BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC | **BOSTON CONSERVATORY at BERKLEE** | INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES
921 Boylston Street, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA | 617-747-6600 | ISS@berklee.edu

HOW TO REQUEST A REDUCED COURSE LOAD ACCOMMODATION OR A MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE DUE TO HEALTH REASONS

International students in F-1 status are normally required to enroll in a full-time course load in order to maintain their status. However, students may study part-time ("Medical Reduced Course Load") or take a leave of absence ("Medical Leave of Absence") if they have a documented health-related reason, including physical and mental health.

Follow the steps below to request a reduced course load accommodation (part-time enrollment) or medical leave of absence due to a medical/psychological reason. F-1 students must meet F-1 regulations: 8 CFR 214.2 (f)(b)(iii)(B).

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Approval for a medical leave of absence or medical reduced course load is valid for one semester at a time.
- If you need this benefit for more than one semester, you must request it for each individual semester.
- For the purpose of maintaining your F-1 status, an approved semester with a medical reduced course load or medical leave of absence counts as if you were enrolled full-time for that semester. For example, if you have an approved leave of absence during the Spring semester, you may still have a summer vacation semester before being required to enroll again in the Fall semester.
- I-20 authorization for medical reduced course loads or medical leaves of absence are limited to a total of 365 days (approximately three semesters) while in F-1 status.
- Requesting medical part-time or a medical leave of absence requires that you obtain documentation from a qualified doctor. F-1 regulations require that your doctor have a valid U.S. license and be either a **medical doctor** (M.D.), **psychiatrist** (M.D.), **doctor of osteopathy** (D.O.), **licensed psychologist** (LP), or **licensed clinical psychologist** (LCP). This requirement is determined not by Berklee but by the U.S. federal government. Students being treated by another kind of healthcare provider should inquire with that provider about whether a qualifying supervisor could co-sign their letter to align with the government's requirements.
- Berklee Case Management Services can help connect students with relevant healthcare provider information.
- There are different processes which students need to follow depending on when the request for a reduced course load is made (whether before or after the course add/drop deadline) and whether they will enroll in some courses or no courses. Carefully review the information below regarding the following scenarios:

Scenario 1: Requesting MEDICAL PART-TIME ENROLLMENT *BEFORE* THE ADD/DROP DEADLINE

If a medical part-time semester is authorized before the semester add/drop deadline, you may be billed at the part-time tuition rate for that semester. Request a reduced course load accommodation with **Accessibility Resources for Students** (ARS). You will need to register with ARS and submit a medical letter that meets the F-1 regulations listed in step 2 below. ARS will forward the approved accommodation request to ISS for I-20 authorization. To register with Accessibility Resources, go to www.berklee.edu/accessibility-resources and click on the *My Accessibility Portal* link.

You do not necessarily *have* to meet with International Student Services (ISS) to request a reduced course load accommodation (part-time semester) before the add/drop deadline. The entire process could be handled through ARS, though you are certainly welcome to speak with ISS to discuss any questions you may have.

STEP 1: Meet with your doctor to discuss the need for a reduced course load accommodation. F-1 regulations require that your doctor have a valid U.S. license and be either a **medical doctor** (M.D.), **psychiatrist** (M.D.), **doctor of osteopathy** (D.O.), **licensed psychologist** (LP), or **licensed clinical psychologist** (LCP). Letters from other types of healthcare practitioners cannot be used. This requirement is determined not by Berklee but by the U.S. federal government.

STEP 2: Request a letter from your doctor if they determine you would benefit from a reduced course load accommodation. Show this instruction sheet to your doctor to ensure the letter includes all of the information below:

- The letter must be printed/written on official stationery from the doctor's office or hospital/clinic
- Include the semester (fall, spring, summer) and year for which you are requesting an accommodation
- Statement that your health situation warrants a reduced course load accommodation
- Signature of the doctor (ink/digital)
- The doctor's U.S. medical license number *(not the NPI number)*

STEP 3: Schedule an in-person or virtual appointment with ARS to request a reduced course load accommodation: berklee.edu/accessibility-resources/appointments.

You must submit your doctor's letter to ARS through one of the methods below:

- You can bring the original letter with you when you meet with ARS.
- Your doctor can email a PDF of their original letter from their office email account to ARS at accessibilityresources@berklee.edu or fax it to 617-747-2091; or
- Your doctor can mail the original letter to: Berklee ARS, 1140 Boylston St, MS-939-RT, Boston, MA, 02215

STEP 4: After meeting with you and reviewing your doctor's letter, ARS will contact ISS with the status of your request. Then, ISS will approve part-time after we receive the notification, and a new I-20 with part-time authorization will be issued. *You do not need to complete the ISS part-time enrollment request form.*

Scenario 2: Requesting MEDICAL PART-TIME ENROLLMENT *AFTER* THE ADD/DROP DEADLINE

If a medical part-time semester is authorized *after* the semester add/drop deadline, you will still be maintaining your F-1 status for immigration purposes but you will not receive a refund for the full-time tuition rate that you have been charged. In this case, you will not need to meet with Accessibility Resources for Students (ARS) but should directly contact ISS.

STEP 1: Meet with your doctor to discuss the need for a reduced course load accommodation. F-1 regulations require that your doctor have a valid U.S. license and be either a **medical doctor** (M.D.), **psychiatrist** (M.D.), **doctor of osteopathy** (D.O.), **licensed psychologist** (LP), or **licensed clinical psychologist** (LCP). Letters from other types of healthcare practitioners cannot be used. This requirement is determined not by Berklee but by the U.S. federal government. Students being treated by another kind of healthcare provider should inquire with that provider about whether a qualifying supervisor could co-sign their letter to align with the government's requirements.

STEP 2: Request a letter from your doctor if they determine you would benefit from a reduced course load accommodation. Show this instruction sheet to your doctor to ensure the letter includes all of the information below:

- The letter must be printed/written on official stationery from the doctor's office or hospital/clinic
- Include the semester (fall, spring, summer) and year for which you are requesting a reduced course load accommodation
- Statement that your health situation warrants a reduced course load accommodation
- Signature of the doctor (ink/digital)
- The doctor's U.S. medical license number *(not the NPI number)*

STEP 3: Arrange for your doctor's letter to be sent to Berklee ISS.

You must submit your doctor's letter to Berklee ISS through one of the methods below:

- You can bring the original letter to our office during a scheduled meeting with ISS.
- Your doctor can email a PDF of their original letter from their office email account to Berklee ISS at ISS@berklee.edu
- Your doctor can mail the original letter to the following address:
  Berklee International Student Services, 1140 Boylston St, MS-939-ISS, Boston, MA, 02215

STEP 4: After reviewing your doctor's letter, ISS will confirm that it meets the U.S. government's regulations and will then approve part-time enrollment for the duration of the semester. An updated I-20 with part-time authorization will be issued. *You do not need to complete the ISS part-time enrollment request form.*

Remember that medical part-time authorizations must be requested for each semester and will not carry over automatically. If your need for part-time enrollment extends beyond the first semester for which you requested it, you will need to complete the aforementioned steps again to request another semester.

Scenario 3: Requesting a MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE (enrollment in no courses)

If you need to take a medical leave of absence, and will not be enrolled in any courses during a specific semester, you are advised to complete the process *before* the start of the semester. If you determine that you must start a medical leave of absence and withdraw from all courses after a semester has begun, you may be entitled to a partial refund of tuition according to Berklee's published refunds and withdrawal policies.

STEP 1: Meet with your doctor to discuss the need for a medical leave of absence. F-1 regulations require that your doctor have a valid U.S. license and be either a **medical doctor** (M.D.), **psychiatrist** (M.D.), **doctor of osteopathy** (D.O.), **licensed psychologist** (LP), or **licensed clinical psychologist** (LCP). Letters from other types of healthcare practitioners cannot be used. This requirement is determined not by Berklee but by the U.S. federal government. Students being treated by another kind of healthcare provider should inquire with that provider about whether a qualifying supervisor could co-sign their letter to align with the government's requirements.

STEP 2: Request a letter from your doctor if they determine you would benefit from a medical leave of absence. Show this instruction sheet to your doctor to ensure the letter includes all of the information below:

- The letter must be printed/written on official stationery from the doctor's office or hospital/clinic
- Include the semester (fall, spring, summer) and year for which you are requesting a medical leave of absence
- Statement that your health situation warrants a medical leave of absence
- Signature of the doctor (ink/digital)
- The doctor's U.S. medical license number *(not the NPI number)*

STEP 3: Arrange for your doctor's letter to be sent to Berklee ISS.

You must submit your doctor's letter to Berklee ISS through one of the methods below:

- You can bring the original letter to our office during a scheduled meeting with ISS.
- Your doctor can email a PDF of their original letter from their office email account to Berklee ISS at ISS@berklee.edu
- Your doctor can mail the original letter to the following address:
  Berklee International Student Services, 1140 Boylston St, MS-939-ISS, Boston, MA, 02215

STEP 4: After reviewing your doctor's letter, ISS will confirm that it meets the U.S. government's regulations and will then approve the leave of absence for the duration of the semester. An updated I-20 will be issued noting the approval to drop below full-time enrollment during that specific semester.

STEP 5: Once your medical leave of absence has been approved, please adjust your course enrollments following the appropriate procedures.

STEP 6: Before course registration opens for the next semester in which you will enroll, submit the Returning Student Intent Form to the Berklee Registrar so that you are assigned a course registration time for the upcoming semester. Because you will have correctly requested a medical leave of absence for the semester, you will have been maintaining your F-1 status and therefore will not need to request a new I-20.

Remember that medical leaves of absence must be requested for each semester and will not carry over automatically. If your leave of absence extends beyond the first semester for which you requested it, you will need to complete the aforementioned steps again to request another semester and maintain your F-1 status. If you do not follow the steps above to request another leave of absence, your F-1 status will be terminated at the start of the next semester in which you were required to enroll.