

Request for Authorization to Drop below Full-Time Enrollment

International Students who are in the United States in F-1 Status are required by law to maintain full-time status every semester of the academic year. **“Full-time student status” is generally defined as 12 credits for undergraduates and 9 credits for graduates each academic term.** The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) allows very limited reasons for a student to engage in less than full-time enrollment. The basic exceptions are outlined below. You must contact the International and Multicultural Programs office *prior* to dropping below full-time status. Failure to receive approval by a Designated School Official (DSO) in the International and Multicultural Programs office may result in you being out of status and deportable from the United States.

The following section must be completed by the Designated School Official:

Name of Student: _____

The student named above is seeking authorization to drop below full-time student status during the following academic term: _____

The reason for this request is (Please check appropriate reason):

- The student is having initial difficulties with the English language or reading requirements. (NOTE: May only be used during the first term). [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii) and 22 CFR 514.23(e)]
- The student is unfamiliar with American teaching methods. (NOTE: May only be used during the first term). [8CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii) and 22 CFR 514.23(e)]
- The student has been placed in an improper course level. [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii) and 22 CFR 514.23(e)]
- The student needs less than a full course load to complete the degree program in the current academic term (NOTE: The student must complete the degree program by the end of the term in which authorization is granted or he/she is out of status). [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(B) and 22 CFR 514.23(e)]
- The student has a legitimate medical reason for being enrolled less than full-time. (NOTE: You must have an official medical record, such as a letter from a doctor, recommending the reduced course load. [8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(iv) and 22 CFR 514.23(e)]

I endorse and authorize less than full-time registration for this student during the semester requested above.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PDSO/DSO

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8 CFR 214.2 (f)(6)(i)(B) Undergraduate study at a college or university, certified by a school official to consist of at least twelve semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term in those institutions using standard semester, trimester, or quarter hour systems, where all undergraduate students who are enrolled for a minimum of twelve semester or quarter hours are charged full-time tuition or are considered full-time for other administrative purposes, or its equivalent (as determined by the district director in the school approval process), except when the student needs a lesser course load to complete the course of study during the current term.

8 CFR 214.2 (f)(6)(iii) Reduced course load. The designated school official may allow an F-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study as provided in this paragraph (f)(6)(iii). Except as otherwise noted, a reduced course load must consist of at least six semester or quarter hours, or half the clock hours required for a full course of study. A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the DSO will be considered out of status. On-campus employment pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship is deemed to be part of the academic program of a student otherwise taking a full course of study. (Paragraph (f)(6)(iii) revised effective 1/1/03; [67 FR 76256](#))

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22 CFR 514.23(e) Full course of study requirement. Exchange visitor students shall pursue a full course of study at a post-secondary accredited educational institution in the United States as defined in Sec. 514.2, except under the following circumstances:

- (1) *Vacation*. During official school breaks and summer vacations if the student is eligible and intends to register for the next term. A student attending a school on a quarter or trimester calendar may be permitted to take the annual vacation during any one of the quarters or trimesters instead of during the summer.
- (2) *Medical problem*. If the student is compelled to reduce or interrupt a full course of study due to an illness or medical condition and the student presents to the responsible officer a written statement from a physician requiring or recommending an interruption or reduction in studies.
- (3) *Bona fide academic reason*. If the student is compelled to pursue less than a full course of study for a term and the student presents to the responsible officer a written statement from the academic dean or advisor recommending the student to reduce his or her academic load to less than a full course of study due to an academic reason.
- (4) *Non-degree program*. If the student is engaged full time in a prescribed course of study in a non-degree program of up to 24 months duration conducted by a post-secondary accredited educational institution.
- (5) *Academic training*. If the student is participating in authorized academic training in accordance with Sec. 514.23(f).
- (6) *Final term*. If the student needs less than a full course of study to complete the academic requirements in his or her final term.