

3/15/2022

To: APC, Graduate Council, and Priorities and Planning

RE: Course Withdrawal/College Withdrawal Policy Update

From: Rameen Mohammadi, Associate Deans, Assistant Dean of EL, The Dean of Students

The current policies regarding course withdrawal and College Withdrawal at both the undergraduate and graduate levels require students to present documentation to the appropriate Dean's office in support of requests made after the ninth week of instruction in a regular semester. At Oswego, this policy dates back, in basically the same form, to at least 1980 (the oldest catalog we were able to inspect*). Although we have been unable to trace the specific rationale of the Documented Late Course Withdrawal policy, we suspect that the primary consideration was to emphasize student self-reliance in monitoring their academic progress.

We contend that it is out of step with the current administrative processes that deal with student academic progress. Our position is that a student should be able to leave a course without the concern of a failing grade, irrespective of the timing. Putting in place impediments to a more open withdrawal policy has many consequences for both students and staff.

Negative consequences of this policy for students:

- If a student would be best advised to resign from a class to concentrate efforts in other classes, being stuck in that class for lack of appropriate documentation constitutes an additional source of strain.
- If a student seeks to resign from a class due to an incident of interpersonal or sexual violence, or other highly personal situations, a system in which they must document these incidents reduces the likelihood that the student will request the withdrawal, instead absorbing the failing grade and adding to academic issues. It can take months or more for a student in such a situation to come forward and discuss it, and the current policy has no provision for that.
- The current policy does not include mention of financial liability students may have when withdrawing from a course. This is an important piece of information in making a well-informed decision. By the fifth week of classes students are 100% liable for the tuition associated with a course from which they withdraw. This is particularly important for graduate students.

Negative consequences of this policy for staff:

- Handling sensitive personal (especially medical) documentation puts faculty and staff in legally questionable situations. Staff (largely the Associate Deans) tasked with fact-checking medical documentation are being asked to make judgments outside their expertise. As well, health care providers cannot generally respond to even simple inquiries

regarding patients, so the process of verifying documentary evidence frequently cannot be concluded objectively.

We recognize that although a W grade can mitigate GPA damage, it has financial aid and degree completion consequences. These need to be the topic of discussion between student and advisor.

We recommend, then, that the policy be revised in two ways:

First, we propose the withdrawal deadline move from the end of the ninth week of instruction to the end of the last day of instruction in a fall or spring semester.

Second, we propose a modification to the approval structure of a withdrawal request. Previously, instructors were requested to approve withdrawals (regular and late), although this was effectively just informational. We will still need the last date of attendance from the instructor for the student withdrawing. Our current system notifies instructors automatically when the withdrawal process concludes, which was not the case when the current policy originated. It is imperative that the student's academic advisor, who has the greatest knowledge of individual circumstances and needs, be involved in this process. The Associate Deans will ensure that students are informed of the implication of a course withdrawal.

Change to the Course Withdrawal Policy will also affect the College Withdrawal policy. By removing the reference to the Documented Course Withdrawal Policy, students will in effect be able to request to withdraw from college until the last day of classes without documentation.

The proposed policies require a clear definition for the Last Date of Attendance (LDA). We have used the Federal Government's definition for what constitutes attendance, which includes guidance for online courses as well.

** In researching this matter, we examined existing withdrawal policies at other institutions. Among 14 SUNY institutions investigated, most have a similar late withdrawal process that operates from week 9-12 of the semester. Within SUNY, only Geneseo was found to have an open withdrawal policy that goes until the last day of instruction. Interestingly, Ivy League institutions appear evenly split between those with open withdrawal policies and those resembling the current Oswego policy.*

Policy on Course Withdrawal (Undergraduate)

Current-Undergraduate Catalog (2021-2022)	Proposed
<p style="text-align: center;">Course Withdrawal Policy</p> <p>A student may withdraw from a course in either the fall semester or the spring semester, after the end of the fifteenth day of instruction through the end of the last class day of the ninth week (excluding Spring Break). The student must complete a Course Withdrawal Form, which must be signed by the course instructor and have the signature of the dean of the school or college of the student’s major. Once the request is approved by the dean, the student must submit the completed form to the Registrar’s Office by the published withdrawal date. Appropriate fee(s) will be assessed.</p> <p>A grade of W will be assigned when a student withdraws from a course. This grade is not used to calculate a GPA. The hours are counted as hours for which the student was enrolled that semester, but no credit is earned for the course.</p> <p>Documented Late Course Withdrawal Policy</p> <p>If a student believes that his or her circumstances are extraordinary (poor performance in a course is not an extraordinary circumstance), a student may petition for late withdrawal from a</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Course Withdrawal Policy</p> <p>A student may withdraw from a course, in either the fall semester or the spring semester, after the end of the fifteenth day of instruction through the end of the last class day of instruction. The student must complete a Course Withdrawal form. The last date of attendance (LDA) will be provided by the course instructor and then the withdrawal must be approved by the student’s primary advisor and the dean of the school or college of the student’s major.</p> <p>For non-degree students, the withdrawal approval is done by the Dean of Extended Learning; these students do not have an assigned advisor.</p> <p>Appropriate fee(s) will be assessed.</p> <p>A grade of W will be assigned when a student withdraws from a course. This grade is not used in the calculation of GPA. The hours are counted as hours for which the student was enrolled that semester (i.e., attempted hours), but no credit is earned for the course.</p>

course after the end of the last class day of the ninth week (excluding Spring Break) in either the fall semester or the spring semester through the last day of classes/instruction for the respective semester. In order for a documented late course withdrawal to be approved, the student must provide documentation of extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control, and these circumstances must have occurred after the end of the last class day of the ninth week in either the fall semester or the spring semester (excluding Spring Break) through the last day of classes/instruction for the respective semester. Examples of acceptable extenuating circumstances are a change of employment hours that make class attendance impossible, a major illness or death in the immediate family, or the student's own major illness or injury.

The instructor of the course must indicate approval or disapproval of the late course withdrawal by signing the Late Course Withdrawal Form. Additionally, the documentation (a health care provider's verification of student illness [physical or psychological] or of major illness of immediate family member; copy of obituary, listing relationship of deceased to student, letter from student's employer) of the alleged extenuating circumstances must be received by the dean of the school or

Last Date of Attendance (LDA): Federal regulations in 34 CFR 668.22(l)(7)(i) provide guidance regarding attendance that includes information useful in establishing the LDA, including for asynchronous online courses. The date when the student engaged in any of the bulleted activities or a similar activity can be used for establishing the LDA.

- **Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;**
- **Submitting an academic assignment;**
- **Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;**
- **Attending a study group assigned by the school;**
- **Participating in an online discussion about academic matters; or**
- **Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.**

<p>college of the student's major at the time of submission of form. The appropriate dean has final authority to approve or disapprove documented late course withdrawal(s). Appropriate fee(s) will be assessed.</p> <p>A grade of W will be assigned when a student withdraws from a course. This grade is not used to calculate a GPA. The hours are counted as hours for which the student was enrolled that semester, but no credit is earned for the course.</p>	
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Policy on Course Withdrawal (Graduate)

Current-Graduate Catalog (2021-2022)	Proposed Policy
<p>Course Withdrawal Policy After the end of the fifteenth day of instruction through the end of the last class day of the ninth week in either the fall semester or the spring semester, a student may withdraw from a course in that semester by completing the appropriate form, obtaining the signature of the course instructor, and securing the signature of the dean of Graduate Studies. The student must submit the form to Graduate Studies for approval. Once the request is approved the student must submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office by the published withdrawal date.</p> <p>Appropriate fee(s) will be assessed and must be paid before processing course</p>	<p>Course Withdrawal Policy After the drop period concludes, a student may withdraw from a course in progress through the last day of instruction. Note that the drop period extends through the last day of instruction during winter and summer sessions (see Winter and Summer Session FAQs for more details about the drop process for those sessions).</p> <p>A student may initiate a withdrawal by completing the Course Withdrawal Form in myOswego. The form requires the course instructor to provide the last date of attendance (LDA) and then the withdrawal must be approved by the student's graduate advisor and the dean of the Division Graduate Studies.</p>

withdrawal and program adjustment forms after the published drop date.

A grade of W will appear on the transcript. This grade is not used to calculate a GPA, but the hours are counted as hours for which the student was enrolled that semester.

For more information, review the full Transcript Notation Policy

Late Course Withdrawal Policy

After the end of the last class day of the ninth week in either the fall semester or the spring semester through the last day of classes/instruction for the respective semester, if a student believes that the student's circumstances are extraordinary (poor performance in a course is not an extraordinary circumstance), a student may request late withdrawal from a course for documented extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control which occurred after the end of the last class day of the ninth week in either the fall semester or the spring semester through the last day of classes/instruction for the respective semester (e.g., change of employment hours, major illness or death in immediate family, student's own major illness, the onset of which occurred after the last class day of the ninth week in either fall semester or spring semester).

The instructor of the course must indicate approval or disapproval of the late course withdrawal by signing the Documented Late Course Withdrawal Form. Additionally, the documentation (e.g., a health care provider's verification of student illness [physical or

Non-matriculated students who do not have an assigned advisor will follow the same process but will not need a graduate advisor's approval. Your withdrawal date determines your tuition liability (see [Student Accounts Withdrawals and Drops](#) for details).

Appropriate fee(s) will be assessed.

A grade of W will appear on the transcript. This grade is not used to calculate a GPA, but the hours are counted as hours for which the student was enrolled that semester (**i.e., attempted hours**), but **no credit is earned for the course.**

Last Date of Attendance (LDA): Federal regulations in 34 CFR 668.22(I)(7)(i) provide clear guidance regarding attendance that includes information useful in establishing the LDA, even in the case of asynchronous online courses. The date of when the student engaged in any of the bulleted activities or a similar activity can be used for establishing the LDA.

- **Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;**
- **Submitting an academic assignment;**
- **Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;**
- **Attending a study group assigned by the school;**

<p>psychological] or of major illness of immediate family member; copy of obituary, listing relationship of deceased to student, letter from student's employer) of the alleged extenuating circumstances must be received by the dean of Graduate Studies at the time of submission of forms. The dean of Graduate Studies has final authority to approve or disapprove late course withdrawal(s).</p> <p>Appropriate fee(s) will be assessed and must be paid before processing late course withdrawal and program adjustment forms after the published drop date.</p> <p>A grade of W will appear on the transcript. This grade is not used to calculate a GPA, but the hours are counted as hours for which the student was enrolled that semester.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and ● Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.
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Impact on the College Withdrawal

The reference to the Documented Late Course Withdrawal period is no longer pertinent, so it has been removed. The Military Leave of Absence or Medical Leave of Absence are not affected by this change. There is also a proposed rewording of the paragraph on college withdrawal for non-degree and graduate students. We also wanted to highlight the significance of the role of the Dean of Students' office in ensuring that the students understand the impact of college withdrawal at the undergraduate level.

<p>Current-Undergraduate Catalog (2021-2022)</p>	<p>Proposed</p>
<p>Withdrawal during the semester (Fall/Spring):</p> <p>Matriculated (degree-seeking) Continuing Undergraduates need to contact the The Dean of Students (315-312-5483) and make appropriate arrangements for a College Withdrawal. The deadline for doing this without having to document extenuating circumstances is the same as the Course Withdrawal Period listed on the College Calendar. Withdrawal after the drop period will show on your transcript with a W grade.</p> <p>If the college withdrawal is confirmed during the semester drop period (1st three weeks of the semester), the courses will be removed from the transcript.</p> <p>If the college withdrawal is confirmed during the semester course withdrawal period, W grades will be assigned to all of the student's courses. W grades have no impact on the student's semester or cumulative grade point average.</p> <p>If the college withdrawal is confirmed during the semester Documented Late Course Withdrawal period, documentation of an extenuating circumstance, beyond the student's control, must be provided to the Dean of Students office. If approved, W grades will be assigned. If not</p>	<p>Withdrawal during the semester (Fall/Spring):</p> <p>Matriculated (degree-seeking) Undergraduates need to contact the Office of the Dean of Students (315-312-5483) and make appropriate arrangements for a College Withdrawal.</p> <p>If the college withdrawal is confirmed during the semester drop period (1st three weeks of the semester), the courses will be removed from the transcript.</p> <p>If the college withdrawal is confirmed during the semester course withdrawal period, W grades will be assigned to all of the student's courses. W grades have no impact on the student's semester or cumulative grade point average.</p> <p>Instructors will provide the last date of attendance for the student in their courses.</p> <p>The deadline to request a College Withdrawal for a particular semester is the last day of classes for that semester.</p> <p>Non-degree undergraduate students do not need to follow the college withdrawal process; they may withdraw from all of their courses. For college withdrawal by graduate students, refer to the graduate catalog.</p>

approved, the student will earn grades for the semester.

The deadline to request a College Withdrawal for a particular semester is the last day of classes for that semester.

Graduate students and non-degree Undergraduates can use the course drop/withdrawal process to drop all of their courses.

The financial implications of a college withdrawal can be significant. The student will be directed to appropriate offices to determine the impact of the college withdrawal on financial aid and financial obligations to the College.

The role of the Office of the Dean of Students in the context of college withdrawal is to ensure students understand its implications. The financial or academic impact of a college withdrawal can be significant.

Policy on College Withdrawal (Graduate)

Current-Graduate Catalog (2021-2022)	Proposed
<p>Withdrawal from the College</p> <p>A student who withdraws from the College during the end of the semester should consult with the Graduate Office to ascertain the proper procedures if the student wishes to be considered for re-entrance at a later date.</p>	<p>Withdrawal from the College</p> <p>A graduate student seeking to withdraw from the College should email the Graduate Studies Office (gradstudies@oswego.edu) to make arrangements.</p> <p>If the college withdrawal is confirmed during the semester drop period, the courses will be removed from the transcript. A grade of W will be recorded on the transcript for any courses in progress if the college withdrawal happens after the drop period concludes</p>

for the semester. Course instructors will provide the last date of attendance for the student in their courses.

A student who wishes to be considered for re-entrance at a later date should contact the Graduate Studies Office (also see Time Limit on Credit and Catalog Curricular Requirements for further details related to completing your degree after leaving the college for a period of time).