



## Reduced Course Load for F-1 and J-1 Degree-Seeking Students (Medical Reasons)

### What is a Reduced Course Load?


A reduced course load (RCL) is permission from International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) for F-1 and J-1 degree-seeking students to drop below full-time study during a semester in which a student is required to be full-time (spring and fall). A reduced course load can be for either **academic** or **medical** reasons.

### Medical Reduced Course Load:

Any request for a **medical reduced course load** must be approved by ISSS on the basis of a compliance with federal visa policy and a recommendation from a U.S. medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or a licensed clinical psychologist. The physician must complete and sign the **Medical Reduced Course Load Provider Form** (see page 3).

This option permits you to completely withdrawal from the semester, allowing for zero (0) credits in the current semester. You are also allowed to register for part-time study (less than 12 credits for undergraduate students, and less than 9 credits for graduate students), if desired. You are allowed **three (3) semesters** or **twelve (12) months** of medical reduced course load per degree level. Each RCL authorization applies to a single semester. If you require another RCL semester, a new request must be submitted to ISSS, along with a new or updated Medical Reduced Course Load Provider form from your physician addressing the need for an RCL for the next semester.

### Applying for a Medical Reduced Course Load:

You are **required** to meet with an ISSS Advisor before applying for an RCL. Students who do not meet with an ISSS advisor first may be denied and will have to re-apply after meeting with an advisor. To request an RCL, please complete a “**Medical Reduced Course Load**” **E-Form** using the iStart link  found at [www.ic.utah.edu](http://www.ic.utah.edu).

### Full-Time Study Requirements:

As an international student, you must register for full-time study each semester unless you are on a summer vacation semester or if you are approved for a reduced course load from ISSS. Full-time enrollment at the U consists of **12 credit hours** for undergraduate students and **9 credit hours (or 3 thesis credit hours)** for graduate students.



## Employment

Full-time employment is not permitted during a medically reduced course load semester. Part-time employment may be approved if it is directly related to promoting the student's health and wellness. The ISSS office, in consultation with the medical professional, may evaluate whether continued employment is appropriate, or advisable, for a student experiencing medical problems severe enough to interfere with full time study.

### Important considerations:

- During the reduced course load semester, you will be considered to be maintaining status even if you are not registered in a full course of study. You will continue to be eligible for F-1 and J-1 benefits, if you are otherwise eligible. However, if you are taking zero credits, you may not be eligible for other U of U services (e.g., Student Life Center, Counseling Center).
- If you have no registration (zero credit hours) during a **Fall** or **Spring** semester, you must also submit a **Leave of Absence Form (LOA)** to the Registrar's Office in order to remain active in your academic program. Failure to complete an LOA form will result in a discontinuation of your academic program and require an application for re-admission to the University. The LOA form is linked in the **Reduced Course Load E-form**.
- **You may not drop a course resulting in part-time study before receiving authorization from ISSS.** A request for an RCL authorization must be updated in your immigration record **prior** to reducing your course load. If you drop below a full course of study without the prior approval of ISSS, you may fall "out of status", which will require you to apply for Reinstatement. If you have dropped or withdrawn from a course without prior Medical Reduced Course Load authorization from ISSS, please schedule an appointment with an Advisor immediately to discuss your situation.
- **You must alert ISSS if you will need a program extension as a result of an RCL.** For more information on extending your studies at the University of Utah, please refer to the **F-1 I-20 or J-1 Student DS-2019 Extension** policy guide.
- You are not authorized for a Reduced Course Load without ISSS approval.
- **This policy guide is for F-1 students and J-1 degree-seeking students only.** If you are a non-degree seeking exchange student on a J-1 visa and would like to reduce your course load due to a medical issue, please schedule a **Sponsored Student Advising appointment** as soon as possible to discuss your situation.