



## Reduced Course Load (RCL) Request

F-1 students are required to register for at least 12 credit hours each main semester (fall and spring) in order to maintain full-time student status. F-1 students cannot drop below full-time enrollment without prior approval from the Office of International Relations (OIR). It is the student's responsibility to uphold both University of Arkansas - Fort Smith and United States federal laws and regulations. Students must contact OIR if they intend to drop below full-time enrollment. Students must obtain an approval by OIR prior to dropping the course(s). Approval is granted on a semester basis. If any F-1 student fails to maintain full-time student status without OIR approval, they will be considered as violating the immigration regulations.

### Federal regulations only allow limited circumstances for F-1 students to apply for RCL.

- **Illness or Medical Condition** [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(B)]

A designated school official (DSO) may authorize a reduced course load (or no course load, if necessary) due to a student's temporary illness or medical condition. The period of time will not exceed an aggregate of 12 months while the student is pursuing a course of study at a particular program level.

In order to authorize a RCL based upon a medical condition, the student must provide current medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist that includes a diagnosis of the illness or medical condition as well as a recommendation for the student to drop or withdraw from class. The document should also specify the semester involved and whether the medical condition is considered to be ongoing. It may not be possible for an F-1 student with an ongoing medical condition to continue to hold a visa type that requires full-time university attendance. A student previously authorized to drop below a full course of study due to illness or medical condition for an aggregate of 12 months may not be authorized to reduce their course load on subsequent occasions while pursuing a course of study at the same program level.

- **Academic Difficulty** [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(A)]

This circumstance can only be used when a student is taking the initial academic term. If RCL is approved for academic difficulty, the student is required to maintain a minimum of six (6) credit hours for the semester and must begin a full course of study at the next offered term. RCL start and end dates must correspond to semester start and end dates. Valid academic RCL reasons include:

- o improper course level placement.
- o initial difficulty with reading requirements.
- o initial difficulty with the English language.
- o unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods.

- **To Complete Course of Study In Current Term/ Final Semester** [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(C)]

The DSO may authorize RCL in a student's final semester if fewer courses are needed to complete the program. The student must be enrolled in at least one (1) required class. RCL start and end dates must correspond to semester start and end dates. If the student is not required to take any additional courses to satisfy the requirements for completion, but continues to be enrolled for administrative purposes, the student is considered to have completed the program and must take action to maintain their status. Such action may include an application for a change of status or departure from the United States.

Any F-1 student intending to take less than 12 credit hours during the main semester must complete the RCL Request Form (page 2). If the RCL request is approved, the student must take the necessary steps to confirm with their academic advisor and drop the course(s).

## PART I. TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First Name Middle Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
UAFS Student ID Phone UAFS Email Address

Program of Study: \_\_\_\_\_ Requested RCL Year: \_\_\_\_\_  Fall  Spring

### Reason for RCL

- i. Illness or Medical Condition (student must enclose valid doctor documentation)
- ii. Academic Difficulty
- iii. To Complete Course of Study in Current Term/Final Semester

Intended number of credit hours enrolled if RCL is approved: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART II. TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISOR (if RCL reason ii. or iii. is selected)

It is not common for students to request RCL. In order for F-1 international students to maintain their immigration status, they are required to enroll in at least 12 credit hours/full-time enrollment each main semester. There are special circumstances that permit a student to drop below the required amount of credit hours (page 1). If you need more information about F-1 immigration regulations in order to complete this form, please contact the Office of International Relations at 479-788-7137 or International@uafs.edu.

Do you recommend the student to drop below 12 credit hours in the requested semester as stated above?

- No
- Yes. Please indicate the reason(s):
  - To complete their course of study in the current term/final semester
  - Student has been placed in an improper course level (initial semester only)
  - Student is having difficulty with reading requirements (initial semester only)
  - Student is having difficulty with the English language (initial semester only)
  - Student is unfamiliar with U.S. teaching methods (initial semester only)

Comments (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Name Phone Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Signature Date

## PART III. TO BE COMPLETED BY OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Approved
- Rejected

\_\_\_\_\_  
OIR Officer's Signature Name Date