and physical health)

Have you ever been authorized to take a reduced course load for an **illness or medical condition** in the past (including other schools attended in the U.S.)? Yes No

I certify that I have reviewed the reduced course load information (page 1) and that I understand I must receive a new I-20 from ISSS prior to taking a Reduced Course Load for academic difficulty/medical reasons:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

SECTION B: For Reduced Course Loads In Final Semester - *To be Completed by Academic Advisor- Please Answer ALL Questions*

I have reviewed the above information and it is consistent with my assessment of the student's situation. I support the student's request to take a reduced course load during the Fall Spring semester of _____ (year)

For how many credits will the student register during their final semester? _____

When will/did this student complete all degree requirements*? Choose one:

Plan A Masters/PhD Students: ____/____/_____ (Date of anticipated Thesis/Dissertation submission)

Plan B Masters w/Flex Course: ____/____/_____ (Official last date of last Flex course)

Plan B Masters w/Master's Examination: ____/____/_____ (Date of Master's Examination)

All other students: End of Fall/Spring/Summer term (circle one) in year: _____

I certify that I have reviewed and completed this form, and that it reflects this student's academic standing within his/her degree program.

Name of Academic Advisor: _____ Phone or Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

SECTION C: ISSS Use Only - for Academic/Medical Reduced Course Load Authorizations

In consultation with the applicant for the Reduced Course Load I have evaluated the circumstances and consider the student eligible for a Reduced Course Load pursuant to 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(6)(iii) based on the following eligibility criteria:

Student is experiencing difficulty because of (please choose the most appropriate, only one):

Improper course level placement Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods

Initial difficulties with the English Language Initial difficulties with reading requirements

Illness or Medical Condition (A letter from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist, certifying the difficulty to be engaged in full-time study is on file.)

Student will take ____ credits during period of authorized reduced course load.

Name of DSO/ARO: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____