

AUTHORIZATION FORM TO DROP BELOW FULL COURSE OF STUDY

Immigration regulations require that all F-1 and J-1 students register for and complete a full course of study each academic semester. Federal immigration regulations severely limit a student's ability to be less than full time, but it may be allowed in circumstances explained below. A student must meet with the Student Immigration Specialist to review request and obtain proper approval. (Read the back to see if you qualify.)

SECTION I Student Section

Name: _____ ID: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Please check all that apply: Undergraduate New Student (1st Year) Transfer (from U.S. school)
 Graduate Continuing Student

Semester I am requesting reduced course load: Fall _____ Spring _____ VISA: F1 J1

Approved Reasons for Authorization to Drop Below (see back for details):

- Medical (Must have recommendation from a medical professional)
- Improper course placement (Section II required)
- Initial English language difficulties (Section II required)
- Initial unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Last semester of academic program (Section II required)

Other Reduced Course Load Requests:

- Concurrent Enrollment
(Must provide verification of enrollment at time form is submitted)
- Graduate student working on dissertation, thesis, project,
or comprehensive exams (Section II required)
- Other (Section II required)

Student Explanation (attach additional typed sheet, if needed): _____

Student's Signature __

Date: _____

SECTION II Academic Advisor, Department Chair, or Graduate Coordinator Section

Recommendation: Recommend approval
 Do not recommend approval

Comments: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

FOR ISSP OFFICE USE ONLY

- Enrollment Checked
- Petition Approved
- Petition Denied

ISSP Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

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QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Immigration regulations require that an international student be enrolled full-time during each semester. Full-time enrollment requires **12 semester units for undergraduates** and **9 semester units for graduates**. Please note that courses you **audit** or any **incompletes** that you are working to finish do **not** count toward the full-time enrollment requirement for immigration purposes. In addition, federal regulations limit only **one (1-5 units) online/web course** to count toward full-time enrollment requirement for immigration purposes.

According to 8 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) § 214.2(f)(6)(iii), the Designated School Official (DSO – the Student Immigration Specialist and staff in ISSP have this designation) may allow an F-1 and J-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study only under the criteria listed below:

- **Medical Condition** – A letter written by a licensed medical doctor, or a licensed clinical psychologist on their professional letterhead stating that a specific (explained) illness or medical condition compelled the student to reduce or interrupt (state which one) his/her full course of study. The letter should include the semester involved and the number of the unit reduction.
 - An F-1 or J-1 student must apply and be approved by ISSP prior to dropping the course(s).
 - An F-1 or J-1 student may receive a medical condition reduce course load for a maximum of 12 months per degree level but must be approved each semester.
- **Academic Difficulty** – Federal Regulations list authorized reasons for Academic difficulty as (1) Initial difficulties with the English language, reading requirements, or unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods and (2) Improper course level placement.
 - An F-1 or J-1 student must apply and be approved by ISSP and their department prior to dropping the course(s).
 - An F-1 or J-1 student must register for a minimum of 6 semester units.
 - An F-1 or J-1 student can only be authorized for an academic difficulty reduce course load **once** during each academic program level (Bachelor's, Master's). An initial difficulty reduce course load can only be approved within an F-1 or J-1 student's first year in the U.S.
- **Final Term** – ISSP must be notified by completing the reduce course load form if a student is completing their final semester. If a student is unable to graduate within the semester for which a request for a final semester reduce course load was made, they will need to report to ISSP as soon as possible.
 - An F-1 or J-1 student must apply no later than the last day to drop courses.
 - An F-1 or J-1 student may receive a Final Term reduce course load during their final academic semester only.
- **Graduate Student working on thesis, project or comprehensive exams** – ISSP requires the completed form along with an authorized signature from the student's major department. Student must be enrolled in requisite thesis/project units.

Please note that a lack of financial support does not constitute a valid reason to reduce your course load. Please also be aware that lack of course availability or inability to obtain required course is not a valid reason for a reduce course load.

For questions or concerns regarding the reduced course load procedures, please contact California State University, Fresno's ISSP: intlstudentservices@csufresno.edu