

Office of the Dean of Students Hardship Withdrawal Information Sheet

Overview:

Hardship withdrawals may be granted to students who experience non-academic emergencies which interfere or prevent the completion of their coursework. Typically, hardships (non-academic emergencies) tend to fall into one of three categories: medical, personal, and financial. On average, seventy percent of granted hardships are medical in nature. Partial hardship withdrawals are rarely granted unless there is a compelling reason for such requests. If you are requesting a partial hardship withdrawal, you must clearly outline and explain how and/or why your non-academic emergency impacted only a portion of your studies. The Office of the Dean of Students and/or the Hardship Withdrawal Committee are very selective in granting partial hardship withdrawals.

The hardship withdrawal process is not the appropriate venue to resolve or petition academic matters (e.g. grades). Such concerns must be addressed in your respective department, school, or college. In addition, the hardship withdrawal process is not an alternative means to drop classes after the mid-point, to remove unwanted grades, or preclude resulting academic/financial aid actions (warning, probation, exclusion, etc.).

Personal Statement of Hardship:

In addition to completing a hardship withdrawal form, you are required to write a personal statement of hardship. Your statement of hardship is a narrative, your personal voice, to explain and convey your non-academic emergency to the Office of the Dean of Students and/or Hardship Withdrawal Committee. It is essential that you give accurate details about the circumstances surrounding your hardship, date(s) of the emergency, and an account of how the situation specifically prevented you from completing your coursework. In addition, you must provide official documentation that supports and is consistent with your statement of hardship.

Hardship Withdrawal Documentation Requirements

Medical (e.g., physical or psychological emergencies):

Type-written correspondence on office letterhead from a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, or any licensed healthcare professional should be submitted as part of your documentation. The letter should include the dates for which you were under the doctor's care, a statement of how your illness/condition interfered with the completion of your coursework, and the name/title/phone number of the office representative who can verify the authenticity of the letter. Notes on prescription pads, appointment slips, and/or medical consultation forms are not acceptable in lieu of a doctor's letter.

Personal (e.g., death in the family, family crisis, etc.):

All family emergencies require official and/or notarized forms, documents, or correspondence from a state agency, governmental entity, or reputable business. For example, death of a close family relative requires a death certificate and/or obituary with the name/date of the publication.

Financial (e.g., loss of sole-supporting job, head of household challenges, mandatory job changes):

Financial emergencies require the student's employer or supervisor to document the mandatory change(s), the date of the change, and the organizational representative who can verify the circumstances of the job change, preferably a human resource professional.

Hardship Withdrawal Policy:

Students may be granted hardship withdrawals when non-academic emergency situations occur which prevent them from completing their course work (e.g., severe medical problems, traumatic events/circumstances that cause them to miss numerous classes). Hardship withdrawals are subject to the *following restrictions*:

1. Students are not eligible for hardship withdrawals in any course in which they have completed the course requirements (e.g., *taking the final exam or submitting the final project*).
2. Students must initiate an application for a hardship withdrawal no later than one academic year after the semester in which the courses were taken.

Hardship status normally applies to all of your courses for the semester, but in some cases may be granted for some and not others. Students requesting a hardship withdrawal in some but not all of their courses must provide documentation to justify such a partial withdrawal.

Hardship Withdrawal Process:

All hardship withdrawal requests are submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Decisions regarding hardship withdrawals requested within the *same semester of enrollment* and prior to the administration of final examinations or final projects, shall be made, by the Dean of Students or designee on a rolling basis. The Director of Student Assistance, Dean of Students' designee, will meet with students requesting a *same semester hardship withdrawal*. The meeting provides an opportunity for the student to explain their non-academic emergency and to receive immediate assistance and/or advisement, as necessary.

Decisions regarding hardship withdrawals requested *within one academic year* after the semester in which the courses were taken shall be made by a Hardship Withdrawal Committee. The Hardship Withdrawal Committee will meet, at a minimum, once a month and during peak times twice a month. To have your case reviewed in a particular month, you must submit your information on or before the 1st Friday of the month to be reviewed.

Please Note:

- Approval of Hardship Withdrawal status does not guarantee the student a grade of "W." Whether a student receives a "W" or "WF" is the final discretion of the instructor for the course.
- The Dean of Students/Designee or Hardship Withdrawal Committee are not authorized to grant exceptions to the two restrictions above. Exception to one or both of the two restrictions requires you to complete an Application for Hardship Withdrawal Appeal. The Application for Hardship Withdrawal Appeal may be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Students.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Checklist for Hardship Withdrawal Application:

- Application for Hardship Status
- Personal Statement of Hardship
- Official Supporting Documentation

Student Success Strategies (seven proactive approaches to prevent withdrawal):

- When registering for classes for the term, consider personal responsibilities, lifestyle, and course demands in order to set a balanced and manageable schedule.
- Familiarize yourself with your syllabi so that you have a clear understanding of instructor/course expectations.
- Get in the habit of communicating with your professors; any difficulties in class or challenges outside of the classroom may be resolved/addressed by talking with your instructors about how to improve your classroom performance.
- Develop support systems with classmates.
- Be resourceful and seek assistance when needed (e.g., Counseling Center, Student Advisement, Student Support Services, African-American Student Services & Programs).
- During mid-point week, meet with your instructors, assess your academic standing in all courses, and make adjustments accordingly.
- If you have completed the majority of your course requirements and something unexpected happens, confer with your instructor about an “incomplete.”

If you would like to learn more about the hardship withdrawal process and/or have any questions, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 404-413-1515 or visit the website at www.gsu.edu/deanofstudents.

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