

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 International Student Advisor to review request and obtain proper approval. *(Read the second page to see if you qualify).*

SECTION I

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ ID: _____ Today's Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Please check all that apply: ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Graduate

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

Number of Units Enrolled this semester: _____ Number of units of classes enrolled that's online _____

(Only 1 (1-5 unit) online class will count towards full time enrollment of 12 units as undergraduate and 9 units as graduate students)

Approved Reasons for Authorization to Drop Below *(see second page for details):*

- ☐ Medical *(Must have a licensed doctor note specifying: "Due to the medical condition, it's recommended student take XX number of units this semester")*
- ☐ Improper course placement *(Section II required)*
- ☐ Initial English language difficulties *(Section II required)*
- ☐ Initial Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods *(Section II required)*
- ☐ Last Semester of academic program # of units _____.
(Must be at least one face to face class on Fresno State campus)
(Section II required)

Other Reduced Course Load Requests:

- ☐ Concurrent Enrollment _____ *(Must enroll minimum 7 units at Fresno State and provide verification of enrollment at other school at time the form is submitted)*
- ☐ Graduate student completed/ is completing all course work, and is working on dissertation, thesis, project, or comprehensive exams. *(Section II required)*
- ☐ Graduate student whose program provides less than 9 units current semester *(must register at least 6 units)*
(Section II required)
- ☐ Valley Industry Partnership for Cooperative Education
(VIP Internship) (Section II required)

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

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 Number: _____ Email: _____

FOR INTERNATIONAL OFFICE USE ONLY

- ☐ Petition Approved
- ☐ Petition Denied

International Office Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

AUTHORIZATION TO DROP BELOW FULL COURSE OF STUDY

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 INTERNATIONAL OFFICE 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 INTERNATIONAL OFFICE 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 INTERNATIONAL OFFICE 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** – INTERNATIONAL OFFICE 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 INTERNATIONAL OFFICE 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** – International Office 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 an authorized drop below, please contact California State University, Fresno, International Office at international@mail.fresnostate.edu