



UTC OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

6 Steps to Obtaining Approval for Reduced Course Load

1. Print the F-1/J-1 Reduced Course Load (RCL) handout and form from UTC International Office Website: utc.edu/international
2. Read over the F-1/ J-1 Reduced Course Load Handout. Complete the top portion of the RCL form attached to handout.
3. Make an appointment to see your International Student & Scholar Advisor or Designated School Official (DSO).
4. Obtain the first approval from International Student & Scholar Advisor or DSO. **(If you are applying for reduced course load due to final term, you may skip this step.)**
5. See your academic advisor for approval.
6. Obtain the second/ final approval from International Student & Scholar Advisor or DSO.

F-I/J-I Reduced Course Load (RCL)

This handout explains the requirements for an F-1 student who would like to drop below full-time enrollment and obtain approval for a Reduced Course Load (RCL). An F-1 student must not drop below full-time enrollment without prior approval from Office of International Relations (OIR). Without OIR approval to drop below full-time enrollment, an F-1 student will be considered out of legal immigration status.

Medical Condition

Complete the F-1 RCL form and submit a letter written by a licensed medical doctor, a doctor of osteopathy, or a licensed clinical psychologist on their own professional letterhead stating that a specific (explained) illness or medical condition compelled the student to reduce or to interrupt (state which one) his/her full course of study. The letter 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.

- Application Deadline: An F-1 student must apply and be approved by International Office prior to dropping the course(s).
- Minimum Enrollment: None - An F-1 student may register for as few as 0 credit hours dependent upon the physician letter and the RCL form.
- Duration: An F-1 student may receive a Medical Condition RCL for a maximum aggregate of 12 months per degree level.

Academic Difficulty

Complete the F-1 Reduced Course Load (RCL) form. The only Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authorized reasons for an Academic Difficulty RCL are the following: (1) Initial difficulties with the English language, reading requirements, or unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods and (2) Improper course level placement.

- Application Deadline: An F-1 student must apply and be approved by International Office prior to dropping the course(s).
- Minimum Enrollment: An F-1 student must register for a minimum of 6 credit hours.
- Duration: An F-1 student can only be authorized for an Academic Difficulty RCL once during each academic program level.
- An Initial Difficulties RCL can only be approved within an F-1 student's first year in the U.S.
- An Improper Course Level Placement RCL is not restricted to an F-1 student's first year in the U.S.

Final Term

Complete the F-1 Reduced Course Load (RCL) form. If a student is unable to graduate within the semester for which they request a Final Term RCL, they should report to UTC International Office immediately because they may be subject to losing legal immigration status and may require a reinstatement. All students who apply for a Final Term RCL will be blocked from registering for class in future semesters.

- Application Deadline: An F-1 student must apply by the last day to add/drop courses.
- Minimum Enrollment: An F-1 student must register for a minimum of 1 credit hour.
- Duration: An F-1 student may receive a Final Term RCL during their final academic semester only.

Reduced Course Load Rules

- It is the responsibility of the student to uphold both UTC and U.S. government laws and regulations.
- Federal regulations require F-1 students to register full time during both the Fall and Spring semesters. Full-time enrollment is defined as 12 hours for undergraduate students at UTC.
- UTC students approved for RCL will receive a new I-20.
- All students will receive an e-mail from UTC International Office when their RCL has been approved.



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**F-1/ J-1 Reduced Course Load
(RCL) Form**

This section must be completed by student requesting RCL

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

UTC ID #: @ _____ Telephone Number: _____

UTC Email: _____@utc.edu

Requested RCL Term: _____ Fall _____ Spring Year: _____

Select (ONE) DHS- authorization RCL Reason:

_____ Medical Condition _____ Academic Difficulty _____ Final Term

If RCL is requested for Academic Difficulty, please select one of the following:

_____ Initial Difficulties _____ Improper Course Level Placement

Explain selection: _____

If Initial Difficulties, please select reasoning:

_____ English Language _____ Reading Requirements _____ Unfamiliarity with US Teaching Methods

Explain selection: _____

I understand that if I obtain a Final Term RCL and do not finish my program before the end of the semester, I risk losing OPT employment, may be required to enroll full time and pay late fees and/ or may fall out of legal status.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

International Office Signature: _____ Date: _____

(International Office signature is not required above in requesting RCL for final term.)

This section must be completed by student's Academic Advisor

Do you recommend that the student fall below full-time enrollment (12 credit Hours)? Yes No

Requested RCL Term approved: Fall Spring Year: _____

Number of enrolled hours during RCL term: _____

Indicate the course name, course subject, number, and hours you will take during the RCL semester:

| Course Name | Course Subject | Course Number | # of Hours |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|------------|
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| | | | |
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Student's Expected Graduation/ completion of program:

Fall Spring Summer I Summer II Year: _____

Explain medical condition or academic difficulty (if applicable): _____

Specific degree requirements remaining: _____

Academic Advisor Information

Name: _____ Phone extension: _____

Email: _____@utc.edu

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This is must be completed by International Student Advisor or DSO

Approved: _____ Denied: _____ I-20 issue date: _____

OIR Signature: _____ Date: _____