Reduced Course Load Request Form

An international student advisor must authorize a drop below full course load (commonly referred to as a "reduced course load" or RCL) and update SEVIS prior to the student reducing his or her course load.

A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of International Student and Scholar Services will be considered out of status.

Note: The only exception to the requirement that a student be registered full-time before submitting this form is a student in his/her final semester of study. Undergraduate or graduate students may enroll in a part-time course load during final semester of degree program, but we need to have an academic advisor confirm that the student is, in fact, in her/his final semester.

A reduced course load can be approved due to “academic difficulty” only once while pursuing a course of study at a particular program level.

Academic Difficulty includes the following:

- Initial difficulties with difficulty with reading requirements;
- Initial difficulties with the English language;
- Unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods (must be first year in the U.S.); and
- Improper Course Level Placement - Student was placed in an advanced course without an appropriate foundation course.
- A student requesting authorization for a reduced course load due to initial difficulty or improper course placement must remain enrolled for no fewer than six (6) semester hours, or half the clock hours required for a full course of study.

Full-Time Equivalency for Graduate Students: Graduate students must be in compliance with the Temple University’s full-time registration requirements. A graduate student enrolled at least one of the following courses will be automatically considered full-time and does not need to submit any forms to ISSS. There is no reduction in the course load as the students are considered “full-time”.

- 9184
- 9284
- 9994
- 9995
- 9996
- 9998
- 9999

Grad students at the thesis or dissertation stage may enroll for only 1 credit hour per semester, depending on Graduate School and department requirements. Again, to be automatically considered full-time and in compliance with graduate school policy, you must be registered for one of the above referenced courses.

Grad students with a full-time TA, RA, or Grad Externship may be considered full-time with 6 semester hours AND departmental approval. Please provide a copy of the first page of your award letter.
Reduced Course Load (RCL) Based on a Medical Condition

A F-1 or J-1 student may be authorized for part-time or non-enrollment, if necessary, due to the student’s documented temporary illness or medical condition for a period of time not to exceed an aggregate of 12 months (3 semesters) while the student is pursuing a course of study at a particular program level.

A student may be authorized to reduce course load for a reason of illness or medical condition on more than one occasion while pursuing a course of study, so long as the aggregate period of that authorization does not exceed 12 months (3 semesters).

In order to be approved for a reduced course load due to a medical condition, the student must provide to the ISSS office “medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist”. This would be a letter from one of the above referenced professionals indicating:

1. The specific nature of the illness;
2. How and for what period of time the medical professional has been treating student for this illness;
3. The medical professional’s recommendation for either a partial reduction of courses or a recommendation for complete withdraw from classes; and
4. The medical professional’s prognosis as to when student will be able to resume full-time studies.

The letter must be typed on the medical professional’s letterhead and signed in blue ink by the medical professional. This letter must be accompanied by this RCL Request form.

If ISSS finds the documentation sufficient, we can authorize the student to withdraw from some or all of the courses for which the student is registered. If the illness continues and the student needs to request authorization for an additional RCL, the student must submit the request to this office BEFORE the beginning of the semester in question. The request must include a new letter from the medical professional and a new Request for Reduce Course Load form.

THE STUDENT SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE REQUEST WILL BE APPROVED. STUDENT MUST REGISTER FOR A FULL COURSE OF STUDY. IF REQUEST IS APPROVED STUDENT WILL BE PERMITTED TO WITHDRAW. IT IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE PAPERWORK IS SUBMITTED TO THE ISSS IN TIME TO AVOID ANY UNIVERISTY FEES ASSOCIATED WITH A LATE WITHDRAW.

The student’s Academic Advisor must complete this form. Upon completing the form, the Academic Advisor should FAX it to the Office of International Services (ISSS) at 1-3200.

PLEASE NOTE:

• USCIS DOES NOT RECOGNIZE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AS A VALID REASON FOR DEVIATION FROM A FULL COURSE OF STUDY.
• USCIS does not accept “I don’t have enough classes to take this semester.” The ISSS has contacted the USCIS several times regarding this issue and has always been instructed that the student must add non-required courses.
• A reduced course load can be approved on the academic difficulty basis only once while pursuing a course of study at a particular program level. If an F-1 student has already been authorized to drop below a full course of study at one program level, he or she is not eligible for a second authorization due to academic difficulties while pursuing a course of study at that same program level, even if the prior RCL was granted by another institution.
To the Student: You will receive an e-mail if the reduced course load is approved. This form is to be completed and signed by the academic advisor, and Faxed to 1-3200 or submitted by e-mail to ISSS (iss@temple.edu) after the form is signed by your academic advisor.

To the Advisor: If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our office by phone at 1-7708 or by email at ISSS@temple.edu.

Please choose which situation below applies to the student:

### Academic Difficulty RCL:
ISSS may authorize a reduced course load for a student experiencing academic difficulties, but only on the basis of the reasons specified in the regulations. “USCIS reserves the authority to review and approve any such permissions granted by the ISSS...Where the USCIS finds the University’s decision inappropriate, it is the responsibility of the University to demonstrate that the permission to take a less than full course load was granted in good faith.”

Inability to offer a reasonable explanation will be construed as intentional abuse of the student school program. In that case, USCIS will advise the student that he or she is out of status and will consider possible action against the institution involved, as prescribed in 214.4(b). In the absence of proof of abuse, USCIS will not take action against wither the student or the school.

ISSS may authorize a reduced course load for a student experiencing academic difficulties, but only on the basis of the following reasons specified in the regulations. A reduced course load based on the academic difficulty reason “must consist of at least six semester or quarter hours, or half the clock hours required for a full course of study.”

- [ ] Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods (first year only)
- [ ] Initial difficulty with English (first year only)
- [ ] Improper course level placement - Student was placed in an advanced course without an appropriate foundation course.
- [ ] Initial difficulty with reading requirements (first year only)
- [ ] Current semester is the student’s final semester. Student has applied for graduation and will meet degree requirements on: ____________________  
  (please indicate a specific date)
- [ ] Grad Student is in final semester of coursework and will advance to thesis/project/research stage next semester. Any subsequent registration for required coursework will place the student in violation of her/his F-1/ J-1 student status.
- [ ] Grad Student has completed all coursework and is preparing for comps/prelims which student MUST pass before moving forward in degree program. 
  Date of Prelim Exams: ____________________
- [ ] Reduced Course Load Based on an illness or medical condition. Student should attach medical documentation as described on page 2.

**Student’s Name:**

**Student’s TU ID:**

**Semester RCL is Needed:**

**Advisor’s Name:**

**Advisor’s Signature:**

**Advisor’s E-mail:**

**Date:**