



Information for Faculty - Reduced Course Load (RCL) Approval for International Students

Please complete form on second page

Purpose: International students on F-1 or J-1 visas are required by federal regulations to maintain specific enrollment levels and progress towards the degree or program completion. We are required to keep records of this information and report it within the first thirty days of every semester using the federal SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) database.

This form may also be used later in the semester for unexpected course load changes due to the academic or medical problems described below.

International students must keep their academic program as their primary purpose in the United States. They are expected to be consistently making sufficient academic progress toward their degrees (all F-1 and some J-1 students) or in their specific program of study if not a degree program (other J-1 students). Specifically at UMass Dartmouth, international students must be registered every Fall and Spring term.

Process and Approvals: Acceptable reasons for course reductions or exceptions to the enrollment and progression requirements must come from the list below, must be recommended by the student's department and then approved in the SEVIS database by the International Student & Scholar Center.

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Instructions: The basic full-time enrollment rule is as follows:

12 or more credits if undergraduate
9 or more graduate-level credits if a graduate student*
12 or more graduate-level credits if a law student

Academic Advisors must consider the full-time requirement in advising international students. They must be full-time students by the university's rule of 12 or more credits for undergraduates, 9 or more graduate credits for graduate students*, or 12 or more graduate credits for law students. Except for summers and the winter intersessions, international students must remain continuously enrolled. For any reduced course load, including any time after add/drop, permission must be received FIRST from the International Student & Scholar Center and only under the following exceptions:

Reasons for reduction from a full-time load include only:

- First semester initial difficulties with English language, initial difficulties with reading, unfamiliarity with American teaching methods, improper course level placement
- Physical and mental health, with medical documentation
- Final semester of credit course work, including credit-bearing thesis registration

Please complete this form to give the departmental recommendation for a reduced course load under the parameters explained in this memo. Approved forms should then be sent directly to the International Student & Scholar Center. They will remain in the each student's confidential file and may be viewed at any time by the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (US ICE).

Please call x6633 for help interpreting cases or about government regulations.

***A Special Case** – graduate students who are registered for zero credits of Project or Thesis Continuation are considered full-time by the University. The ISSC **still** needs a Reduced-Course Load form from the department verifying that this is true in your case. Please check the appropriate description in the graduate section of the form.

Reduced Course Load Approval for International Students
Please see the instructions and explanations

Student's name ID number Major Semester/year

Academic Advisors and Graduate Program Directors:

Please use this section to show your approval for any variation from a 9-credit minimum load of graduate-level courses, or a 12-credit minimum load of graduate-level courses for law students.

- [] Student is in first semester of academic program and has
Please use an exception to full time enrollment listed on instruction page
[] Student is in the final semester of coursework and is registered for credits. Student will have thesis/project to complete in future semesters.
[] Student is completing a thesis/dissertation or project (the student must be enrolled in the appropriate full time zero credit "continuation" course)
[] Student has requested reduced course load for medical reasons. (Student must submit medical documentation to International Student & Scholar Center first)
[] Student is in the final semester and requires only credits to complete the degree program.
[] Other- Please explain:

Recommended:
Academic Advisor Signature Print Name
Date email ext

Graduate Program Director Signature Print Name
Date email ext

Undergraduate Academic Advisor and Department Chair:

Please use this section to show your approval for any variation from a 12-credit minimum load of courses.

- [] Student is in first semester of academic program and has
Please use an exception to full time enrollment listed on instruction page
[] Student is in the final semester of coursework and only requires number of credits to complete degree program.
[] Student has requested reduced course load for medical reasons. (Student must submit medical documentation to International Student & Scholar Center first)
[] Other- Please explain:

Recommended:
Academic Advisor Signature Print Name
Date email ext

Undergraduate Department Chair Signature Print Name
Date email ext