

Authorizing a Reduced Course Load (F-1)

There may be times when your student is unable to take a full course of study. Below are the only three situations where this is allowed. Be sure to keep all documentation on file.

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

A PDSO and DSO may authorize an RCL under the following conditions:

(A) Academic difficulties

An RCL can only be authorized once per program level due to:

- Initial difficulty with the English language or reading requirements.
- Unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods.
- Improper course level placement.

(B) Medical conditions

An RCL can only be authorized for a medical condition each session and for an aggregate of 12 months at the same program level:

- Student must provide medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, licensed doctor of osteopathy, licensed psychologist or licensed clinical psychologist.
- Student must provide current medical documentation each new session.
- PDSO or DSO must reauthorize the RCL each new session.
- A student may be authorized an RCL on multiple occasions but must not exceed a total period of 12 months at the same program level.

If necessary, a zero course load may be authorized.

(C) Completion of course of study

An RCL may be authorized for completion of course of study if:

- The student is in the final session and fewer courses than the original/traditional full course of study are needed for completion.



An RCL must be at least half the credit or clock hours required to be full time, except for a medical condition.



An RCL for medical conditions may be authorized more than once, but must not exceed an aggregate of 12 months within the same program level.



Student must resume a full course of study at the next available session, excluding a summer session, unless another RCL is authorized.



A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the PDSO or DSO is out of status.

For more detailed information, please see related articles on the [SEVIS Help Hub](#).