



F-1 Student Reduced Course Load (RCL) Authorization Request Form

Submit completed form to GEOIS@vcu.edu

This form is for use by an international student in F-1 visa status to request authorization for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) and outlines the RCL criteria needed to qualify for an exception. Undergraduate Full Course of Study (FCS) is a minimum of 12 credits per semester (Fall and Spring). Graduate FCS is a minimum of 9 credits per semester (Fall and Spring). English Language Program FCS is a minimum of 18 English Language Program credits per semester (Fall and Spring).

For RCL Exception to Full Course of Study, the student **must** fall into one of the following 3 categories:

1. Academic Difficulty
2. Completion of Course of Study (also known as Final Semester)
3. Medical Condition

NOTE: Per federal regulation, there are **no exceptions** to these categories or criteria. For more detailed information, please see the [Full Course of Study, Reduced Course Load, and Full-Time Equivalent](#) section on [GEO's website](#).

Student Information (to be completed by the student)	
Last Name	First Name
Date of Birth (month/day/year)	SEVIS # on your I-20 N__
V #	Telephone
Email	Date

US Residential Address (Physical address, PO Box is not permitted)	
Street Address	Apartment Number
City and State	Zip Code

Academic Level

- Bachelor's Master's Doctoral English Language Program (ELP)

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Information and Exception (usually completed by a student's advisor; please check with your individual school or college to see if there are additional internal review requirements.)

Semester: Spring Fall Year _____

To qualify for an RCL authorization, the student must fall into one of the three available categories and meet one of the required criteria listed below. Please elect ONE category and ONE criterion as appropriate:

1. Academic Difficulty

Regulatory citation: 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(A)

Initial difficulty with the English language. Note: This may only be used 1 time during the first year of the student's academic program.

Initial difficulty with reading requirements. Note: This may be only be used 1 time during the first year of the student's academic program.

Unfamiliarity with US teaching methods. Note: This may only be used 1 time during the first year of the student's academic program.

Improper course level placement.

2. Completion of Course of Study

Regulatory citation: 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(C)

The student is in their final semester of their program and needs fewer credits than the FCS required in order to graduate at the end of the semester.

This student needs only ____ credits in order to graduate at the end of the semester elected above.

3. Illness or Medical Condition

Regulatory citation: 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(B)

The student has supplied compliant documentation from their doctor to a GEO Designated School Officer (DSO).¹ This documentation is attached to this form's submission for review.

NOTE: **all** of the following **must** be included in the provided documentation:

- Letter, on doctor's letterhead, dated no earlier than 30 days before the start of the semester for which the Medical RCL is requested;
- include the signature, address, telephone number, and email of the MD, DO, or LCP;

¹ Doctor in this context means: US-licensed Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), or Licensed Clinical Psychologist (LCP) to a GEO DSO to substantiate the illness or medical condition.

- clearly state that, due to illness or medical condition, the student be registered for either fewer credits than FCS or for no credits at all for the semester.

NOTE: The letter does not need to identify the student’s illness or medical condition or address any other information about the student’s health status that would usually be covered by patient-health care provider confidentiality.

By my signature below, I attest that I am the authorized signatory; that all information entered by me is true as I know it; that I understand what is being asked of me; and that I know to contact the VCU Global Education Office at GEOIS@vcu.edu or 804 828-0595 for clarification or to ask questions.

VCU Employee with Signatory Authority: _____

Date: _____

Name	Title
Department	Telephone
Email	

Next Steps: A GEO Designated School Official (DSO) will review the RCL Authorization Request Form and will respond to the student and VCU employee with signatory authority by email either approving or denying the request. This typically takes 3-5 business days. If this is a time-sensitive request, please contact GEOIS@vcu.edu to discuss. Otherwise forms are processed in the order in which they are received.