F-1 Student: Medical Leave of Absence or Reduced Course Load

As an F-1 student, you may either drop below full time registration, or go on a leave of absence and remain in the U.S. if you obtain a doctor’s letter recommending the reduced course load (RCL), or leave of absence for medical health or mental health reasons, AND you bring that letter to International Student Services (ISS). You MUST receive approval for this leave from ISS before you go on leave.

Medical Condition

To request a Medical Condition RCL, an F-1 student must complete this 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 there is a significant medical condition compelling the student to reduce or to interrupt his/her full course of study.

Immigration regulations governing reduced course loads for students with medical needs state that:

- Reduced course load enrollment for medical reasons may not exceed a total of 12 months during a student’s program of study. Students are granted this 12-month limit for each level of study (bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral levels). If, after 12 months, a student is unable to resume full-time study due to medical reasons, immigration policy requires that the student either (1) exit the U.S. with the option to reapply for study once s/he is able to undertake a full course load or (2) apply to change to a new visa classification suited for continued medical treatment in the U.S.

- If a student’s medical condition prevents full-time enrollment for more than one semester, medical documentation must be newly provided and ISS must newly authorize a reduced course load for each subsequent semester in which a reduced course load is required. Medical documentation and ISS authorization are not required during the summer break.