



Category: 2.0 Education	Responsible Owner: Academic Board	Effective Date: April 2023
Policy/Form Number: 2.7	Approval Body: Board of Governors	Policy/Form Name: Withdrawal Under Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure

A. POLICY:

PURPOSE/COMMITMENT:

Withdrawal under extenuating circumstances is a request to withdraw from classes after the normal drop date for reasons of compassion, including but not limited to mental health challenges, a medical condition or death of an immediate family member, with the intention of establishing a fair and equitable student-centred process and procedure for requesting and granting Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances. The College and its employees will treat the student with compassion, with the goal to find every possible avenue to ensure the student completes their courses or program, without compromising the academic integrity of the student's course or program.

WHEN TO USE THE POLICY:

This policy is to be used when students request withdrawal from courses outside of the normal withdrawal period. Under normal circumstances, application for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances must be made within one month after the last day of the term, unless the individual is in hospital, out of the country receiving treatment, or otherwise unable to request Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances, or participating in responsibilities, for example participating in a funeral, related to the requested Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances, with accompanying documentation.

The following is considered when applying this policy:

1. Students are expected to attend class regularly and register for a course load that they can balance with their other commitments, so as to adequately complete course and program requirements.
2. In some cases, it is recognized, this will not and cannot be the case due to extenuating circumstances, including, but not limited to mental health challenges, medical issues or family problems.
3. Withdrawal Under Extenuating Circumstances is only to be pursued if the instructor and the College are unable to accommodate the student as it would impede academic integrity or cause undue hardship. It is assumed that instructors and students have acted in good faith to mutually identify an opportunity for accommodation and the completion of the course or program in a reasonable time frame. If students are absent from class for 3 weeks or more, in most circumstances they cannot be accommodated as it would impede academic integrity.
4. For existing students, the College will endeavour to accommodate. See College 2.17 Accommodation Policy.
5. While adhering to the College 2.17 Accommodation Policy, where the student cannot be accommodated as a result of undue hardship, or the illness or other problems becomes a long-term concern, the student may

request Withdrawal Under Extenuating Circumstances from their courses if the withdrawal period has already passed.

6. Withdrawal in these circumstances, if approved, will not be subject to academic penalty.
7. Under normal circumstances, application for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances must be made within one month after the last day of the term, unless the individual is in hospital or otherwise unable to make this request in a timely manner, as considered reasonable by the VP Academic.
8. Under normal circumstances, Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances will not be granted if the student has written the final exam.
9. Students receiving Withdrawal Under Extenuating Circumstances will be permitted to re-register in instances where the issue has been resolved prior to the start of the next term, in that term. In instances where the issue is ongoing, the College may withhold re-enrollment until such time that medical documentation has been providing stating the student is fit to return to their studies.
10. The application for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances will be considered by the Director of Student Services and the VP Academic.
11. Where a student receives Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances, a letter will be produced and approved by the Manager of Counselling in Student Services, granting the student an Authorized Leave for the purposes of the Withdrawal. The letter will be provided to the student, a notation made in the transcript and a copy of the letter put in the student's permanent record.
12. Authorized Leave may only be granted once during the student's studies at Columbia College, as per government regulation, though students are permitted to apply for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances more than once.

DEFINITIONS:

AUTHORIZED LEAVE:

There are a few cases where a student may be able to take a leave of up to a maximum of 150 days from their program of studies and still be considered to be actively pursuing their studies. These are for medical reasons or pregnancy, family emergency, death or serious illness of a family member and any other type of leave Columbia College authorizes.

TIME LIMIT ON ACCOMODATION: If a student misses class for 3 weeks or more, in most circumstances they can not be accommodated.

Responsible Owner:

Academic Board

Category:

2.0 Education

B. PROCEDURES:

Person Responsible	Event/Impact	Action
Student	Unable to complete the term due to a medical, mental health or other condition.	If after the withdrawal date, the student may request Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances.

		The student must report his absence to the instructor as soon as possible. The student should also immediately inform Student Services. Email communication is considered communication.
Instructor	Is the student able to return to their studies before the end of the first week of the next term?	Must determine whether accommodation of the student is possible without compromising the academic integrity of the course being taught and undue hardship to the College. Current term only. See 2.17 College Accommodation Policy.
	Where the instructor cannot accommodate the student despite the student's ability to return to their studies.	Must outline why accommodation is not possible for the student, to Student Services. Failure to do so, will result in the expectation that the instructor will work to construct accommodation that will allow the student to complete the course or their studies. See College 2.17 Accommodation Policy and Procedure.
Director of Student Services	Approves request when it is clear that policy guidelines have been met.	Submits request for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances to VPA.
VP Academic	Approves request when it is clear that policy guidelines have been met.	Approval and communication to Director of Student Services who informs student.

1. A request for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances is to be submitted to the Director of Student Services, at the earliest possible opportunity and, under normal circumstances, no later than one month after the last day of the term, unless the individual is in hospital or otherwise unable to make this request in a timely manner, as considered reasonable by the VP Academic.
2. Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances will not be granted if the student has written the final exam, except in the circumstances detailed in #4.
3. In the case of Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances, requests received later than one month after the last day of the term or after the exam is written, will require additional documentation from a health care provider detailing why the student was unable to take the necessary steps to submit their request for Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances prior to one month after the last day of the term. Where this explanation, or the student's condition, does not obviously indicate why this was the case, the cause for their inability to follow the policy must be explained in that letter. The Director of Student Services will submit this request to the VPA for approval.
4. Accompanying documentation must be detailed and specific enough to support the student's request. The College may contact the signatory to confirm the authenticity and accuracy of the claim and the documentation.

5. The student must be enrolled at the College at the time the issue emerged.
6. Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances is considered a serious issue for those suffering from serious conditions or problems. As such, the expectation is that a student seeking Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances will most likely seek complete withdrawal from courses for the term. If accommodation cannot be reached in one course, a partial withdrawal may be considered.
7. Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances requires a significant portion of the course to be impacted as a result of medical, mental health or other issue(s). This would generally require two (2) consecutive weeks of non-attendance in all courses which can be attributed to the issue. If there are mitigating circumstances where the student did attend a class, or a portion thereof during this time, the student must explain their attendance decision, which may be taken into account when determining whether a Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances is to be considered.
8. Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances will be considered on the following grounds, when the student's ability to attend or effectively engage in the classroom, or complete assignments is significantly impacted:
 - a. Due to injury
 - b. Due to illness
 - c. Due to mental health issue
 - d. Death in the immediate family (child, spouse, father, mother, brother or sister) or extended family living in the student's household, or otherwise approved at the discretion of the VP Academic.
 - e. Other issues as deemed appropriate by the Director of Student Services in consultation with the VPA.
9. Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances requests must be accompanied by official documentation which is provided by, but not limited to:
 - a. Physician
 - b. Registered Clinical Counsellors
 - c. Psychologists or other mental health professionalsor
 - d. a recognized and credible expert (Columbia College nurse or registered counsellor)
10. The Director of Student Services will ensure that any opportunity to accommodate the student has been explored with instructors in the student's courses, understanding that events late in term, or extended absences from class, may effectively prevent accommodation. As such, the Director of Student Services may use their discretion on whether to consult with an instructor or not before forwarding to the VPA for consideration.
11. The VPA will render a decision which will be communicated to the instructor, Student Services and the student through email.

12. Appeal of a Decision:

A respondent may appeal a decision to the Principal, who will review the decision with those involved and make a final decision. The decision of the Principal is final (i.e., not subject to further appeal). Within three (3) working days, the Principal submits a formal report of the appeal to the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator. The report will describe the circumstances of the case and explain the basis on which the appeal was decided. The Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator will enter the verdict in the student's file.

13. Records Retention

Records created as a result of actions taken under the policy and these procedures shall be marked and treated as confidential.

14. **Policy 3.6 [Refund Policy](#)**: can be found at the latter link.

LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITE:
[Withdrawal under Extenuating Circumstances Application](#)
[Appeal Form](#)

REFERENCE TO EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT CLAUSES:
n/a

REFERENCE TO BYLAWS:
n/a

RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS:
n/a

RELATED POLICIES:
3.6 Refund Policy
2.17 Student Accommodation Policy and Procedure

C. APPROVALS:

IF APPLICABLE:

Chair, Academic Board	Date:
Chair, Marketing and Recruitment Committee:	Date:
Chair, Finance Committee:	Date:

APPROVAL FOR ALL POLICIES:

Responsible Owner:	Date:
Principal or Designate:	Date:
Chair, Board of Governors:	Date:

Proposed Review Date: May 2028	Dates(s) revised: November 2022	Replaces Policy/Form Number: Practices on Late Withdrawals. October 2019
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