

Reduced Course Load Policy for Undergraduate Students with Documented Disabilities

I. Applicability

This policy applies to undergraduate students who wish to take a reduced course load as an accommodation for a disability. Approval of such a course load pursuant to this policy entitles the student to maintain Goucher institutional aid on a prorated basis and to remain in the residence halls while carrying a less than full-time course load.

Students who are not requesting to maintain institutional aid or scholarships that require full-time attendance, or to remain in campus housing while carrying less than a full-time course load do not need to submit a request for an accommodation, but may simply register for a reduced course load pursuant to regular registration processes. However, registration for a reduced course load may have an impact on progress towards degree completion and so should be discussed with the student's academic advisor. Students should also consult with billing and financial aid offices prior to registering for a reduced course load.

II. Policy

Students with disabilities that significantly limit their ability to manage a full-time course load (12 or more credits) may be accommodated by receiving approval to take a reduced course load. While it is typically preferable for a student with a disability to be accommodated through methods such as academic advising, priority enrollment, and academic accommodations, it may be necessary for a student to request a reduced course load because of a more severe academic impact of a significant disability. Factors such as employment, extracurricular activities, family/personal obligations, failure to make use of appropriate academic accommodations, or poor class attendance are not acceptable reasons for a reduced course load under this policy.

Requests for this accommodation will be considered on a semester-by-semester basis and students must submit a request to the Director of Accessibility Services as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks prior to the start of each semester.

A. Billing and Financial Aid

- 1) Students who drop below a full-time load will be billed for tuition on a per-credit basis.
- 2) The reduced credit load will potentially result in an adjusted financial aid package:
 - a) Federal Direct Loan Eligibility: Federal Direct Loans are prorated based on enrollment status. A student approved for a reduced course load can take as few as 6 credits and still be eligible for a Federal Direct Loan.
 - b) Federal Pell Grant Eligibility: Federal Pell Grants are prorated based on enrollment status.
 - c) Goucher institutional aid (Goucher grants and merit scholarships): All Goucher institutional aid will be prorated based on enrollment status.
 - d) Federal Work Study Program: The Federal Work Study Program is limited and only offered to students with federal need who are enrolled in 12 credit hours. Exceptions to the credit hour requirement will be considered as an accommodation for a disability.
 - e) Other Financial Aid: Students who receive any other type of aid should check with the office of financial aid to determine the effect on such aid of a less than full-time enrollment status.

B. Health Insurance

Students who are registered for Goucher's student health insurance program must be registered for at least seven credits, which is the credit requirement of the college's insurance provider.

C. On Campus Employment

Students who have been granted permission to carry less than a full-time course load due to a documented disability will be regarded as an eligible student employee for purposes of participating in the Goucher Work Program (GWP).

D. Honors and Awards

Certain honors and awards may require full-time status as a condition of eligibility; such restrictions may be established by the donor or organization supporting such awards, and the college is unable to modify such requirements. Students carrying a reduced course load pursuant to this policy are, however, eligible to receive any honor or award that does not carry such a restriction.

E. Full-time status:

- 1) In order to maintain full-time status (except for purposes of eligibility for federal and state aid), a student must register for a minimum of 8 credits during a regular semester.
- 2) In the event that a student approved for a reduced course load is required to verify full-time status to a third party, such as a health insurance company or a landlord, a request for a verification letter should be made to the Registrar. Generally, the Registrar will, with the student's consent, confirm with the third party that the student maintains full-time status if the student has registered for at least 8 credits, and has been granted a reduced course load accommodation. It is important for students to note that the decision to maintain third party benefits for a student with full-time status on a reduced course load rests solely with the third party. Goucher's role is simply to verify that we are providing the student with full-time status. In most cases the college's determination of full-time status results in the preservation of third party benefits, but Goucher is not responsible to guarantee this outcome.

3) Full-time Enrollment Requirement for International Students (F-1 visas)

International students are required by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal visa regulations to enroll full-time and maintain full-time status. There are very limited circumstances in which a reduced load for medical or academic reasons may be granted. In order to maintain their immigration status in the United States, an international student must be approved for a reduced course load by the International Student Advisor prior to reducing their course load and pursuing institutional exceptions. An international student who is granted reduced load for medical reasons may be granted such reduction for not more than 12 months, which may or may not be consecutive. A reduced load granted for allowable academic reasons may be granted for only one semester. Note that carrying a reduced course load may have an impact on the student's ability to work on campus.

4) Athletics Participation

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division III: Regulations, *Section 14.1.8.1.7.2. Student-Athlete with Education-Impacting Disabilities – 12-hour requirement only*, provides: The Management council, or a committee designated by the Management Council to act for it, may waive the 12-hour requirement for a student-athlete when objective evidence demonstrates that an institution defines full-time enrollment for that student-athlete to be fewer than 12 hours to accommodate for the student's education-impacting disability.

Pursuant to this policy, students must be enrolled in at least 8 credit hours in order to maintain eligibility to participate in intercollegiate sports.

5) Housing

Students approved to take a reduced course load as an accommodation will be entitled to remain in college housing, but must maintain a course load of at least 8 credits

III. Request Process

- Requests for reduced course loads under this policy should be made to the Director of Accessibility Services with supporting documentation as soon as possible and no later than two weeks prior to the first day of classes for the semester in which this status is sought. Requests should be submitted [online](#). Requests for reduced course load status will not be considered after the drop/add deadlines.
- Reduced course load status is not automatically renewed. Students are required to request this status every semester.
- The Director will evaluate the documentation to determine the impact of the disability on the student's ability to carry a full course load. The student will be asked to sign the Reduced Course Load Approval Form, which includes a statement acknowledging that he or she has reviewed the consequences that accompany reduced course load status and accepts them.
- The reduced course load accommodation approved by the Director of Accessibility Services will be reviewed by the student's academic advisor who will explain to the student the consequences for making progress toward meeting graduation requirements.
- The student is responsible for contacting the billing department regarding billing questions, and the Financial Aid Office regarding financial aid questions.
- ***If the student wishes to drop below the approved reduced course load at any time during the semester after the add/drop deadline, the student will need to follow regular withdrawal policies. Billing and financial aid will not be retroactively adjusted for such course withdrawals.***
- If a student's application for reduced load status is denied, the student may appeal the decision through the standard appeal procedures outlined on the OAS website.

REDUCED COURSE LOAD APPROVAL FORM

_____ has a documented disability that has been reviewed by the Director of Accessibility Services. The Director has reviewed the impact of the disability in the context of the student's proposed schedule and determined that a reduced course load is a reasonable accommodation under Section 504 and/or the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The student will register for the following number of credits during the current semester. _____

If the student carries at least 8 credits, the accommodated course load will be treated as the student's minimum course credit load for full-time status.

I acknowledge that I have read the Reduced Course Load Policy, and understand the potential impact of taking a reduced load on making sufficient progress toward meeting graduation requirements, billing, and financial aid. *Furthermore, I understand that I must be actively registered with the Office of Accessibility Services each semester in order to continue with reduced course load status and maintain eligibility for institutional aid and housing in Goucher residence halls.*

Student Signature

Date

Director of Accessibility Services

Date

Student Advisor

Date

- Cc: Bursar
Registrar
Financial Aid
Athletics (if applicable)
International Student Advisor (if applicable)
Director of Residential Life
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies
Director of Payroll
Assistant Director of Career Development for Student Employment