



Capstone International Center International Student & Scholar Services

105 B.B. Comer Hall | Box 870254 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0254 | TEL: 205-348-5402
INTERNATIONAL@UA.EDU | [HTTP://INTERNATIONAL.UA.EDU/ISSS/](http://INTERNATIONAL.UA.EDU/ISSS/)

Recommendation for Reduced Course Load

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING REDUCED COURSE LOADS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- 1) Read the following information carefully to ensure you maintain valid F-1 or J-1 student status.
- 2) Discuss your situation with your academic adviser/professor.
- 3) This information will help your adviser/professor determine whether or not your situation meets the requirements for dropping below full time enrollment due to academic reasons.
- 4) Before authorizing your request for a reduced course load, International Student & Scholar Services must receive recommendation from your adviser/professor, explaining your academic problem(s) with the course.
- 5) If your request for a reduced course load is approved, ISSS will update your SEVIS record and issue you an updated I-20. Keep this updated I-20 with your transcripts as proof you maintained valid F-1 status while under enrolled.
- 6) You cannot drop the course before receiving written authorization from International Student & Scholar Services.
- 7) You must maintain at least 6 credit hours of enrollment.
- 8) You must resume a full course of study the next available term.
- 9) Reduced course load based on academic difficulty can be approved only once per **level** of study.

Full-time Enrollment Requirement

F-1 and J-1 international students are required to maintain a full course of study each semester. Failure to maintain full-time enrollment is a violation of the F-1 or J-1 student's status. Below are the requirements to be considered full-time:

- Undergraduate students: 12 credit hours of enrollment
- Graduate students: 9 credit hours of enrollment
- Graduate student with a full assistantship (.50 GTE): 6 credit hours of enrollment
- Graduate students who have only research/project hours remaining: the number of credit hours necessary to be considered full-time is at the discretion of the student's academic adviser but must be in-line with departmental and Graduate School policies
- Undergraduate and Graduate students in their final term do not have to enroll full-time. In the final semester of study, Undergraduate and Graduate students may enroll only in the number of hours needed to complete the degree.
- NOTE: Only one 3-credit hour online course may count toward a student's full-time status.

Regulations allow for authorization of a reduced course load for a student experiencing academic difficulties **ONLY** on the basis of the following reasons:

- Initial difficulties with the English Language
- Initial difficulties with reading requirements
- Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Improper course level placement

These are the only academic difficulty reasons allowed for which a reduced course load may be approved. The "possibility of failing a class" in itself is not a permissible reason for a reduced course load. However, the cause of the student's lack of success in the class may be due to one of the allowed reasons.

Focus on Educational Level

The academic difficulty exception to a full course of study requirement focuses on the educational level and can be approved only once during a particular program level. This applies to a student who transfers from one school to another at the same educational level. If the student was approved for a reduced course load for academic difficulties at the first school, he/she is not eligible for approval for a reduced course load by the second school.



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**Recommendation
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Course Load**

TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISER/CHAIR

NOTE: This form is required if a student will drop courses below full-time status and must be received by International Student & Scholar Services prior to course withdrawal. International Student & Scholar Services must report the reason a student is not enrolled full-time to USCIS.

According to USCIS and University of Alabama standard, full-time enrollment is considered 12 credit hours per semester for undergraduate students and 9 credit hours per semester for a graduate student. However, if a graduate student is on a .50 assistantship, he/she need only be enrolled six credit hours to be considered full-time.

Name of Student: _____

CWID Number: _____ Level of Study: _____

Major Field(s) of Study: _____

UA Academic Department: _____

Adviser/Chair's Name: _____

Adviser/Chair's Title: _____

Adviser/Chair's Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

INSTRUCTIONS TO ACADEMIC ADVISER: Please complete the following approval and sign at the bottom.

This is to confirm that the above named student is a student in the Department of _____.

In this Fall; Spring; Summer of (year) _____, he/she is enrolled for _____ credit hours.

I recommend that the student be allowed to drop (course name and number) _____, which will cause the student to fall below a full-time load based on the following academic reason(s):

- Student has initial difficulties with the English Language
- Student has initial difficulties with reading requirements
- Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods
- Improper course level placement

Please detail the specific academic difficulties the student is having with the course, which he/she will drop:

Adviser/Chair's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____