Reduced Course Load Guide

I. OVERVIEW

Dropping below full-time enrollment (12 credits for undergraduates; 8 credits for graduates) requires prior approval from International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) in the form of a Reduced Course Load (RCL). See 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(6)(iii). Students enrolled in thesis or dissertation hours can also be considered to be full-time students, with prior ISSS and academic approval. Students experiencing difficulty with English language proficiency or reading requirements will need to register for English as a Second Language coursework as needed to bolster language skill and remain full-time. ISSS reserves the final right to approve or deny any Reduced Course Load request. In some cases, ISSS may instead recommend a Leave of Absence, which would allow the student to withdraw from classes but also necessitates departure from the United States.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A student is only eligible for a Reduced Course Load in very specific circumstances:

1. Academic Difficulty (only approved once per academic level):
   a) You are in your first or second semester and are having initial difficulty understanding American teaching methods for your classes. You must resume full-time study in the next available semester. You must carry at least half-time credit hours.
   
   b) You have been placed in an improper course level. You must resume full-time study in the next available semester. You must carry at least half-time credit hours.

2. Documented Illness, Medical, or Psychological Condition (12 months total)
   a) You have a documented illness, medical, or psychological condition. Bring a completed Medical Reduced Course Load Approval Form (in the ISSS Guides and Forms Library) to an international student advisor or email it in a PDF attachment to isss@kent.edu. Your licensed physician, doctor of osteopathy, or clinical psychologist must complete the Medical Reduced Course Load Approval Form.
   
   b) Pregnant students requesting RCL must include an explanation from their doctor with specific reasons beyond normal pregnancy symptoms as to why the student is unable to attend classes.

3. Completion of Course of Study
   a) You are in your last semester and require fewer credits to graduate than are necessary to be considered a full-time student. You may only use this reason twice.

4. Thesis or Dissertation Work
   a) You are a Master’s student or Ph.D. candidate working on your thesis or dissertation full-time, registered for fewer than 8 credit hours.

III. TO APPLY

1. If your ISSS advisor feels that you qualify for a reduced course load, complete the Reduced Course Load Form: https://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/rcl-student-request. You will be notified via email when your academic advisor/coordinator completes his or her portion. Follow the specific instructions on the form for medical RCLs.

2. If your advisor approves your request, you must meet with an advisor in ISSS in order to confirm your RCL approval. Do not drop below full-time registration until an international student advisor approves your request. Dropping below full-time registration before obtaining RCL approval from ISSS constitutes an immigration violation and may result in the termination of your student status.