

Interim Policy on Retroactive Withdrawal

University of Arizona

Effective Date: January 9, 2013, applicable for students admitted to the University of Arizona for fall 2012.

Current Academic Policy on Retroactive Withdrawal

“Retroactive Withdrawal

Under appropriate circumstances a student may petition for withdrawal after completion of classes for a term. If the student has experienced severe physical or psychological stress of such nature as to prevent satisfactory completion of course work in the semester or term in question, the student may petition for retroactive withdrawal for all courses taken that semester or term. This petition must be accompanied by adequate documentation and filed with the dean of the student’s college.”

Reasons to change the existing policy:

- 1) The existing policy permits retroactive withdrawal only for medical reasons. The University needs a broader policy that permits retroactive withdrawal based on medical, disability and other legitimate reasons, including fulfilling the University’s nondiscrimination, anti-harassment and Title IX obligations.
- 2) Bring the policy more in line with legal and ethical practices, which include members of the health professions in the decision-making process when medical or other matters involving a student’s health and well-being constitute a basis for the request.
- 3) Maintain the student’s privacy interests when his or her request for a withdrawal involves medical, disability, psychological or equity reasons.
- 4) Bring the policy more in line with current University practice and policies used by peer institutions.
- 5) The one year time limit was added because it is often difficult to get all the necessary signatures and records to fulfill the petition requirements beyond one year.

Interim Policy on Retroactive Withdrawal

Policy

Under appropriate circumstances, students may petition for a complete retroactive withdrawal from all classes for a previous semester, and may, in rare circumstances, consider a petition for partial retroactive withdrawal.

Students may petition for a complete retroactive withdrawal based on either **Extenuating Circumstances** (Retroactive Withdrawal for Extenuating Circumstances), or for **Other Reasons** that do not rise to that level (General Retroactive Withdrawal). **Neither unsatisfactory performance alone nor failure to take action within published deadlines constitutes an adequate reason for any type of retroactive withdrawal.**

The time limit for filing a petition for a retroactive withdrawal either for **Extenuating Circumstances** or **Other Reasons** is typically **one year** from the last day of class of the semester for which the retroactive withdrawal is sought. If a student demonstrates good cause for being unable to file a petition within this **one year** period, then the time period may be extended. If a petition for retroactive withdrawal is approved, the student will receive a **W** for all classes to which the retroactive withdrawal relates during the semester for which the student sought the withdrawal.

Retroactive Withdrawal for Extenuating Circumstances

Students may petition for a complete retroactive withdrawal from all classes in a previous semester, based upon any the following, which constitute extenuating circumstances:

- a student's own physical or mental illness;
- a student's own injury;
- a student's own disability; or
- discrimination or harassment, as defined by the University's Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy.

Procedures for Filing a Petition for Retroactive Withdrawal Based on Extenuating Circumstances (Student's Own Physical or Mental Illness or Injury or Disability)

Student's Obligations. If a student's request for a complete Retroactive Withdrawal is based on his or her own physical or mental illness or injury or disability, the student must:

1. Contact the Dean's office of his or her college(s) to obtain appropriate forms to complete the petition.
2. Complete a Retroactive Withdrawal packet, which will include:
 - The petition form
 - A copy of his or her most recent transcript printed from UAccess Student

- The instructor statement forms from each instructor for the courses listed on the petition. *In seeking these statements, students need not disclose their mental or physical health condition, nature of injury or disability to faculty members, but need only inform the faculty members that they are seeking a retroactive withdrawal based on extenuating circumstances*
 - The following information, *which will be placed in a sealed envelope addressed to the Executive Director of Campus Health Service:*
 - The student's personal statement describing the nature of the student's own mental or physical illness, injury or disability, the duration of the condition, and the challenges the student faced in completing his or her coursework, and
 - Medical documentation from a licensed health care provider and/or a letter on that healthcare provider's letterhead, which includes:
 - The approximate date of onset of the mental or physical illness or injury or disability giving rise to the circumstances surrounding the request for a complete retroactive withdrawal for extenuating circumstances, and the dates through which such condition(s) continued; and
 - The general nature of the mental or physical illness or injury or disability and how and why it warrants the action sought.
3. Submit the completed Retroactive Withdrawal packet, including the sealed envelope containing supporting medical documentation addressed to Campus Health, to the General Petitions Office.

University's Obligations:

1. If the packet is not complete, the General Petitions Office will notify the student of the deficiencies, which the student must remedy before further consideration.
2. If the packet is complete, the General Petitions Office will log the petition into the system and forward the packet to the Campus Health Service.
3. Upon receipt of the completed Retroactive Withdrawal packet, designated Campus Health Service personnel will review the completed petition along with a deputized member of the General Petitions Committee and make a determination whether to grant the petition. Campus Health Service also may consult with the Disability Resource Center or one of the co-chairs of the General Petitions Committee during its review. Unless the student has signed a HIPAA-compliant release, a deputized member of the General Petitions Committee will not be privy to any confidential medical documentation provided to the Campus Health Service.
4. Campus Health Service will send written notification of the decision to the student, the student's college(s), the General Petitions Committee and the Registrar, but will not include any medical documentation in its communications with these individuals.
5. The petition and all other supporting documentation, with the exception of medical documentation, which will be retained at Campus Health Service, will be returned to the Registrar for processing and archiving.

Procedures for filing a Petition for Retroactive Withdrawal for Extenuating Circumstances (Institutional Equity)

Student's Obligations. If a student's request for a complete retroactive withdrawal is based on issues related to discrimination or harassment as defined in the University's Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy, the student must:

1. Contact the Office of Institutional Equity.
2. Complete a petition, along with any accompanying documentation the Office of Institutional Equity requests.

University's Obligations.

1. The Office of Institutional Equity will review the student's documentation and make a determination whether the circumstances surrounding the request for complete retroactive withdrawal warrant such withdrawal.
2. If, after review, the Office of Institutional Equity determines that the basis for the request does not involve matters over which it has jurisdiction, the Office of Institutional Equity may refer the student to his or her Dean's office to file a petition on some other basis.
3. In rare circumstances, the Office of Institutional Equity will consider a request for a partial Retroactive Withdrawal and may approve such withdrawal.
4. The Office of Institutional Equity will send written notification of its decision to the student, the student's college(s), the General Petitions Committee and the Registrar, which will retain the decision in its records.

General Retroactive Withdrawal

Students may petition for a complete General Retroactive Withdrawal for other reasons, including:

- maternity or paternity;
- caring for a family member with a serious health condition;
- emergency military obligations;
- death of an immediate family member or life partner;
- being a victim of a violent crime or natural disaster;
- documented university personnel miscommunication or error; or
- other unique or unusual circumstance that may otherwise merit consideration by the General Petitions Committee.

Procedures for filing a Petition for General Retroactive Withdrawal

Student's Obligations. To obtain a General Retroactive Withdrawal, the student must complete a General Retroactive Withdrawal Packet by:

1. Obtaining a petition for Retroactive Withdrawal from the Dean's Office of his or her college(s)
2. Completing the petition
3. Obtaining a copy of the most recent transcript printed from UAccess Student
4. Obtaining the instructor statement forms from each instructor for the courses listed on the petition
5. Preparing a personal statement, which must include the reasons the student is seeking the general retroactive withdrawal, including documentation related to the stated reason(s) for the withdrawal, such as:
 - a birth certificate
 - a statement from his or her family member's health care provider documenting the family member's serious health condition
 - military documentation related to the individual's obligation to serve
 - a death certificate
 - statement from an attorney or other representative
 - police reports or
 - other documentation related to the unusual circumstances warranting consideration for complete retroactive withdrawal.
6. Submitting the completed General Retroactive Withdrawal Packet to the Dean of his or her college(s) for signature.

University's Obligations.

1. Upon receipt of the completed General Retroactive Withdrawal Packet, the Dean(s) will forward the General Retroactive Withdrawal Packet to the General Petitions Office.
2. If the application is incomplete, the General Petitions Office will notify the student of the deficiencies and return the petition packet to the student for completion.
3. If the packet is complete, the petition will be logged into the system and forwarded to the General Petitions Committee for consideration.
4. The General Petitions Committee will review the petition and accompanying documentation and make a determination whether to grant the petition.
5. The General Petitions Office will send written notification to the Registrar of its final decision, along with the Petition and all accompanying materials.
6. The Registrar will review the decision and notify the General Petitions Office if any changes to the decision should be considered.
7. The Registrar will retain the Petition, as well as all accompanying documentation, for processing and archiving.
8. The General Petitions Office will notify the student and the student's college(s) of the decision.