Authorizing a Reduced Course Load (F-1)

SEVP
STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

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.
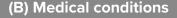
Reduced Course Load (RCL)
A PDSO and DSO may authorize an RCL under the following conditions:

(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.

An RCL for academic difficulties may only be authorized for the initial academic term.

(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, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist (DSO must keep student's medical records on file).
- 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 or the in the student's final session.

An RCL for medical conditions may be authorized more than once, but must not exceed an aggregate of 12 months at 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 has violated the terms of their status.

For more detailed information, please see related articles on the SEVIS Help Hub.