

**International Student
Medical Reduction of Course Load (RCL) / No
Course Load (NCL)**

WELLNESS CENTER
220 PAWTUCKET STREET, UNIVERSITY CROSSING, SUITE
300 LOWELL, MA 01854
phone: 978-934-6800 fax: 978-934-3080
email: Health_Services@uml.edu

Medical RCL / NCL are for the current semester only and requests must be submitted before the last day of class(es) for that semester, preferably prior to the start of the semester. This process should always begin with consultation with the ISSO on the intent to apply for a change in course load.

Purpose

A change of course load to less than full-time for medical reasons is initiated by a student when the student's medical condition interferes with their ability to do coursework, manage day-to-day functions, or live safely in the university environment. The purpose of a Reduction or No Course Load is to support the student in taking time away from school to receive treatment, to focus their time and resources on improving their health, and eventually return to the University with a significantly improved chance of academic and personal success.

Policy/Procedure

An F-1 or J-1 visa holder cannot maintain F-1 or J-1 status without registration in a full-time course load unless otherwise authorized by the ISSO. Students can be authorized to engage in a reduction of course load or no course load (medical leave) based on ongoing medical issues through the Medical Reduced Course Load process.

International F-1 or J-1 students requesting to either take a Reduced Course Load or no course load for illness or medical conditions must provide official medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist according to health services (**8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(B)**).

This Request for Reduced or No Course Load must include the diagnosis as well as accompanying justification as to why the student is unable to continue as a full-time student. When requesting medical documentation, students should seek advice from their healthcare provider as to whether to request a course reduction or a no course load (medical leave) from the University and have that stated on their documentation. Please note that pregnancy in and of itself will not justify a Reduced Course Load or No Course Load for illness or medical conditions unless there is medical documentation by a medical provider to support it.

Please be advised that requests may be denied if the medical condition and accompanying documentation does not meet the criteria for medical leave or course reduction.

International students should be aware that Federal regulations require that the above-mentioned process be approved on a semester-by-semester basis. International students may be authorized to reduce their academic course load for illness or medical conditions on more than one occasion during the

same academic level through the above-mentioned review process so long **as the aggregate period of that authorization does not exceed 12 months**. USCIS calculates any Medical Reduction of Course Load by days, not by p/t or complete withdrawal.

An International Student requesting a reduction of course load (RCL) or no course load (NCL) for medical reasons must:

1. Read the Medical RCL/NCL policy and procedure.
2. Consult with the ISSO and complete the ISSO Request for Reduced Course or No Course Load for Illness or Medical Conditions form and have licensed medical provider; doctor of osteopathy (DO), medical doctor (MD), or Clinical Psychologist sign the form.
3. Complete page one of the International Student Request for Medical Reduced or No Course Load form.
4. Have their licensed medical provider, DO, MD, or Clinical Psychologist complete page two of International Student Request for Medical Reduced or No Course Load form.
5. Write a personal statement describing how the medical condition will prevent or prevented successful completion of academic work.
6. Submit the completed paperwork to the Wellness Center in person, via email at wellness_center@uml.edu, or via regular mail at;

Wellness Center
220 Pawtucket Street, Suite 300
Lowell, MA 01854

To return to school, a student must present documentation from their health care provider via a Readiness for Return form, that they have been receiving treatment and the health problem no longer prevents them from successfully completing course work. The student should also submit a brief statement of how they plan to ensure a successful return to their academic work.

Review Process

The Director of Health Services or Director of Counseling Services will review the documentation and may request additional information from the student or the health care provider.

The Director of Health Services or Director of Counseling Services will make a recommendation to the ISSO based the documentation submitted by the student. Specifics of medical information will be kept confidential.

The ISSO will process the request with the SEVP Response Center for a change to the student's F-1 or J-1 visa status. If the request is approved, the student will proceed with a semester of reduced (RCL) or no course load (NCL). The student will be expected to submit a Readiness for Return form and resume a regular course load in the following semester unless the student reapplies for an additional semester of RCL or NCL.