# Dropping Courses and Immigration Implications

The following is provided as information for F-1 and J-1 students.  **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SEE THE DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO DROPPING ANY COURSES....**

The last day to withdraw from a course for the Fall 2021 semester is ***Friday, November 19th*!** Withdrawing from a course means that a grade of “W” will be entered on your transcript.

However, withdrawing from a class may have immigration consequences ***if*** the course is needed for you to be considered a full time student.  The office of International Student and Scholar Services reminds all international students in F-1 and J-1 status that U.S. federal regulations require that they be registered for a full-time course load as determined by their academic level and program.

What constitutes a full-time course load varies according to academic level.

**Academic Level Minimum Full-time Course Load**

Undergraduates 12 credits per semester

Graduates 9 credits per semester 

There are some very limited exceptions to the full-time course requirement, including being in your final semester prior to graduation, having a medical condition, or having academic difficulty due to documented English language difficulty or course placement problems.  **Under Federal SEVIS regulations, these exceptions require prior approval from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services before you can withdraw from the course.** For complete information, contact the Director of International Student and Scholar Services to obtain a handout on “Permissible Reasons Under F-1 Regulations to Register for Less Than a Full Time Course Load,” or view the handout on the ISSS Moodle site at [www.manhattan.edu](http://www.manhattan.edu/).

The most common violation of F-1 and J-1 status is failure to sustain a full-time course load through the end of the semester. A few students drop below the minimum number of credits needed to be full-time without prior permission, a smaller number of students withdraw from all courses late in the semester.

These same students may return to full course loads the following semester. However, they are all in violation of F-1 and J-1 status rules, because returning to a full-time course load does not "fix" the problem of having been less than full-time the previous semester.

The penalty for a status violation, like the ones described above, is loss of all F-1 and J-1 benefits, including the right to be employed on or off campus. To restore benefits and return to legal status, the student must pay a $370 fee and apply for reinstatement with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Obviously, a status violation is a very serious matter. Avoid violating the terms of your status, and contact the ISSS director whenever you have a question or a concern regarding F-1 or J-1 issues, including the full-time course rule.