Reduced Course Load (RCL) for F-1 International Students

Overview

Requirement to pursue a full course of study is one of the cornerstones of maintaining F-1 Status. Every fall and spring semester Trinity University has an enrollment-reporting responsibility in SEVIS to the US Department of Homeland Security on all F-1 Students.

A Trinity Designated School Official MUST authorize a “reduced course load” (RCL) and must update SEVIS prior to the student reducing his or her load. A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the DSO will be considered out of status according to 8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(E).

Eligibility

There are limited exceptions to the “full course of study” requirement. SEVIS limits the reasons for which a reduced course load (RCL) can be granted. You must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible for an RCL:

- **Illness or Medical Condition** (must be supported by a letter from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist)
  - The DSO must reauthorize the reduced course load every semester and update SEVIS to reflect the authorization. The regulations require the student to present current medical documentation to support each RCL authorization.
  - RCLs for medical conditions can be granted for no more than 12 months in the aggregate during any one course of study.

- **Academic difficulty exceptions** (can be in advance approved only for once per program level):
  - Initial Difficulty with the English Language
  - Initial Difficulty with Reading Requirements
  - Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods
  - Improper Course Level Placement

- **To Complete Course of Study in Current Term** (this is done in the student’s final semester if fewer courses are needed to complete the course of study)

RCL’s are only granted on a semester basis. Therefore, in the case of an RCL for academic difficulty, a student must resume a full course of study in the next available semester. For RCL’s related to illness or a medical condition, the student must either resume a full course of study in the next available semester or obtain another illness/medical RCL with new documentation.

How to Request a RCL

- First, meet with your academic advisor and/or doctor to discuss your plans for dropping below full-time
- Meet with Financial Aid (if applicable) to discuss implications on your international student scholarship
- Submit your RCL request form to the ISSS Office
  - Once your RCL request has been granted, you will be issued a new form I-20 and you may, at that time, then drop below full-time with the university

NOTE: If you receive an International Student Scholarship (institutional aid from Trinity), then you MUST speak with the Financial Aid office before dropping below full-time! Failure to consult the Trinity Financial Aid office before dropping below full-time may result in the loss of your scholarship funding!
This form is to be used by F-1 students who wish to make a request to drop below full-time status.

Part 1- To be completed by the Student

Family (last) Name: ___________________________________________ Given (first) Name: ___________________________________________

Student ID#: _____________________ SEVIS ID number: _______________

First semester at Trinity _____________

Do you receive an International Student Scholarship from Trinity University? □ Yes* □ No

*If you checked “yes” above, please indicate here that you have met with the Trinity Financial Aid office prior to submitting this RCL form:

I confirm that I met with the Trinity Financial Aid Office to discuss my scholarship (please initial):________________________

☐ I certify I have read the request form instructions and information in full.

☐ I certify the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate.

☐ I understand I must report any address changes, current (U.S.) or permanent (out of U.S.), to the ISSS Office within 10 days of the change.

Signature________________________________________ Date__________________________

Part 2- To be completed by the Authorizing DSO

Please indicate the purpose for authorizing this RCL:

☐ Illness or Medical Condition

☐ Doctor’s note received? □ Yes □ No

☐ Initial Academic Difficulty

☐ Student in Final Semester

Designated School Official’s prior authorization of a “Reduced Course Load” (RCL): I certify that the student’s SEVIS record will be updated prior to the student reducing his or her load by Trinity University by Trinity University.

Authorizing Designated School Official:

☐ Robert (Bob) Seese  ☐ Stephanie Herzog  ☐ Nanette Le Coat  ☐ Andre Martinez  ☐ Alfred Rodriguez

Title________________________________________

Signature________________________________________ Date__________________________