Higher Education Withdrawal without Financial Penalty in Special Circumstances Guidelines

Policy Code: FN1350

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What do I need to demonstrate in order to be withdrawn without financial penalty?

To be withdrawn without financial penalty from a course/courses within a nominated term, you must be able to demonstrate, with independent supporting documentation, that:

1. **Due to special circumstances, you were unable to complete your course requirements;**
   i.e. you were unable to:
   a. undertake the necessary study required, attend sufficient lectures or tutorials, or meet other compulsory attendance requirements in order to meet your compulsory course requirements; or
   b. complete the required assessable work; or
   c. sit the required examinations, or complete any other course requirements because of your inability to meet i, ii or iii.
   AND

2. **Those special circumstances did not make their full impact until after the last date to withdraw without penalty as published by the University.** i.e. your circumstances occur:
   a. before the last date to withdraw without penalty, but worsen after that day; or
   b. before the last date to drop without penalty, but the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent until after that day, or
   c. on or after the last date to drop without penalty.
   AND

3. **Those special circumstances were beyond your control.**
   i.e. a situation occurs that a reasonable person would consider is not due to the person's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the person is not responsible. This situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal. A lack of knowledge or understanding of the University's policies, fee schedules and calendars is not considered to be beyond a person's control.
What are special circumstances?

Special circumstances may include:

**Medical reasons**

**Example 1**: You have a medical condition that existed prior to the last date to drop without penalty, continued past that date, and deteriorated to the extent that you were unable to continue your studies.

**Example 2**: Your medical condition only became known after the last date to drop without penalty and it was such that you were unable to continue with your studies.

You will need to supply a medical certificate to substantiate your claims.

**Family / personal reasons**

Due to unforeseen personal/family reasons that occur or worsen after the last date to drop without penalty and that are beyond your control, you are unable to continue with your studies.

**Example 1**: A member of your family suffers from a severe medical condition and, after the last date to drop without penalty, you are required to provide full time care. As a result, you are unable to continue with your studies.

**Example 2**: A member of your family or close friend dies and you are affected to the extent that, after the last date to drop without penalty, you realise that you are unable to continue with your studies.

**Example 3**: You or your family's financial circumstances change unexpectedly after the last date to drop without penalty to the extent that you are unable to continue with your studies.

You will need to supply documentation from, for example, a family doctor or counsellor, to substantiate your claims.

**Employment related reasons**

After the last date to drop without penalty, your employment status or arrangements change unexpectedly due to circumstances **beyond your control**, and you are unable to complete your studies.

**Example 1**: You are employed out of necessity and studying. After the last date to drop without penalty, your employer unexpectedly increases your hours of employment in circumstances where you are unable to object. As a result you are unable to continue with your studies or complete your course requirements.

**Example 2**: You are employed out of necessity and studying. After the last date to drop without penalty, your employer directs that you be transferred to a different state. Your institution does not offer distance education and as a result, you are unable to continue with your studies or complete your course requirements.

**Note**: Choosing to increase your hours of work or undertake additional employment is **not** regarded as circumstances beyond your control.

You will need to supply a letter from your employer to substantiate your claims.

**Course related reasons**

Your institution changes the arrangements for your unit or course and, as a result, you are disadvantaged to the extent that you are unable to complete the requirements of the course.
Example 1: Your institution cancels your unit or course after the last date to drop without penalty and, as a result, you are unable to complete the requirements of the unit or course.

Example 2: You enrol in a unit, having applied for credit towards the units previously undertaken at another institution, and are not advised of the decision for credit by your institution until after the last date to drop without penalty.

You will need to supply supporting documentation from your institution to substantiate your claims.

What supporting documentation will I need to provide?

It is most important that you provide independent supporting documentation to support your claims. It is not sufficient to provide only a personal statement outlining your special circumstances.

Depending on your reason for applying for withdrawal without penalty you will need to provide a statement from a doctor, counsellor, your employer, or your institution to verify your claims.

Letters from a family member or other students will not be considered independent.

Independent supporting documentation must be signed and preferably be on printed letterhead. A letter from a doctor that does not identify that doctor's medical provider number will not be accepted. A document witnessed by a Justice of the Peace must have that person's full details for identification purposes with the Department of Justice, if necessary.

Supporting documentation should indicate:

- that your circumstances were beyond your control;
- that the circumstances did not make their full impact on you until on or after the last date to drop without penalty for the course;
- when it became apparent after the last date to drop without penalty that you could not continue with your study; or
- how your circumstances prevented you from withdrawing from your study before the last date to drop without penalty.