

# Retroactive Withdrawal Policy

**Subject** Student Success

**Web Link** [https://www.montana.edu/policy/retroactive\\_withdrawal/](https://www.montana.edu/policy/retroactive_withdrawal/)

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## 100.00 Introduction and Purpose

Montana State University is committed to the health, safety, and well-being of individual students and the campus community. Occasionally, students may experience situations that significantly limit their ability to function successfully or safely in their role as students. In such circumstances, students may be eligible for a retroactive withdrawal.

A retroactive withdrawal may be available for students who experienced circumstances beyond their control, such as mental or physical illness, injury, or other extraordinary circumstances, which significantly limited their ability to complete their coursework and impacted their capacity to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner.

Students requesting a retroactive withdrawal for reasons other than those specified herein should contact the Dean of Students to determine whether there are other offices that must be consulted. Graduate students seeking a retroactive withdrawal must submit their requests to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Students or former students who wish to explore retroactive withdrawal options should confer with the Dean of Students and their academic advisor. Students can discuss their situations and tentative plans with the following offices, where applicable: Disability Services, The Registrar, Financial Aid Services, Student Accounts, the Graduate School, International Programs, and Campus Civil Rights (CCR).

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as a limitation on CCR to implement remedies or interim measures in accordance with the [Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Policy](#) and [Grievance Procedures](#).

## 200.00 Nondiscrimination and Requests for Reasonable Accommodation

Consistent with its [Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy](#), Montana State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of any type of characteristic protected by applicable law in the administration of the university's programs and activities. The university is committed to providing equal access to all participants in university academic programs, services, and processes, including students with disabilities. Students with disabilities, temporary injuries, and other medical conditions should contact the [Disability Services](#) to request accommodations.

## 300.00 Retroactive Withdrawals

A retroactive withdrawal may be an option for students who were unable to complete a standard withdrawal through the Office of the Registrar or the Graduate School (if applicable), or who were unable to submit a timely leave of absence request in accordance with the Leave of Absence policy during the semester of their departure from the university. A retroactive withdrawal is an extraordinary remedy that is available at the discretion of the university and only for the reasons set forth below :

1. The student experienced a mental or physical illness or injury that significantly limited their ability to complete their coursework and impacted their capacity to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner;
2. The student was forced to leave the university abruptly due to a health or safety emergency within their immediate family, including an individual whose close association with the student is the equivalent of a family relationship and the circumstances impacted their ability to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner; or
3. The student experienced an extraordinary circumstance beyond their control that significantly limited their ability to complete their coursework and impacted their capacity to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner.

Students should be aware that earning a poor grade in a course (or courses), not being aware of deadlines, or failing to complete all the requirements of a course are not reasons to support a request for retroactive withdrawal. Students are not eligible for retroactive withdrawal for courses for which the student has been found to have engaged in academic misconduct in violation of the code of student conduct, or where the student has been granted an extension.

Retroactive withdrawals are typically granted for all courses a student was enrolled in during a term. However, a retroactive withdrawal may be granted under exceptional circumstances for individual courses where the student can clearly demonstrate why the circumstances that form the basis for the request impacted some, but not all, of the student's courses.

## 310.00 How to Apply for a Retroactive Withdrawal

To apply for a retroactive withdrawal, the student must submit a written request to the Dean of Students for undergraduate students or the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate students, that includes their name, student identification number (GID), semester

for the retroactive withdrawal requested, and the basis for the request. The student must also include supporting documentation to verify claims of illness, injury, or extraordinary circumstances which precluded the student from completing their course requirements and applying for a university withdrawal during the semester of departure. If the request is due to a medical or mental health issue, the student may be requested to provide documentation from a treating medical or mental health provider. Medical or mental health documentation, if requested, must be current or correspond to the period of time under review. If a student chooses not to provide the requested documentation or to respond within the timeframe set by the Dean of Students or the Dean of the Graduate School, an individualized assessment may proceed based on information in the Dean of Students or Dean of the Graduate School's possession at the time.

The Dean of Students or the Dean of the Graduate School may consult, as necessary and appropriate, with other university officials regarding any request for retroactive withdrawal. Retroactive withdrawal requests that are based on protected class discrimination or harassment or that contain a civil rights rationale may first be referred to Campus Civil Rights for consideration under the university's Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy. Campus Civil Rights may then provide the Dean of Students with a recommendation regarding the request for retroactive withdrawal.

The Dean of Students shall render a written decision on the request for a retroactive withdrawal after a review of the submitted written requests and other documents provided along with consultations with appropriate administrator(s), faculty, Department Head and/or college Assistant Dean. The Dean of Students shall provide the student with a copy of the decision stating whether the request is granted or denied and the basis for the decision. If the request is denied, the decision shall also include information on how the student may appeal the decision pursuant to the Appeal Process identified herein. Information regarding the withdrawal shall be made available to university officials where necessary and appropriate, such as advisors, financial aid, and the registrar, among others.

## 400.00 Appeals Process

### 410.00 Appeal from Decisions Related to Retroactive Withdrawal

#### 410.10 Undergraduate students (degree or non-degree)

Within five business days of receiving the decision of the Dean of Students, the student may submit an appeal of the decision in writing to the Vice President of Student Success

(VPSS). The written request for appeal must specify the particular substantive and/or procedural basis for the appeal and must be made on grounds other than general dissatisfaction with the decision of the Dean of Students. The review by the VPSS will be limited to the following considerations:

1. Is there any new information not previously available to the student that may change the outcome of the decision-making process?
2. Were there any procedural irregularities that materially affected the outcome of the matter to the detriment of the student (meaning the process outlined by policy was not followed)?
3. Was the decision supported by the information and documentation provided?

After reviewing the matter fully, the VPSS will issue a written decision affirming, modifying, reversing, or remanding the decision, along with the basis for the decision. The VPSS's decision shall be the final decision of the University.

#### 410.20 Graduate Students (degree or non-degree)

Within five business days of receiving the decision of the Dean of the Graduate School, the student may submit an appeal of the decision in writing to the University Provost. The written request for appeal must specify the particular substantive and/or procedural basis for the appeal and must be made on grounds other than general dissatisfaction with the decision of the Dean of the Graduate School. The review by the Provost will be limited to the following considerations:

1. Is there any new information not previously available to the student that may change the outcome of the decision-making process?
2. Were there any procedural irregularities that materially affected the outcome of the matter to the detriment of the student (meaning the process outlined by policy was not followed)?
3. Was the decision supported by the information and documentation provided?

After reviewing the matter fully, the Provost will issue a written decision affirming, modifying, reversing, or remanding the decision, along with the basis for the decision. The Provost's decision shall be the final decision of the University.

## 500.00 Tuition and Fee Refunds for a Retroactive Withdrawal

Students granted a retroactive withdrawal from the university may, at the discretion of the university, qualify for a full or partial reduction of tuition or refundable student fees for the semester. However, students may be required to repay federal financial aid previously received for the semester.

Students who receive a retroactive withdrawal will typically have a “W” reflected on their transcripts in place of any previously recorded grades. Under exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Dean of Students or the Graduate Dean, a “W” will not be noted on the transcript and the course will be removed from the transcript.

Considerations for approving or denying a partial or full reduction of tuition or refundable student fees include:

1. Whether the student experienced a mental or physical illness or injury that significantly limited their ability to complete their coursework and impacted their capacity to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner;
2. Whether the student left the university abruptly due to a health or safety emergency within their immediate family, including an individual whose close association with the student is the equivalent of a family relationship, and the circumstances impacted their ability to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner;  
or
3. Whether the student experienced an extraordinary circumstance beyond their control that significantly limited their ability to complete their coursework and impacted their capacity to withdraw or request a leave of absence in a timely manner.
4. Prior reductions or refunds of tuition or student fees due to previous approved leaves of absence or retroactive withdrawals; and
5. Other facts and circumstances the university determines are appropriate for consideration.