Reduced Course Load

Policy

Students must pursue a “full course of study at all times” (except for summer breaks which is considered an official break by USCIS). A full course load is 12 credit hours for undergraduate students and 9 credit hours for graduate students. Do not drop below full-time without authorization from a Baylor Designated School Official (DSO). A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the DSO will be considered out of status.

The U.S. Government stipulates the reasons for which a Reduced Course Load (RCL) can be granted. The reasons include:

--Initial Difficulty with English Language
--Initial Difficulty with Reading Requirements
--Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods
--Improper Course Level Placement
--To Complete Course of Study in Current Term

Illness or Medical Condition - A student may be authorized to reduce course load for a reason of illness or medical condition on more than one occasion while pursuing a course of study, so long as the aggregate period of that authorization does not exceed 12 months. Evidence must be demonstrated with medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist. Each new term must be reauthorized.
The exceptions to the "full course of study" requirement are limited, but very important. In the situations described above, F-1 students are considered to be maintaining status even if they are not registered for a full course of study, and they continue to be eligible for F-1 benefits if they are otherwise eligible.

Process

1. A student must submit the Reduced Course Load (RCL) Request Form to the Baylor ISSS Office. This may include documents from medical personnel, faculty members, etc. to demonstrate the need for an RCL. All medical related requests will require documentation from a licensed US physician. All other requests will require documentation from the student's advisor or major professor.
2. A DSO will review the materials and determine whether a reduced course load is necessary.
3. The DSO will inform the student of his or her decision via email.