

Auburn University
Office of International Education

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DROP BELOW FULL TIME FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Revised January 2009

Non-immigrant students in the United States must maintain their student status by adhering to immigration regulations set forth by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As part of maintaining one's immigration status, **F-1/J-1 students must attend school full-time** (pursue a full course of study) at the school that they are authorized by DHS to attend as indicated on their I-20 or DS-2019. (For a more complete list of requirements for F-1/J-1 students to maintain their status, see the OIE website.)

To be considered full time, an F-1/J-1 **undergraduate** student must be enrolled for at least **12 hours** per semester. **Graduate** students must be enrolled for at least **9 hours** per semester. Students in the Intensive English Program (IEP) must be enrolled in at least 12 clock hours of class per week. A student may be exempt from being full time in two circumstances: 1) during the summer, if the student qualifies to take a summer vacation term (see the *Summer Vacation Policy*); and 2) if he/she has been authorized to **drop below a full course of study** (see instructions and application for *Authorization to Drop Below Full Time*) or otherwise be **certified as pursuing a full course of study**.

Acceptable Conditions for Dropping Below a Full Course of Study:

Academic Difficulties

A reduced course load can be approved on the basis of academic difficulty basis only once per program level. Additionally, a reduced course load due to academic difficulty "must consist of at least 6 semester hours."

1. **Student is having "Initial Difficulty with the English Language."** Initial difficulty is defined as within the first year of study. To receive authorization for a reduced course load, the student must include a letter from the Director of the Intensive English Program assessing the English language difficulty and recommended actions. Student will seek assistance with language difficulties and pursue a full-course-of-study in future terms.
2. Student is **unfamiliar with American teaching methods or is having initial difficulties with reading requirements**. To receive authorization for a reduced course load, the student must submit a letter from the faculty member teaching the course or the student's academic advisor explaining the difficulty.
3. Student is being advised by his/her Academic Advisor to drop a course because of **improper course level placement**. To receive authorization for a reduced course load, the student must submit a letter from his advisor explaining the situation. This reason cannot be used in the case in which a student is enrolled for a course required for his/her program, unless it was taken out of sequence or without necessary prerequisites for the course.

Medical Condition

4. Student is compelled by **illness or other medical condition** to interrupt or reduce a course of study. To receive authorization for a reduced course load, the student must provide OIE with a signed and dated statement from physician. Student must resume a full-course-of-study within one year from the

Acceptable Conditions for Dropping Below a Full Course of Study, (con't):

date of written authorization by OIE in order to maintain status. The student is still required to carry Auburn University insurance during this time. This reason can be used a maximum of 2 semesters.

Other Conditions

5. **For Undergraduates: Student is graduating this semester** and has completed all other requirements except for one or two courses. (Graduate students who are graduating should submit the “Full Course of Study” form.) To receive authorization for a reduced course load, the student must submit a letter from his academic advisor attesting that the student has completed all degree requirements except for one or two courses. This reason can be used a maximum of 1 semester.

NOTE: If the student fails to graduate, he/she must be enrolled full time in all subsequent semesters or be certified by OIE as full time. As such, a student must utilize care in ensuring he/she will complete the remaining required courses during the semester in which he/she is authorized to drop below full time.

6. **Student will be out of the United States** for one semester and will return to continue his/her education in the following semester. Student must submit copy of plane ticket showing return date to OIE and verify prior to departure that all documents are in order so that she may re-enter the United States. Students must report to the OIE upon return for verification of departure and return dates.

All the above conditions must be reported in SEVIS. As such, students who believe they meet one of conditions previously outlined must receive authorization from OIE **before** dropping below full time. Each form is only valid for one semester, after which time students must return to full time enrollment the following semester or submit a new form authorizing them to be less than full time. **This form should NOT be submitted during the summer term unless it is your first or last term**, since most students are considered to be on vacation term during the summer and are not required to be enrolled or full time.

NOTE: Submission of the Drop Below form in and of itself does not constitute approval. It is only valid *if* you qualify for one of the conditions outlined in the instructions for the forms, and are approved by OIE staff.

Approval of Your Request to Drop Below Full Course of Study:

To verify approval of your “Authorization to Drop Below Full Time” form, please check your registration screen in OASIS. Approved students will be enrolled in **GRAD6@@0001: Drop Below Full Time Authorized**, a non-credit bearing administrative notation, which will appear on your permanent record within 30 days. You will **NOT** receive an email notification unless there is a problem with your form.

If this course does not appear on your transcript within 30 days of submission of your form, or **if you are enrolled full time and need to drop a course before the university drop deadline**, please contact OIE via email at intledu@auburn.edu a few days prior to the drop deadline to check the status of your form. OIE is NOT responsible for tuition charges incurred if you drop a course after the university drop deadline.

Date Stamp

DROP BELOW FULL TIME FORM

Auburn University, Office of International Education *Revised January 2009*

APPLICATION DEADLINE: If enrolling for less than full time this document must be submitted at least two weeks PRIOR to the start of each term. If dropping a course *during* the semester this form must be completed PRIOR to dropping any hours. **Students who fail to obtain proper authorization from OIE before dropping below full time will be out of status.**

Last Name (print): _____, First Name (print): _____

AU Student ID: _____ Visa Status: F-1 J-1

SEVIS ID: _____ Email address: _____

Department: _____ Level of study: Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D., Other _____

(Grad students only) I am pursuing: Thesis/Dissertation Option Non-Thesis/Dissertation Option

Program start date (current degree): _____ Expected date of completion: _____

I am requesting to drop below full time for FALL, SPRING, SUMMER* Semester, _____ (year)

During the term requested, I will carry _____ credit hours Advisor's Email: _____

Please select the reason you are requesting to drop below full time. Attach any required documentation to this form and submit it to OIE.

- ___ 1. **Student is having "initial** (within first year of study) **English language difficulties."** The student must include a letter from IEP assessing the English language difficulty and recommended actions.
- ___ 2. **Student is unfamiliar with American teaching methods or is having initial difficulties with reading requirements.** Attach a letter from the faculty member teaching the course or your Advisor explaining the difficulty.
- ___ 3. Student is being advised by his/her Academic Advisor to drop Course Number _____ because of **improper course level placement.** Attach a letter from advisor explaining situation.
- ___ 4. Student is compelled by **illness or other medical condition** to interrupt or reduce a course of study. The student must provide OIE with a signed and dated statement from his/her physician.
- ___ 5. UNDERGRADUATES ONLY: **Student is graduating** this semester and has completed all other requirements except for one or two courses. The student must submit a copy of his/her plan of study signed by their advisor/dept. chair and a list of required courses and corresponding credit hours.
- ___ 6. **Student will be out of the United States** during _____ semester of _____ (year), and will return to continue his/her education in the _____ semester of _____ (year). Student must attach copy of plane ticket showing return date and verify all documents are in order so that he/she may re-enter in the United States prior to departure.

I hereby request that the above named student be authorized to drop below full time enrollment. I have read the instructions and understand the conditions by which I am requesting this reduced course load. If required, I have attached a letter with additional explanation.

Department Chair's Signature

Printed Name

Date

Academic Advisor's Signature

Printed Name

Date

Student's Signature

Printed Name

Date