



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 ISSS and your academic advisor/professor.
- 3) This information will help your advisor/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 advisor/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 degree level**.

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 advisor 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.



**Recommendation
for Reduced
Course Load**

PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

I have read the information regarding Full-time Enrollment and Eligibility for Academic Reduced Course Load. I understand and affirm the following (please read and check your affirmation of all of the following):

- I have not obtained a Reduced Course Load at this degree level at any other institution;
- Before I drop below full-time enrollment, I must complete this form confirming authorization from both International Student & Scholar Services and my Academic Advisor;
- It is my responsibility to ensure that I withdraw from courses through MyBama or the Registrar's Office after approval from both ISSS and my Academic Advisor; and
- I will be ineligible for any further Academic Reduced Course Load authorizations at this degree level.

Student's Name: _____ Student's CWID Number: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PART 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES ADVISOR

This is to confirm that the above named student is:

- In their **first semester of study** and may be considered for a Reduced Course Load based on Initial Difficulties with English or with Reading, Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods, or Improper Course Level Placement;
- Beyond the first semester of study** and may only be considered due to Improper Course Level Placement.

ISSS Advisor's Name: _____

ISSS Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PART 3: TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISOR/CHAIR

UA Academic Department: _____

Advisor/Chair's Name: _____

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

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 CANNOT recommend an Academic Reduced Course Load for this student.
- 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 (FIRST SEMESTER ONLY)
- Student has initial difficulties with reading requirements (FIRST SEMESTER ONLY)
- Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods (FIRST SEMESTER ONLY)
- Improper course level placement

Please provide any additional details you feel necessary:

Advisor/Chair's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Scan and return to ISSS as a direct email attachment to international@ua.edu.