

**8 C.F.R. § 214.2(m)(9) – Students in established vocational or other recognized non academic institutions, other than in language training programs**

(9) Full course of study. Successful completion of the course of study must lead to the attainment of a specific educational or vocational objective. A "full course of study" as required by section 101(a)(15)(M)(i) of the Act means --

(i) Study at a community college or junior college, certified by a school official to consist of at least twelve semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term in those institutions using standard semester, trimester, or quarter-hour systems, where all students enrolled for a minimum of twelve semester or quarter hours are charged full-time tuition or considered full-time for other administrative purposes, or its equivalent (as determined by the district director) except when the student needs a lesser course load to complete the course of study during the current term;

(ii) Study at a postsecondary vocational or business school, other than in a language training program except as provided in § 214.3(a)(2)(iv), which confers upon its graduates recognized associate or other degrees or has established that its credits have been and are accepted unconditionally by at least three institutions of higher learning which are either: (1) A school (or school system) owned and operated as a public educational institution by the United States or a State or political subdivision thereof; or (2) a school accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body; and which has been certified by a designated school official to consist of at least twelve hours of instruction a week, or its equivalent as determined by the district director; (Revised 10/29/93; 58 FR 58097)

(iii) Study in a vocational or other nonacademic curriculum, other than in a language training program except as provided in Sec. 214.3(a)(2)(iv), certified by a designated school official to consist of at least eighteen clock hours of attendance a week if the dominant part of the course of study consists of classroom instruction, or at least twenty-two clock hours a week if the dominant part of the course of study consists of shop or laboratory work; or

(iv) Study in a vocational or other nonacademic high school curriculum, certified by a designated school official to consist of class attendance for not less than the minimum number of hours a week prescribed by the school for normal progress towards graduation.

(v) On-line courses/distance education programs. No on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward an M-1 student's full course of study requirement if such classes do not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. (Added effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

(vi) Reduced course load. The designated school official may authorize an M-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study only where the student has been compelled by illness or a medical condition that has been documented by a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist, to interrupt or reduce his or her course of study. A DSO may

not authorize a reduced course load for more than an aggregate of 5 months per course of study. An M-1 student previously authorized to drop below a full course of study due to illness or medical condition for an aggregate of 5 months, may not be authorized by the DSO to reduce his or her course load on subsequent occasions during his or her particular course of study. (Paragraph (m)(9)(vi) added effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

(A) Non-SEVIS schools. A DSO must report any student who has been authorized by the DSO to carry a reduced course load. Within 21 days of the authorization, the DSO must send a photocopy of the student's Form I-20 to the Service's data processing center indicating the date that authorization was granted. The DSO must also report to the Service's data processing center when the student has resumed a full course of study, no more than 21 days from the date the student resumed a full course of study. In this case, the DSO must submit a photocopy of the student's Form I-20 indicating the date that a full course of study was resumed, with a new program end date.

(B) SEVIS reporting. In order for a student to be authorized to drop below a full course of study, the DSO must update SEVIS prior to the student reducing his or her course load. The DSO must update SEVIS with the date, reason for authorization, and the start date of the next term or session. The DSO must also notify SEVIS within 21 days of the student's commencement of a full course of study.

<http://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-11261/0-0-0-17197/0-0-0-19221.html> (Accessed 10/16/2012)