

**Office of International Programs**

5500 N. St. Louis Avenue

Chicago, IL 60625-4699

773.442.4796

[international-programs@neiu.edu](mailto:international-programs@neiu.edu)

**Please read this important information before completing the form:**

Students who are studying at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) with an F-1 or J-1 student visa must follow certain federally mandated regulations to maintain their student status while studying in the U.S. One of these regulations is to always be enrolled full-time during each semester, Fall and Spring. (Undergraduate: 12 credit hours. Graduate: 9 credit hours). International students may have the Summer term off as their annual holiday (Unless you are admitted for the Summer semester at Northeastern Illinois University, you must be enrolled full time).

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), Homeland Security (DHS), and Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) have created guidelines by which Northeastern Illinois University must operate as a university to host international students. USCIS, DHS, and ICE allow for students to be authorized for less than full-time only enrollment for very specific reasons. These are listed on the attached request form.

Requesting to drop below full-time enrollment is very serious. If a student drops below full-time enrollment, they will be “out of status”, which means they have violated the terms of their visa and thus, in effect, they are terminating their nonimmigration status. **Students must consult with their Designated School Official (DSO) at the Office of International Programs (OIP) to request and be given authorization before dropping their course.**

Further, it is always a good idea for the student to discuss their options with the academic advisor, as they are the experts regarding the student’s academic progress. The Office of International Programs will not authorize less than full-time enrollment without the advisor’s approval. **Additionally, it is very important that both the student and the advisor are aware that requests for less than full-time enrollment can be authorized only once due to academic difficulties during each degree-seeking program.** This means that if authorized now, the student will not be permitted to drop below full-time enrollment for the remainder of their degree program, whether the student continues at NEIU or transfers to another institution.

The only exception to this rule is if a student is in their final term prior to graduation, and they do not need a full course load to complete the degree requirements. This requires documentation (copy of graduation application) and the advisors authorization, too. Bring this documentation to the DSO in the Office of International Programs (OIP).

Please contact [international-programs@neiu.edu](mailto:international-programs@neiu.edu) if you have any questions regarding the above information. It is important for all of us to be on the same page to best assist students to remain in good status, both academically and within federal visa guidelines.

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Please carefully read the attached information regarding authorization for less than full-time enrollment. Complete Section A and then request that your academic advisor complete Section B summarizing the reason for a reduced number of credits. Please return this form to the Office of International Programs in LWH-0008C.

<b>Section A: (To be completed by the student)</b>			
<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>		
<b>Student ID #:</b>	<b>SEVIS ID #:</b>		
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b>		
<b>Section B: (To be completed by the academic advisor)</b>			
<b>REASON FOR REDUCED COURSE LOAD (SELECT ONLY ONE REASON)</b>			
<p><b>No appointment necessary with International Student Advisor for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Completion of Program:</b> This option may be used only one time. The student is graduating during this current term. The last course MUST be on campus (not online or at another university). You will receive a new I-20/DS-2019 with a shortened program end date prior to graduation.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Graduate Students Taking Qualifying/Comprehensive Exam:</b> This option may be used only one time. The student is taking the qualifying/comprehensive exam this semester/quarter and will be registered for 6 credits. The student must enroll fulltime during all subsequent semesters of coursework, even if the exam need to be repeated.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Graduate students working on a degree REQUIRED project:</b> The student is completing a required thesis or project and/or scheduled to take the comprehensive exam</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Graduate students taking capstone course:</b> The student is in the MBA or MSA program, and will be taking (or is currently taking) the capstone course.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<p><b>Appointment REQUIRED with an International Student Advisor for approval of the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Academic Difficulties:</b> This option may be used only one time. The student must be enrolled in at least 6 credits. The following circumstance applies (please select only one):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with English language or reading requirements in the first term of study in the US</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods in the first term of study in the US</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improper course level placement (in this instance, students are allowed to drop a course only when the advisor had recommended that a student take a course for which he/she was not academically prepared.)</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Medical Condition:</b> Cannot accumulate more than 12 months of Reduced Course Load exemption for this reason per academic program. The student has provided a letter from a licensed US medical doctor/clinical psychologist that he/she should take a reduced course load/refrain from taking courses during the current term. <b>Please attach the letter to this form.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Authorized Early Withdrawal: Please Note:</b> I-20 record will be terminated for "Authorized Early Withdrawal" during the time student is out of school, and will need to be re-activated by SEVIS 30 days before returning to the U.S. <i>If a student is out of U.S. for more than 5 months, student will need to apply for a new I-20.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Concurrently Enrolled</b> at NEIU and another USCIS-approved school for a total academic load equaling full time study.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student must be enrolled in at least one class at Northeastern Illinois University.</li> </ul> <i>Student must attach proof of enrollment at other school (registration status showing total credit hours taken)</i> </li> </ul>			
<p><b>Semester Requested:</b> _____ <b>Number of credit hours the student will register for:</b> _____</p>			
<p><b>I recommend less than full-time registration for this student during the semester requested, for the reason indicated above.</b></p>			
<p>_____ Student Signature</p>	<p>_____ Academic Advisor's Signature</p>	<p>_____ Academic Advisor's Name</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>