

DROPPING BELOW REQUIRED COURSE LOAD

International students in F-1 and J-1 visa status are required to maintain full-time enrollment during the academic year. A student who is considering dropping below full-time enrollment, for any reason, should make an appointment to meet with with PDSO in the Pensby Center before making a decision to discuss the implications of the action. Further, a student who decides to drop below full time **must** obtain the approval in writing from the PDSO/RO **prior** to officially making the change. A student who registers for fewer classes than a full course load, or drops below a full course of study, without appropriate prior approval from an OIP advisor will be considered out of status. Please be advised that a lack of financial support does not constitute a valid reason to reduce course load.

If you cannot meet this requirement, you must complete a Reduced Course Load Form (RCL) and meet with the PDSO to discuss your request.

Federal immigration regulations limit the international student's ability to enroll less than full time, but it may be allowed in some circumstances explained below. Please note that *if you drop below full-time enrollment without authorization in advance from notifying the PDSO/RO*, we are federally mandated to report this in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS, the online database created by the US Department of Homeland Security to track and monitor students and scholars in F, J, and M status); and you will *lose your F-1 or J-1 status*.

According to immigration regulations governing international students, only a **Designated School Official (DSO)**, a designation held by Pensby Center advisor, not your academic advisor) may allow an F-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study as provided below.

For J-1 students, a Responsible or **Alternate Responsible Officer (RO/ARO)** – again, Pensby Center advisors have this designation, not your academic advisor) may allow such reduced course load.