

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Overview

International students in F-1 status are required to maintain full-time enrollment during the school year. If you cannot or will not meet this requirement, you must request a reduced course load (RCL). Federal immigration regulations severely limit a student's ability to be less than full time, and part time enrollment may be allowed only in the special circumstances listed below. If you are below full time without authorization after the drop/add deadline, Cedar Crest College is required to report this to SEVIS and you will lose your F-1 status.

According to 8 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) § 214.2(f)(6)(iii), a Designated School Official (DSO) may allow an F-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study only for one of the three reasons described below. **A student who wishes to drop below full time must obtain the approval from a DSO in advance, regardless what the reason might be. A student who drops below a full course of study (after the drop-add period) without prior approval of a DSO will be considered out of status.** Please be advised that a lack of financial support does not constitute a valid reason to reduce course load according to immigration regulations.

NOTE: *If you are approved for reduced course load, you are still eligible for on-campus employment benefits.*

Definition of Full Time

Undergraduate students: 12 semester credits

Graduate students: 9 semester credits

Circumstances that *may* allow a reduced course load (RCL):

Academic Difficulties

You may apply for reduced course load due to academic difficulties if an academic advisor verifies your situation. Immigration regulations allow academic difficulty RCL only if you meet one of the following criteria:

- Initial difficulties with the English language (available only in your first year)
- Initial difficulties with reading requirements (available only in your first year)
- Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Improper course level placement

A student may be authorized for an Academic Difficulties RCL **only for a single term during any one course of study at a particular program level**, and must resume a full course of study at the next available term (excluding summer).

A reduced course load for academic difficulties must consist of at least 6 credit hours for undergraduate students and at least 4 credit hours for graduate students.

Medical Conditions

You must apply for reduced course load if, due to a temporary illness or medical condition, you are unable to be enrolled full time. If medically necessary, you may be approved for no course load (0 credits). To be considered for a medical RCL, you must provide:

- Medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist to substantiate your illness or medical condition.

- The letter from your medical provider must recommend either that you be part time or not enrolled due to medical circumstances.
- The letter from the medical provider cannot be dated more than 30 days before the start of the term for which the RCL is requested.

A reduced course load for a medical condition can be granted for a period of time not to exceed an aggregate of 12 months while you are pursuing a course of study at a particular program level.

You must provide current medical documentation and the DSO must authorize the drop below full time for each new term if the medical condition requires part time enrollment for an extended period of time.

Note: normal pregnancy and childbirth are not acceptable for medical RCL requests

Completion of Course of Study

You may apply for reduced course load in your final term if fewer courses (i.e. less than full time) are required to complete your course of study.

To request RCL for completion, you must obtain an updated academic plan and signature from your academic advisor that fewer than full time credits are required to graduate.

How to Apply for a Reduced Course Load

1. Meet with your academic advisor or licensed medical professional physician (MD, DO, or licensed clinical psychologist) to discuss the above requests and determine if your advisor or medical professional will support your request.
2. Schedule an appointment with a DSO in International Student Services to discuss your situation.
3. Complete the **Reduced Course Load Request (RCL) Form** on page 3 and submit it, with the required documentation listed below, to International Student Services.
 - Academic Difficulties:** A letter from your academic advisor recommending a Reduced Course Load on the basis of one of the 4 reasons listed above and elaborating on the circumstances. The letter must indicate which reason for academic difficulty they are supporting.
 - Medical Conditions:** A letter from a licensed medical physician, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist recommending a reduced course load on the basis of a medical condition for which you have and are receiving care. The letter does not need to detail the diagnosis or treatment but must specify whether the recommendation is for part-time study or no study (0 credits). The letter cannot be dated more than 30 days before the start of the term for which the RCL is requested.
 - Completion of Studies:** An updated academic plan from your academic advisor confirming that you are expected to complete degree requirements in the term for which you are requesting RCL and specifying the number of credits for which you need to be enrolled in the final term.
4. Submit the Reduced Course Load Request (RCL) Form to International Student Services at Allen House 2nd Floor or email it to internationalservices@cedarcrest.edu
5. International Student Services will review your eligibility for RCL. If you are approved, we report your RCL to SEVIS and generate a new I-20 for you. The documented RCL authorization will be printed on page 2 of the I-20. You will then be notified to pick up your new I-20.

Reduced Course Load (RCL) Request Form

Students: Please print clearly and complete this section with a black/blue pen.

Last (Family) Name:	First (Given) Name:
CCC ID:	Major:
CCC Email:	Personal Email:
Cellphone Number:	I-20 Expiration Date:

Current Physical Address:

Have you been authorized for RCL in the past?

No Yes From: (dates) _____ to _____

If yes:

Which level? Bachelor Master

Which school? Cedar Crest Previous School: _____

Which type? Academic Difficulty Medical Completion of Studies

For what semester are you requesting RCL? Semester: _____ Year: _____

How many credits will you be enrolled in if you are approved for RCL? _____

What type of RCL are you requesting?

Academic Difficulty

- Initial difficulties with the English language (only in your first semester)
- Initial difficulties with reading requirements (only in your first semester)
- Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Improper course level placement

Note: You must attach a letter written by your academic advisor (see page 2).

Medical

Note: You must attach a letter written by a licensed medical physician, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist (see page 2).

Completion of Studies

Note: You must attach an updated academic plan (see page 2).

*I understand the requirements for maintaining status and accept responsibility for meeting these requirements.
I understand that I will be out of status if I am below full time without authorization.*

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Academic Advisor: Please complete the section below.

As the Academic Advisor for this student, I approve this student to carry less than the required number of credits as indicated above.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Once completed, please submit this form to International Student Services at Allen House 2nd Floor
Or email to internationalservices@cedarcrest.edu.

For International Student Services use only:

Approved Denied DSO Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date entered in SEVIS: _____