

# 6 Steps to Obtaining Your F-1/J-1 Status

**1** Print the F-1/J-1 Reduced Course Load (RCL) Form from the International Relations Website: [uafs.edu/international](http://uafs.edu/international). The form is located under the Forms link in the right-side menu.

**2** Fill out the form (including the reasons why you would qualify to obtain an F-1/J-1 status).

**3** Make an appointment to see an Office of International Relations (OIR) advisor.

**4** Obtain the **first** approval from the OIR advisor.

**5** See your academic advisor for approval.

**6** Obtain **the second/final** approval from the OIR advisor.

## **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.

### **1. 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 OIR 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.

### **2. 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 OIR 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.

### **3. 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 OIR 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 (the 5th class day of any semester).
- 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 UAFS 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 UAFS.
- UAFS students approved for a Medical Condition or Academic Difficulty RCL will receive a new I-20.
- UAFS students approved for a Final Term RCL will not receive a new I-20.
- All students will receive an e-mail from OIR when their RCL has been approved.

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

This section must be completed by all F-1/J-1 students.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

UAFS ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Select one (1) DHS - authorized RCL reason: • Medical Condition • Academic Difficulty • Final Term

If Academic Difficulty, please select: • Initial Difficulties • Improper Course Level Placement

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If Initial Difficulties, please select: • English Language • Reading Requirements  
• Unfamiliarity with US Teaching Methods

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

Course Name	Course Number	# of Hours	Course Name	Course Number	# of Hours
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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Course Name	Course Number	# of Hours	Course Name	Course Number	# of Hours
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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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**.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

OIR Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This section must be completed by student's academic department.

Do you recommend that the student fall below full-time enrollment? • Yes • No

Requested RCL Term: • Fall • Spring • Summer Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of enrolled hours during RCL term: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Date of defense (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation: • Dec. • May • Aug. Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain medical condition or academic difficulty (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Specific degree requirements remaining: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Advisor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Advisement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

This section must be completed by an OIR Advisor. Do not write in this section.

OIR Advisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_