

Retroactive Withdrawal Requests

Policy

Withdrawal after the unrestricted withdrawal deadline is an exception to George Mason University policy and is only permitted for non-academic reasons. Retroactive withdrawals may be considered when there are extreme unforeseen circumstances outside of the student's control which prevented the student from withdrawing by the unrestricted withdrawal deadline and/or completing the course requirements. Requests are considered only under **exceptional** circumstances. Students may request a retroactive withdrawal after the unrestricted withdrawal deadline and up until the [degree conferral date](#) for the term, if the student experienced an extreme unforeseen medical/mental health or other emergency that prevented the student from withdrawing by the unrestricted withdrawal deadline AND prevented the student from attending and completing assignments for the course/s. Students will need to provide verifiable, third-party documentation with the request. Such documentation is required of all students submitting requests to ensure equity and fairness.

In order to receive consideration, requests for retroactive withdrawals must be submitted by close of business on the [degree conferral date](#) for the term in which the retroactive withdrawal is being requested (spring, summer, fall). Requests made after this time-frame will require a written statement detailing what prevented the student from submitting the request in a timely manner. Retroactive withdrawals are typically allowed only for all courses in a given term, unless the student is able to provide evidence and documentation of how the circumstance/s only impacted one course.

The request must be approved by the student's academic advisor and the Senior Assistant Dean of Student and Academic Affairs. Until a student receives written confirmation that their request has been approved, the student should operate under the assumption that it will be denied (i.e., the student should continue to attend class, submit assignments, consider alternatives, etc.). In some cases, approval by the Associate Provost of Graduation may also be required.

Exceptional circumstances include - but are not limited to:

1. **Medical & Mental Health Circumstances** - Requests for retroactive withdrawals due to severe medical and mental health circumstances must be supported by relevant, dated, and signed medical documentation from the student's healthcare provider. While specifics of the medical condition are not required to be reported, the documentation must indicate that a substantial medical change arose unexpectedly after the unrestricted withdrawal period has ended. If a student is seeking a partial withdrawal, the student must provide documented medical support for why the condition has only affected one course. Otherwise, only a full withdrawal from all courses in a term will be considered.

Please note that retroactive withdrawals are granted only under exceptional circumstances. If a retroactive withdrawal has previously been approved for similar circumstances, future requests based on the same or recurring issues are unlikely to be approved. Students are expected to seek support and utilize available resources during the term, rather than relying on repeated retroactive requests.

2. **Employment** - Unanticipated and unavoidable changes in employment (for example, job site relocated out-of-state) that occur after the unrestricted withdrawal deadline will be considered. These requests must be documented by the employer on company

letterhead. Uniformed service students who are called to duty should refer to the university's [Military Activation Policy](#).

Retroactive Withdrawal is Not Allowed

- To avoid an unsatisfactory grade.
- To avoid academic termination.
- If there is an open honor code or student conduct violation on record.
- To correct enrollment errors on the part of the student. Students are responsible for all courses in which they remain officially enrolled after the drop period has ended.
- For failing to know deadlines.
- To accommodate a student's faculty member preference or time preference.
- When the student has graduated: Retroactive withdrawals are not allowed for courses that have been applied to a completed degree. Once the degree has been conferred and the student has graduated, the transcript is sealed and not subject to alteration.

Requesting a Retroactive Withdrawal

1. Review all policies pertaining to non-academic retroactive withdrawals.
2. Review deadlines for retroactive withdrawals. Completed requests must be submitted by the [degree conferral date](#) in the semester in which the withdrawal is requested. Any request submitted after that date must include verifiable documentation that extreme circumstances prevented the student from meeting this deadline.
3. Reach out to your academic advisor, to request a Retroactive Drop or Withdrawal explaining the specific request and reasons. a. Included with this form should be a detailed explanation of your request and the reasons for it.
 - a. Please include a detailed explanation and the reasons for your request in writing.
 - b. All supporting documentation should also be included. Only written materials and verifiable, third-party documentation can be used to reach a decision.
4. Submit your completed request by the [degree conferral date](#) with supporting documentation to the Graduate Student Services Office in Van Metre Hall Suite 560, or by e-mail to schargss@gmu.edu.
5. Continue attending all classes in which you are officially enrolled and complete the required coursework unless you receive written approval from your academic advisor that your retroactive withdrawal request was approved. If permission is granted, you will need to confirm that there are no holds on your record for the retroactive withdrawal to be processed.

If you are granted a withdrawal, it will result in a "W" on your permanent record. The Schar School of Policy and Government does not reimburse tuition. Retroactive withdrawals are not subject to tuition reimbursement.