

REDUCED COURSE LOAD (RCL) REQUEST FOR F-1 AND J-1 STUDENTS AT NC STATE (Instructions)

International students on a student visa (F-1 or J-1) are lawfully required to make normal academic progress AND to enroll as a full-time student each semester of their program (with very few exceptions). Full-time enrollment at NC State is usually a minimum of 12 credits per semester for undergraduate students and 9 credit hours each semester for graduate students. While 9 credits is the standard for full-time enrollment at the Graduate level, there are occasions when enrollment for credit loads of less than 9 credits does count as full-time and as such satisfies the enrollment requirements of the F-1 or J-1 visa (in which case the RCL is unnecessary). For a definition of full-time enrollment for Graduate Students, please contact your Director of Graduate Programs and/or the Graduate School website (<http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/catalog/full-part-time.html>). Students on the Graduate Student Support Plan (GSSP) should take the additional precaution of consulting the DGP and the GSSP coordinator to ascertain eligibility for GSSP benefits if an RCL is requested. **Office of International Services (OIS) advisors do not define full-time enrollment, do not give advice on course placement or credit hour requirements, and do not grant additional exceptions to University policies or existing federal requirements.**

According to federal regulations, an F-1/J-1 student may be eligible for an RCL under certain conditions:

- A. If the student is medically unable to maintain a full-time course load (with letter of recommendation from Counseling Center or physician)
- B. If a student is having difficulty during the *first* semester of enrollment due to:
 - 1. Improper course level placement, and/or
 - 2. Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods, and/or
 - 3. Initial difficulties with the English language, and/or
 - 4. Initial difficulties with the reading requirements
- C. If the student is in his/her final semester

Medical RCLs:

RCLs for medical reasons require documentation from a medical professional who can attest to the difficulty and explain why a reduction in course load is recommended. With a medical RCL it is permissible to drop some or all courses and the RCL is valid for only **one semester** at a time but may be renewed each semester for up to one year if necessary. Following the semester(s) of RCL it is expected that the student will continue to enroll as a full-time student unless it is the student's final semester. Imminent danger of, or anxiety over, failing a course alone is not a legitimate reason for requesting a reduced course load; there must be additional medical or academic hardship conditions to justify the RCL. **Students should not drop below full-time - or fail to register full-time - until first receiving approval of the RCL from an OIS advisor.**

Academic Hardship RCLs:

Academic hardship RCL's are available only during the first semester of an academic program and permit the student to drop one course only. The DGP / Academic Advisor must indicate on the form the academic reason for the RCL request and in signing the form indicate that they do not object (from an academic advising perspective) to the student receiving an academic RCL for that stated reason. The OIS Advisor may need to request, or the DGP / Academic Advisor may wish to provide, additional information related to the academic circumstances which justify the academic RCL. **Students should not drop below full-time - or fail to register full-time - until first receiving approval of the RCL from an OIS advisor.**

Final Semester RCLs:

If a student is in his/her final semester, a student should submit his/her RCL before the first day of the requested semester. He/she should pre-register for the intended number of reduced credits. A scheduled appointment is not required for paperwork submission. **An RCL authorized for a final semester (which shortens the Program End Date to that semester) cannot be extended: A student MUST complete his/her program by the end of the semester.** For more RCL and enrollment information, please visit our website: <http://www.ncsu.edu/ois/current/enrollment.php>

**REDUCED COURSE LOAD (RCL) REQUEST
FOR F-1 AND J-1 STUDENTS AT NC STATE**

NAME: _____
(LAST NAME – as it appears on I-20/DS-2019) (FIRST NAME)

NCSU CAMPUS ID#: _____ **CELL/DAY PHONE:** _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

DEPARTMENT (No Abbreviations): _____ **LEVEL:** _____

SEMESTER/YEAR OF INTENDED RCL: _____ **INTENDED NUMBER CREDITS:** _____

- PURPOSE:**
- Medical Necessity (attach documentation from Physician/Psychologist/Counseling Center)
 - Academic Hardship: Improper Course Level Placement
 - Academic Hardship: Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
 - Academic Hardship: Initial Difficulties with the English Language
 - Academic Hardship: Initial Difficulties with the Reading Requirements
 - FINAL Semester of Study (*Scheduled* Defense Date (if applicable): _____)

I certify that I understand the requirements, procedures, and ramifications stated on this page.

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

For graduate students, signature(s) of "no-objection" are required:

For academic difficulty/medical/final semester RCL:

DGP Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

For final semester RCL only, additional signatures:

Committee Chair's Name (if T/D): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Graduate School Comment/Approval: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

For undergraduate students, signature of "no-objection" is required:

Coordinator of Advising Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____