Here you can find information about reducing your study load as a UNSW International Student.

Requirements

As an International Student visa holder you must complete your program within the duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). Usually this requires you to enrol in a full time study load (24 units of credit) per semester, until the completion of your program. For further information about this refer to the National Code Part D: ESOS standard 9

Reducing your study load may impact on your ability to complete your program within the duration specified in your CoE. UNSW can only issue a new CoE in limited and exceptional circumstances.

You will need to seek permission from Student Development International (SDI) to reduce your study load in any semester other than your final semester. Please note in most cases you will need to provide supporting documents to verify your application.

There are potentially serious consequences to your CoE and visa when reducing your study load.

The Department of Immigration and Border Security will only allow students to extend their visa in very limited circumstances and for reasons which must be documented.

A reduced study load can be approved in the following circumstances:

1. Core course/s not available

Courses you require for your Program or Major are not offered this semester and no other reasonable options to maintain a full enrolment exist. An application to reduce your study load on these grounds will need to be supported by evidence of the lack of availability of course/s, timetable clash notice etc. and that no other suitable options are available.

2. Academic difficulties

If you have failed courses in previous semesters and are below Good Standing you may be advised by either your Academic Advisor or International Student Advisor (ISA) to reduce your study load as part of an academic intervention strategy. An application to reduce your study load on these grounds will need to be supported by evidence of academic advice to reduce your study load and an intervention strategy. A copy of the intervention strategy will need to be attached to your application and a follow up appointment with an ISA may be required to monitor your progress.

If you are at risk of failing a course in your current semester, provide evidence from course coordinator to indicate you have failed assessments.

3. Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances
Serious medical, personal or other circumstances beyond your control may have put your course progress at risk. An application to reduce your study load on these grounds will need to be supported by appropriate documentation either:
- a medical certificate identifying serious illness, disability or injury that demonstrates your inability to carry a full study load
- or a letter from a Counsellor demonstrating your inability to carry a full study load.

4. Don’t meet prerequisite requirements or program rules

Failed prerequisite course/s in previous semester which impacts on the progress of study plan.

5. Granted transfer credits and able to complete by CoE end date

6. Ahead in you program and able to complete by CoE end date

You previously studied extra courses in summer semester or by overloading.

If you reduce your study load without permission or supporting documentation throughout your degree and then require an extension to your program, you may find that UNSW denies your request for an extension and refuses to issue you with a new CoE. This will mean you will not be able to extend your student visa, and you may not be able to complete your program at the University.

How to reduce study load

If you are considering reducing your study load please complete the following steps:

Step 1: Register on the SDI consultation booking system and attend an Information Session to check if you are eligible to reduce your study load,

Step 2: Complete the Reduce Study Load Form (PDF, 195 KB, 4 pages),

Step 3: Print a copy of your academic transcript, prepare a personal statement and gather supporting documents to support your application.

Step 4: Have the form and study plan completed and signed by your Program Authority (Faculty or School Office),

Step 5: Submit your signed application and supporting documents to SDI front desk, Ground Floor, John Goodsell Building (F20).

Submit this form to Student Development International (SDI) at least 5 working days prior to census date, academic withdrawal and last day of teaching to ensure it’s processed in time.

Step 6: Outcome of your application will be notified via email to your student email.

Step 7: Update your enrolment details on myUNSW before the Census date/specific deadlines. If you do not reduce your study load on myUNSW by the University deadlines you will be required to pay for these courses and there may be academic penalties.
PLEASE BE ADVISED: Each teaching period has specific deadlines for dropping courses in your program. Please refer to Late Enrolment for what those deadlines are, and the procedures for dropping after each deadline. Academic or financial penalties may apply after deadlines.