

Title: Withdrawal Policy

Category: Academic Affairs

Responsible Cabinet Member: Provost

Purpose

To establish clear, fair and consistent procedures for students to withdraw from individual courses or from the University entirely, while maintaining the academic integrity of the institution and protecting students' records and financial responsibilities. This policy ensures that withdrawals are managed in alignment with academic calendars, support student success through defined deadlines and processes and comply with University governance standards.

Scope

This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional students enrolled in credit-bearing courses at the University of Kentucky. Graduate student withdrawals are subject to additional requirements, including continuous enrollment obligations, as outlined below.

Relationship to Professional Program Policies

Professional colleges may establish withdrawal, progression and enrollment policies necessary to satisfy accreditation, licensure or other programmatic requirements. Where such approved college policies conflict with this policy, the college policy governs only those matters specific to the professional program. University-wide administrative withdrawal processes, transcript notations and institutional reporting requirements remain governed by this policy unless expressly provided otherwise.

Definitions

- **Drop:** Removal of a course during the designated drop period with no transcript record.
- **Withdrawal:** Removal of a course after the drop period, resulting in a grade of "W."
- **University Withdrawal:** Withdrawal from all courses for a term.
- **Hardship Withdrawal:** An approved exception to standard withdrawal deadlines based on urgent non-academic circumstances. (Formerly called *Permissive Withdrawal*.)
- **Retroactive Withdrawal:** An approved withdrawal request submitted after final grades are submitted due to documented, urgent non-academic hardship. See the Retroactive Withdrawal Policy for more information on process and procedures.
- **Voluntary Medical Withdrawal:** A withdrawal administered through the Dean of Student's Office through the University's Community of Concern (CoC) Policy for a student experiencing a significant physical or mental health condition that substantially impairs the student's ability to participate in the academic environment or presents a direct and substantial risk of harm to self or others. A voluntary medical withdrawal utilizes the University's Hardship Withdrawal or Retroactive Withdrawal processes, as applicable, while an involuntary medical withdrawal is governed by the Community of Concern Medical Withdrawal Policy.
- **Involuntary Medical Withdrawal:** An administrative action initiated through the Dean of Student's Office and University's Community of Concern (CoC) when a student meets the criteria established in the University's Medical Withdrawal Policy. Involuntary Medical Withdrawals are separate from the Hardship Withdrawal and Retroactive Withdrawal processes and are governed exclusively by the Medical Withdrawal Policy.

- **Continuous Enrollment (Graduate Students):** A requirement of graduate program is that doctoral and thesis-based master's students remain enrolled for each academic term until degree completion, except for approved leaves. For more information on continuous enrollment, please see the related policy.

Unilateral Removal for Failure to Attend a Course (Title IV Compliance)

Applicability and Purpose: To ensure compliance with Title IV federal financial aid regulations and institutional enrollment reporting obligations, the University of Kentucky authorizes instructors to initiate removal of students who do not demonstrate academic participation at least one time during the initial enrollment period.

Conditions for Removal: If, from the first day of classes through the last day to drop a course without a W grade, a student:

- Fails to attend or demonstrate academic engagement (e.g., submitting an assignment, accessing course materials or participating in course activity); and
- Fails to notify the instructor of their intent to remain enrolled; then
- The Instructor of Record may report the student as non-attending to the University Registrar.

Result of Removal

- The student will be administratively dropped from the course.
- The student will receive a 50% refund for the dropped course.
- The course will not appear on the student's transcript.
- The action will be recorded for Title IV compliance and enrollment reporting purposes.

Appeal: Students may contact the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (OSFAS) and state that they are in the class and participating. If the instructor verifies the student's academic participation, the University will take appropriate action to correct the student's enrollment and financial aid records, as applicable.

Student-Initiated Course Withdrawals

Withdrawal Timeframe: Students may voluntarily withdraw from courses up to the completion of 70% of the term, as defined by the academic calendar. Specific dates for each term can be found on the University Registrar's website.

- Students may withdraw from individual courses through MyUK. Withdrawal from a student's final enrolled course for a term constitutes a University withdrawal and requires completion of the University withdrawal process through the Office of the Registrar.
- For graduate students, University withdrawal may require additional approvals, as it may affect continuous enrollment status.

Transcript and Financial Aid Implications

- Withdrawals with No Transcript Record (Drop Period)
 - Students who withdraw within the first three (3) weeks of a fall or spring semester (or the proportional equivalent for shorter sessions) will have the course removed from their transcript.

- These withdrawals will be recorded as course “drops” and will be reflected in institutional reporting for Title IV purposes.
- Withdrawals with a Grade of “W”
 - Students who withdraw after the drop period but before the 70% withdrawal deadline will receive a grade of “W.”
 - The “W” will appear on the transcript but is neutral and non-punitive; a “W” will not impact GPA.
 - However, “W”’s are factored into Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) calculations and must be reported under federal financial aid guidelines.
 - For graduate students, grades of “W” do not affect GPA but may affect satisfactory academic progress, time-to-degree calculations, assistantship eligibility and visa status. Students are responsible for consulting the relevant offices regarding these implications.

Hardship Withdrawals (formerly Permissive Withdrawals): A student may withdraw from a class, or from the university, after the withdrawal period (as identified on the Academic Calendar) until the last day of classes for the academic term, so long as grades have not been issued for the course. The “last day of classes” referred to the date published on the academic calendar, not the last day the course met.

- A hardship withdrawal requires the approval of the dean of the student’s college, or dean’s delegate, based on a petition certifying urgent non-academic reasons. Before acting on such a petition, the respective dean will consult with the Instructor of Record of the class. If the dean of the student’s college approves such a petition, the dean shall inform the Instructor of Record of their action. The student shall be assigned a grade of “W.”
- Urgent non-academic reasons may include but are not limited to:
 - Illness or injury of the student.
 - Serious personal or family problems.
 - Serious financial difficulties.
 - Having excused absences for the dates and times associated with more than one-fifth of the required interactions in a course.

Withdrawal due to Military Service: Students who withdraw and enter the armed services, either mandatorily or voluntarily, after completing the twelfth week of a fall or spring semester, the ninth (9th) week of the summer session or later (or a proportionate amount of time in a summer part of term class or summer session), shall be entitled to receive full credit and residence for the course(s). The grade report shall be what was attained in the course up to the time of withdrawal. If, with the credit and residence time granted, the student has fulfilled all requirements for a degree, the student shall be recommended for that degree by the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. If a comprehensive course examination is required for graduation, this requirement shall be waived.

Retroactive Withdrawal: These are appeals to withdraw which are initiated by the student after the last day of classes for a semester, for which a student has suffered an urgent non-academic hardship. (Please see Retroactive Withdrawal Policy for more information on process and procedures.)

Medical Withdrawal (Voluntary and Involuntary): Voluntary Medical Withdrawals are initiated by the student with the Dean of Student’s Office or, for Involuntary Medical Withdrawals, determined by the Involuntary Medical Withdrawal Committee (IMW), a subset of the Community of Concern (COC) team. Please see the Community of Concern Policy and Medical Withdrawal Policy for more information on process and procedure.

Important Notes: Withdrawals may affect academic standing, satisfactory academic progress, eligibility for financial aid, assistantships, and degree progression. Students are responsible for understanding these implications and are encouraged to consult their academic advisor, the International Center and/or the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships as applicable.