

Guide to Withdrawal Without Penalty

This document is to help students understand the withdrawal without penalty process. This should be read in conjunction with the [Withdrawal Without Penalty \(Coursework\) Procedure](#) / [Remission and Re-Crediting of Fees Guidelines](#).

I CANNOT COMPLETE MY STUDIES DUE TO A SERIOUS DISRUPTION, WHAT CAN I DO?

If you experienced a disruption after the census date that prevents you from studying, you may be able to apply for Withdrawal Without Academic and/or Financial Penalty.

WHAT IS WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT PENALTY?

Withdrawal Without Penalty looks to reverse any academic or financial penalties associated with an eligible withdrawal after census date. A single application is assessed for both:

- Academic Penalty – to change a Fail (F), Fail Withdrawn (FW), or Fail Absent (FA) grade to Withdrawn (W) which does not impact upon your GPA.
- Financial Penalty – to reverse the tuition fees for the impacted units.

WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA?

You will need to write a personal statement which addresses each of the criteria below. This can be attached a word document or entered into the relevant section of the [Withdrawal Without Penalty Application Form](#).

Timing : You must prove (through your evidence) that:

1. Your disruption began after the census date OR
2. Your disruption became worse after census date (which was unforeseen and uncontrollable)

Criteria : That an event or circumstance:

- a. could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided, or guarded against by the student, and
- b. was beyond the student's control, and
- c. caused substantial disruption to the student's capacity for effective study and/or the completion of required work and
- d. occurred during an event critical study period and was at least three (3) consecutive days duration, and / or
- e. prevented completion of a final examination.

For Withdrawal Without Financial Penalty Applications you need to prove the above criteria as well as:

1. That you would have passed the unit had it not been for the special circumstance
2. That the circumstance made it impractical for you to complete your studies in that unit/s at a minimum of a pass level.

Fit to Sit – Have you attempted all tasks for your unit?

The Fit to Sit model states that by completing your assessments you are declaring you are fit and able to do so. Special consideration (including Withdrawal Without Penalty) can only be granted if you can demonstrate:

- You were unfit to make reasonable judgement on your fitness to undertake the assessment, due to mental illness or other exceptional circumstances; or
- You were taken ill during the assessment (in the case of an examination or test), and this can be independently corroborated.

WHAT EVIDENCE DO I NEED?

Evidence provided must confirm the information you write in your personal statement.

Medical Evidence must:

- Be provided by a Registered Health Practitioner (<https://www.ahpra.gov.au>)
- Be written using a [Professional Authority Form](#), or on the health practitioner's letterhead
- Include the dates of consultation after the census date
- Include the date your health practitioner first recognised that you were not well enough to study
- Indicate the impact that the circumstances had on your ability to continue your studies (including impact on ability to focus, concentrate, attend classes or complete academic tasks)
- Indicate how serious the condition was after the census date (fit to study, limited ability to study, unfit to study etc)
- Include a comment in support of your application.

Non-medical evidence must include:

- What the circumstance is that is affecting your studies
- When the circumstance first began to affect your studies
- Specifically how the circumstance is affecting your ability to complete your studies (including impact on ability to attend classes, complete academic tasks etc.)
- How long the change in circumstance has lasted for
- This documentation may be from your employer, faculty/department, police, solicitor or in the form of a Statutory Declaration which *refers to independent supporting documentation*.

Check that your evidence:

- Explains the impact that an event had on your ability to study (what you could/could not do including read, write, concentrate, focus, attend classes or complete academic tasks).
- Includes the specific dates after census, during session that you were affected.
- Explains how the situation was beyond your control.
- Explains how you could not have anticipated the situation prior to the census date.
- Includes a comment in support of your application for Withdrawal Without Penalty.
- (If relevant) Includes a comment to explain why you passed some units but could not complete others in a particular session.
- Is a letter which addresses the points above. Don't submit, test results, photos, x-ray images or prescriptions as they will not be considered.

HOW DO I APPLY?

1. Write a personal statement which addresses the eligibility criteria
2. Obtain documentation
3. Use our checklist below to ensure you have addressed all relevant criteria
4. Submit an online application via the [Withdrawal Without Penalty Application Form](#)

IS THERE A DEADLINE?

An application for Withdrawal Without Penalty must be submitted **before the date for the final examination or assignment for that unit**.

In exceptional circumstances the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Registrar may approve an application submitted later, however Withdrawal Without Financial Penalty is unable to be provided after 12 months have passed. You will need to provide reasons for the delay if you do not apply before the deadline.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting an application to Withdraw Without Penalty, use the checklist below to confirm you have addressed all relevant criteria:

- ☐ Timing
 - ☐ Does your evidence explain the start date and end date of your condition?
 - ☐ Is this written as a whole date (dd/mm/yyyy), not “ongoing” or “unknown”?
 - ☐ Is the start date of your condition after the [census date](#),
or
Does your evidence explain your condition worsened after the [census date](#)?
 - ☐ Does the evidence confirm you were impacted for at least 3 days during a key part of the session, or that you were unable to complete your final exam?
- ☐ Impact
 - ☐ Does your evidence explain how the disruption impacted upon your studies?
 - ☐ Does your evidence explain why you were unable to study at all during the session?
or
Does your evidence explain why your disruption impacted upon you differently in different units?
 - ☐ Does your evidence explain how serious the disruption was?
- ☐ Performance
 - ☐ Have you checked if you were passing your assignments and attending your classes before the disruption began?
and
Have you included an explanation in your personal statement?
 - ☐ Does your evidence explain at what stage in the session you had to stop studying?
 - ☐ Does your evidence address the Fit to Sit criteria (if applicable)?
- ☐ Other Eligibility Criteria
 - ☐ Does your personal statement or evidence explain whether your disruption was able to be predicted, or whether you could have taken any action to prevent the disruption from occurring?
 - ☐ Does your personal statement or evidence explain how the disruption was beyond your control?
 - ☐ Are you submitting your application before the final exam or assignment?
or
Have you provided a reason for the delay in submitting?

WHAT IF I AM STILL HAVING TROUBLE, HOW CAN I GET HELP?

If you still require assistance with your application, complete the [Student CARE MQ Referral form](#) select “Advocacy support” as the reason for referral.



*This guide was prepared for you by the
Student Advocacy & Support Service.*

The information is correct as of June 2021



MACQUARIE
University