



J-1: REDUCED COURSELOAD (RCL) REQUEST FORM INSTRUCTIONS

International students in J-1 status are required to maintain full-time enrollment during the academic year. If you cannot or will not meet this requirement, you must request a reduced course load (RCL) and meet with a WMU immigration advisor in International Student and Scholar Services (IAS) to discuss your request.

The Department of State's regulations limit a student's ability to enroll less than full time, but it may be allowed in some circumstances explained below. If you drop below full time without authorization, I3S is federally mandated to report this to SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System – online database created by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to track and monitor students and scholars in F, J, and M status); and you will lose J-1 status.

Only the Alternate/Responsible Officer, A/RO, in I3S may allow you to engage in less than a full course of study as provided below.

DEFINITION OF FULL TIME

As an undergraduate student, you must register for and complete at least 12 credits per semester. As a graduate student, you must register for and complete at least 6 credit hours per semester.

NOTE: The courses you take for "audit" do not count toward the full-time enrollment requirement for immigration purposes.

NOTE: You are limited to the number of online/web courses that could count towards the full-time enrollment requirement. Only one online class (or 3 credits) may count towards your full-time enrollment. Be advised that some financial sponsors disallow online courses entirely.

ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

A student must apply for reduced course load if, due to a bona fide academic reason supported by the academic advisor or Dean, he/she is unable to be enrolled full time.

MASTERS AND PHD STUDENTS ON THESIS/DISSERTATION TRACK (may use more than once)

If you have completed all course work for a master's or doctoral level program and have only the thesis or dissertation to complete, the University policy allows you to register less than full time, but you must follow the following rules:

- If you are a graduate appointee with employment with the University, all you need to submit to I3S is a copy of the approved **Underenrollment Permission Form for Graduate Appointees** or Reduced Course Load Request Form. If you are not a graduate appointee but have completed all course work excluding thesis or dissertation as a master's or PhD student, you will need to have your academic advisor fill out the attached Reduced Course Load Request Form prior to a final approval by an immigration advisor in I3S.

COMPLETION OF COURSE OF STUDY

A student must apply for RCL in his/her final semester if fewer courses (i.e. less than full time) are needed to complete the course of study. The student must submit a copy of his/her Summary of Audit for Graduation letter from the Office of the Registrar, stating the graduating semester and the credits s/he is completing during the graduating semester. Please note that a student can use this Reduced Course Load option only once during his/her program level.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

A student must apply for RCL if, due to a serious illness or medical condition, he/she is unable to be enrolled full time (or, if necessary, no course load).

- The student must provide medical documentation from a licensed medical physician to the ARO to substantiate the illness or medical condition.
- Medical documentation must contain detailed diagnosis, treatment plan, and prognosis, along with recommendation from the authorized medical physician for you to reduce your course load or not enroll during the particular semester.
- The student must provide current medical documentation to apply for RCL for each new semester.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A REDUCED COURSE LOAD:

- Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to obtain his/her recommendation for Reduced Course Load.
- For medical reasons, additionally set up an appointment to see a licensed medical physician to request a letter supporting the RCL request. The letter must be printed on an official letterhead and contain contact information of the person who signed the letter.
- Bring the following documents with you to meet with an immigration advisor at I3S:
 - Reduced Course Load Request Form (see next page) completed by you and your academic advisor
 - Your DS-2019(s)
 - Passport
 - I-94 Arrival/Departure Record (print here: cbp.gov/i94)
 - (if applicable) A copy of Summary of Audit for Graduation letter; a copy of approved Underenrollment Permission Form for Graduate Appointees; or a letter from a licensed medical physician for a medical reason
- An I3S immigration advisor will review the documents and will decide whether to approve your Reduced Course Load Request.
- If approved, you will be permitted to be underenrolled for the specific semester being requested. A copy of the approved RCL form will be placed in the student's file.

A student who drops below a full course of study without appropriate prior approval will be considered in violation of status.



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____
 WIN #: _____ SEVIS#: _____ Phone: _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Major: _____ Academic Level (BA, MA, PhD.): _____
 E-mail: _____@wmich.edu

I am registering for _____ credit hours during the _____ semester of _____ (year) and request that my academic load be considered as full time enrollment for immigration purposes for the reason indicated below.

- Academic Reason** - complete section below
- Medical Reason** - attach an official letter on letterhead stationery from a licensed medical physician including detailed diagnosis, treatment plan, and prognosis. Does not require a signature from his/her academic advisor in Section B of this form (below).
- Underenrollment Permission Form for Graduate Appointees**
- Masters or PhD student on thesis or dissertation track – have completed all course work excluding thesis or dissertation.** The student is registered this semester per University Academic Regulations and working full-time writing thesis or dissertation.
- Completion of course of study.** (Must graduate this semester)

I understand that it is my responsibility to drop my course, only after the RCL has been approved an I3S immigration advisor.

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

SECTION B: TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT'S ACADEMIC ADVISOR

IMPORTANT: J-1 students may be permitted to pursue less than a full course load provided they can obtain a written statement from their academic advisor or college official explaining the bona fide academic reasons that would require such a reduction. Please provide this information below. Expected Graduation Date of student _____ (Month/Year)

Statement of bona fide academic reason requiring reduced course load:

Attestation of Academic Advisor:

I have reviewed and recommend the above Request. I certify that information provided on this form is accurate in conformance with applicable Departmental, College and University policies, and is in the best interest of the student's successful academic progress.

Academic Advisor's name: _____ Dept: _____ Campus Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*** **Attn: Advisor:** an RCL comment will be added in the SPACMNT screen in Banner once the request has been processed. ***

SECTION C: TO BE COMPLETED BY I3S

Approved Denied: Reason(s) for denial: _____

Date updated in Banner _____ Date updated in ISSM _____