WITHDRAWALS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Withdrawal from a Course

A graduate student who desires to withdraw from a course may do so, with the approval of the student’s advisor or department head, during the period allowed for dropping a class. It is the student’s responsibility to review the UA Academic Calendar for the specific date by which one may drop a course.

No notation of courses attempted will be made on the permanent record of a student who withdraws from the University by the last day to add classes in a particular semester. After that, the withdrawal from a course will be noted on the student’s permanent record. It is the student’s responsibility to consult the Academic Calendar for the specific date by which one may withdraw without receiving a grade notation. From the end of that period until the end of the tenth week of a regular semester or the equivalent in a five-week summer session or three-week Interim session, a student may withdraw from a course, and a grade of “W” will be assigned. Graduate students are not permitted to drop a course after the tenth week.

In extraordinary circumstances beyond the student’s control, a student may petition the department chair to drop a course after the tenth week of class. If the department chair agrees that there are extraordinary circumstances and supports the petition, it is forwarded to the college dean. If the college dean supports the petition, it is sent to the Graduate School for approval. After the tenth week, the student’s academic status at the time of the withdrawal will be noted on the record (“W” for courses passing, “F” for courses failing).

Withdrawal from a course may affect several elements linked to registration and class loads, including (but not limited to) graduate fellowships, assistantships, tuition awards, financial aid, withholding taxes, etc. Contact all aspects of your enrollment that may be affected before dropping a course.

Withdrawal from All Courses (Withdrawal from the University)

A graduate student may withdraw from the University (i.e., withdraw from all courses in the semester), either for non-medical or medical reasons, as long as this is done prior to the last day of classes. The first thing a student considering withdrawing should do is to consult with his or her academic advisor.

It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a withdrawal through myBama and provide the information necessary to complete the withdrawal process. Academic bankruptcy (described in the Undergraduate Catalog) is not available to graduate students.

Withdrawal from the University requires approval from the Office of the University Registrar (206 Student Services Center) and Dean of the Graduate School.

After the first week of a semester, the fact and date of a withdrawal from the University will be noted on the student’s permanent record. After the tenth week, the student’s academic status at the time of withdrawal will be noted on the record with a “W” for courses passing and an “F” for courses failing.

For the different types of withdrawal, the process to initiate each one, and its impact on academic records, go to the University Registrar’s main web pages regarding withdrawal.

The University’s withdrawal policies can be found on the Student Account Services website. For complete details about the financial implications of withdrawals on tuition and other expenses, information about the impact of withdrawal on students receiving federal financial aid, and details concerning the Impact of Withdrawal on Institutional and Non-Institutional (Non-Federal only) Loans and Scholarships if no Federal Aid is Involved can be found on the Student Account Services website.

Withdrawal for Medical Reasons

Policy: The Medical Withdrawal policy of The University of Alabama establishes procedures to follow when a student suffers from a physical, emotional or psychological condition that significantly impairs their ability to function successfully or safely as a student. The policy is primarily administered by the university’s Student Health Center (SHC) according to the procedures described below.

Eligibility: Medical Withdrawals are voluntary. Eligibility for Medical Withdrawal is limited to students who have not taken a final exam or otherwise completed course work for a final grade. The SHC shall request documentation from the dean of the division in which the student is enrolled to verify that the student took no final exam(s) or otherwise completed no course work for a final grade for the semester/term in question; in addition, students are expected to affirm these conditions at the time of the request. Falsely attesting to the eligibility on the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and may result in the denial or revocation of the Medical Withdrawal.

Academic Impact: Medical Withdrawal, when approved, removes all courses for a given semester/term. Students are not allowed to medically withdraw from individual courses. The only exception to this policy occurs when parts of a term within a semester have unique start and end dates. For example the summer semester at UA includes four separate parts (Interim Term, Summer I, Summer II and full Summer Term). It would be possible, if approved, for a student to complete coursework in Summer I and to medically withdraw from Summer II. In this example, the student would not be medically withdrawn from the entire summer semester, but rather only from all of their courses for the Summer II.

Procedures: After appropriate SHC personnel have deemed a medical withdrawal request eligible for consideration, a designated SHC physician handles all medical withdrawal decisions on behalf of the university. The designated SHC physician shall make an individualized assessment before deciding to approve or deny the request and determining the effective date of the withdrawal. The designated physician’s decisions regarding Medical Withdrawal are final with no appeal rights. If approved, the SHC will notify the student and the Office of the University Registrar. Upon notification by the SHC, the University Registrar shall process the withdrawal and notify the student. If the request is denied, the SHC shall notify the student.

Medical Withdrawal Documentation

1. A student must fully and accurately complete the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal Form (forms available at www.shc.ua.edu) and send
the completed form by fax (205-348-7174) or mail to The Student Health Center, Medical Withdrawal, 750 5th Ave East, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

2. A student must have a licensed medical practitioner (physician, nurse practitioner, or mental health professional) submit a completed Licensed Practitioner Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal Form (forms available at www.shc.ua.edu) by fax (205-348-7174) or mail to The Student Health Center, Medical Withdrawal, 750 5th Ave East, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

   The licensed medical professional shall be the one who is currently treating the student for the condition(s) related to the withdrawal and is responsible for obtaining permission from the student to provide the documentation and to discuss the medical conditions, if needed, with the appropriate university personnel. If the university, in its sole discretion, determines that an extraordinary or emergency situation exists, alternative documentation may be requested and considered.

3. A student may also attach to the request form any further supportive documentation from faculty teaching the student’s currently enrolled courses, or if to support a retroactive withdrawal, from faculty who taught the student for the semester/term for which the withdrawal is requested.

4. In the event that the student’s medical condition so incapacitates the student that they cannot act on behalf of themselves, the student’s parent or legal guardian should contact the SHC at 205-348-7164 for further guidance.

Types of Medical Withdrawals

1. Regular Medical Withdrawal, within the current semester/term. A timely regular Medical Withdrawal request must be made before the close of business on the last day of classes of the semester in question.

   A timely withdrawal for the current semester requires a Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form submitted by the student and the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal form submitted by a licensed practitioner (forms available at www.shc.ua.edu). The student is encouraged to begin the medical withdrawal request process as soon as it becomes evident that a physical, emotional or psychological condition significantly impairs their ability to function successfully or safely as a student. The designated SHC physician shall determine the effective date for the medical withdrawal.

2. Retroactive Medical Withdrawal. A timely withdrawal for a previous semester must be made within six months of the end of the semester/term for which the withdrawal is requested. The student must submit the Student Request for Medical Withdrawal form and the Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal form (forms available at www.shc.ua.edu). For all approved Retroactive Medical Withdrawals, the effective date shall be the last day of classes for the semester/term in question.

Medical Withdrawal Requests submitted outside of the semester in question, and beyond the required six months deadline, must have clear, convincing and extraordinary circumstances in order for the request to be considered.

Extensive documentation (such as extended hospitalization and rehabilitation progression not met, etc.) must be submitted to the SHC and must be related to the reasons for the medical withdrawal and to the circumstances that prevented a timely request.

Handling of a Medical Withdrawal

Once a Medical Withdrawal has been approved, the withdrawal will proceed under these guidelines:

1. The Office of the University Registrar assigns a grade of “W” on the official transcript for effective dates that fall after the add/drop period for the semester.

2. All grades from the transcript are completely removed when the medical withdrawal effective date falls within the add/drop period for the semester.

3. The impact of an approved non-medical semester withdrawal (administrative withdrawal) for the same semester is addressed in the following way:

   1. If an approved non-medical withdrawal from an academic division predates the approved medical withdrawal effective date, the earlier date will be applied on the student’s official transcript by the registrar.

   2. If the approved medical withdrawal effective date pre-dates an approved non-medical withdrawal, again, the earlier date will be applied on the official transcript by the registrar.

Return to the University Following Medical Withdrawal

When the medical withdrawal is approved, a SHC representative shall contact the Office of the University Registrar to initiate a medical clearance hold on the student’s record. A medical clearance hold will remain in place until the appropriate medical documentation is received and a designated SHC physician approves release of the hold.

A student seeking to return following a medical withdrawal must provide appropriate medical documentation from a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or mental health professional who has treated the student since the effective date of medical withdrawal. This medical documentation must indicate that it is appropriate and safe for the student to resume classes at the beginning of a specified semester/term. A completed Recommendation for Return to Campus form (forms available at www.shc.ua.edu) must be submitted to the Student Health Center/Medical Withdrawal by mail (750 5th Avenue, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401) or by fax (205-348-7174).

Upon receipt of the required Recommendation for Return to Campus form and other appropriate medical documentation, a designated SHC physician, on behalf of the university and, where appropriate, in consultation with relevant university personnel, will conduct an individualized assessment of the returning student’s situation.

The assessment will include reviewing materials submitted by the student or on the student’s behalf. During the process of reviewing a student’s request to return, if at the discretion of the SHC physician, a determination is made that the information provided by a treatment provider or student is incomplete, requires further explanation or clarification, or when there is a discrepancy between the medical information provided and other available information relating to the student, the student may be required to provide additional documentation and/or grant permission to the SHC to obtain further information about the student’s current condition. In extraordinary circumstances (e.g., concern exists about the medical provider’s credentials/assessment, etc.), the student may be asked to undergo, at their expense, additional evaluation or assessment to assist with the determination about readiness to return. All steps that the SHC may initiate as part of its individualized assessment are aimed at ensuring the student is ready to resume their studies and be a successful member of the campus community.

Every effort will be made to respond to a student’s request for return within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of all requested or required materials. A longer response time may be caused by the inability to reach a student’s treatment provider, clinic closure during university holiday periods, or other extenuating circumstances.

If the decision is made to grant the student’s request to return and lift the medical clearance hold, relevant university personnel may contact
the student prior to the student's return to discuss or review a plan for sustained health. Recommendations shall include, but will not be limited to, ongoing treatment, accommodations, or other resources to help the student succeed.

If, at the discretion of the SHC physician, it is determined that the hold should remain in place because a student is not yet ready to return, the student will be advised in writing by letter or via e-mail to their university account. A student may appeal that decision by submitting an appeal letter in writing to the university's provost by email (provost@ua.edu) or fax (205-348-9137) within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the SHC physician's decision. The provost, or provost's designee, shall review the matter and make a final determination as to the student's ability to return.

If the medical clearance hold is lifted, the returning student may have additional holds on their record (e.g., conduct hold, financial hold, academic hold, etc.) that will need to be resolved through other areas of the university before the student may return. Additionally, to return, the student must meet any applicable admission and enrollment requirements of the university and of the school or college in which they wish to be enrolled.

Financial impact of Medical Withdrawals

The purpose of this policy is to provide academic relief to the student, not financial relief. Please refer to http://studentreceivables.ua.edu/withdrawal.html for the financial impact of withdrawals at different stages in the semester.

Other options for students when medical withdrawal is not appropriate

When Medical Withdrawal is not appropriate, the student is directed to the appropriate dean's office student services area for other potential options.

Questions?

Please call (205) 348-7164 for clarification or more information.

Leave of Absence

Under compelling circumstances beyond the student's control, a graduate student may request that the department petition the Graduate School with the rationale for granting a leave of absence. If granted by the Graduate School, a leave of absence will cover one or more upcoming semesters rather than any prior semester(s). A leave is not a method of avoiding continuous registration requirements, and it does not lengthen the time limit. When a student returns from a leave of absence, the Graduate School must be notified and will work with the department and student to determine the number of semesters remaining on the time limit and the degree requirements that remain.

Military Leave

The University complies with laws concerning readmission of service members.

A student who has been admitted to or enrolled in The University of Alabama Graduate School may ask for a military leave to fulfill a U.S. military obligation. The student should notify the Dean of the Graduate School of a call to military service and provide documentation. Upon return from military service, the student also should notify the Dean of the Graduate School of the intent to return to graduate school and provide documentation of honorable discharge.

A student called to active military duty, unless dishonorably discharged, and eligible for readmission as defined by law, will receive an extension of the degree time limit equal to the term of eligible service, with a cap on the number of years in the extension. The extension is subject to the 5-year limit as applicable to readmission provisions in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (Section 484C of the HEA) and implementing regulations in 34 CFR Section 668.18.