Withdrawal from Courses
Recommended By: Academic Senate
Approved: Ruben Armíñana, President
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Contact Office: Office of the Registrar
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In accordance with CSU Executive Order No. 1037, it is the policy of Sonoma State University that:

I. Dropping a Course: Students may drop a course (or courses) online and without penalty until the drop deadline (check Academic Calendar at http://www.sonoma.edu/registration/calendars/).

II. Withdrawal from a Course or Courses after the drop deadline:

A. Unit Limit for Withdrawal from Courses: Undergraduate students may withdraw from no more than 18 total semester units of coursework attempted at Sonoma State University. Withdrawals for “serious and compelling” reasons, which are documented and approved according to the procedures below, will not count toward the maximum of 18 semester units.

B. Definition of Serious and Compelling: For the purposes of withdrawal, the University defines “serious and compelling reasons” as follows:
   1. The standard of “serious and compelling” applies to situations, such as illness or accident, clearly beyond the student’s control. All situations require documentation.
   2. The following situations are typical of those for which “serious and compelling” is appropriate justification for withdrawal:
      a. An extended absence due to verifiable accident, illness, or personal problem serious enough to cause withdrawal from the university;
      b. An extended absence due to a death in the immediate family;
      c. A necessary change in employment status that interferes with the student’s ability to attend class;
      d. Errors made by SSU;
      e. Other unusual or very special cases will be considered on their merit by the University Standards Committee.
   3. The following situations DO NOT fall under the intent of “serious and compelling”:
      a. Grade anticipated in class is not sufficiently high, or student is doing failing work (including situations where the student has been penalized with a failing grade for academic dishonesty);
      b. Failure to attend class, complete assignments, or take a test;
      c. Dissatisfaction with the course material, instructional method, or instructor;
      d. Class is harder than expected;
      e. Pressure of other classes, employment, and/or participation in extracurricular activities;
      f. A change of major; g) Lack of awareness of the withdrawal process or procedures.
   4. This standard shall be available to students, faculty, and administrators online and on the Petition to Withdraw from a Course form.

C. From the drop deadline through the “last day to Drop with W” (check Academic Calendar),
   1. Students may withdraw from a course (or courses) online for any reason.
   2. Students who withdraw during this period shall receive a non-punitive grade of “W”.
   3. Withdrawing from a course (or courses) for reasons that are not “serious and compelling” will count toward the 18-unit maximum.
   4. Students withdrawing from a course or courses for “serious and compelling” reasons should file a Petition to Withdraw, accompanied by documentation, rather than withdrawing online.
   5. Students withdrawing from all courses should see Section III below (Total Withdrawal).

D. After the “last day to Drop with W” and prior to the last 20% of instruction (check Academic Calendar), students may withdraw with a “W” from a course (or courses) ONLY for “serious and compelling” reasons, which must be documented. Students must pay a fee and file a petition (available at
Admissions & Records) for each course, stating their reasons for withdrawal and providing documentation, which must accompany the petition. Students must obtain the signatures of the course instructor and the chair of the department in which the course is taught for the petition to be approved. Such withdrawals will not count against the maximum number of units in Section II, A above.

E. During the last 20% of instruction (see Academic Calendar), students may withdraw with a “W” from a course (or courses) ONLY for documented “serious and compelling reasons” clearly beyond the student’s control. Procedures are the same as for Section D above. However, for this period, the registrar has the final authority to approve or disapprove the petition. Such withdrawals will not count against the maximum number of units in Section II, A above. Note: While in many cases withdrawing from a course may be the best option, students may wish to consult with the course instructor about whether the amount of work remaining to be completed and the nature of the “serious and compelling reasons” would make an incomplete practicable.

III. Total Withdrawal
   A. During the period between the Drop Deadline and the “last day to withdraw with a W online,” a student wishing to completely withdraw from the semester (drop all courses) must complete a Withdrawal Form for each course. If the student’s reasons for dropping are “serious and compelling,” the reasons must be documented and approved. If “serious and compelling” reasons for withdrawing are documented and approved, the units will not count toward the maximum number of units in Section II, A above.
   B. During the period from the census date to the end of instruction, students wishing to completely withdraw from the semester may do so ONLY for “serious and compelling reasons,” which must be documented. As in Section II, D and E above, students must pay a fee and file a petition for each course, stating their reasons for withdrawal and providing documentation. Students must obtain the signatures of each course instructor and the chair of the department in which each course is taught for the petition to be approved. If the petition is filed during the last 20% of instruction, the Registrar has the final authority to approve or disapprove the petition. Such withdrawals will not count against the maximum number of units in Section II, A above.

IV. Retroactive Withdrawal After a given semester has ended, students may petition to retroactively withdraw from an entire semester if there are “serious and compelling” reasons for such a withdrawal. The student must file a petition, which must be accompanied by documentation of the “serious and compelling” reasons. The petition must also be supported by the student’s department advisor or by an academic advisor if the student is undeclared. The Registrar and the University Standards Committee have the final authority approve or deny such petitions. Students may withdraw from a single course retroactively if and only if there are “serious and compelling” reasons affecting a single course (such as being unable to finish a PE course due to a broken leg). Retroactive withdrawals for “serious and compelling” reasons will not count against the maximum number of units in Section II, A above.

V. Documentation
   All petitions for withdrawal after census date must be accompanied by documentation of the “serious and compelling” reasons for withdrawal. Documentation may include: verification of accident or illness (such as a letter from the treating physician or copies of medical bills); a letter from a licensed counselor; death certificate; employer verification of change of work status; PeopleSoft records; and other like documentation as appropriate.

Full policy information available at [http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/withdrawalfromcourses.htm](http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/withdrawalfromcourses.htm)