

Office of the Dean of Students
HARDSHIP WITHDRAWAL APPEAL Information Sheet

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 you 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.

Overview:

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 Appeals Committee is 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.)

Petitioning the Compliance of the Hardship Withdrawal Policy Restrictions

or

Appealing a Decision of the Dean of Students/Hardship Withdrawal Committee

The Dean of Students is not authorized to grant exceptions to the two Hardship Withdrawal restrictions. Petitioning an exception to either of the Hardship Withdrawal Policy restrictions or appealing a decision of the Dean of Students or the Hardship Withdrawal Committee requires that you complete a Hardship Withdrawal Appeal.

If the Hardship Withdrawal Appeals Committee is considering granting an exception to the two Hardship Withdrawal Policy restrictions or an appeal of the decision of the Dean of Students or the Hardship Withdrawal Committee, the instructor of the course(s) in question shall be contacted, by the Dean of Students, in advance of the Committee's meeting, and offered the opportunity to provide a letter to the Committee stating anything the instructor feels is relevant to the case. Appeal decisions of the Hardship Withdrawal Appeals Committee may be initiated by either the faculty or the student involved in the case and shall be heard by the Provost.

Personal Statement of Hardships:

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 Hardship Withdrawal Appeals 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, a 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 resources professional.

Hardship Withdrawal Appeal Instructions

Petitioning the Compliance of the Hardship Withdrawal Policy Restrictions

If you are petitioning the compliance of either of the Hardship Withdrawal Policy Restrictions the following items are needed:

1. A completed application for Hardship Withdrawal Appeal. You should pay strict attention to completing the sections that include computer numbers for courses, number of courses from which you are withdrawing, dates of last attendance, whether finals were completed, and names of instructors.
2. A typed or legible written personal statement of hardship appeal explaining the non-academic emergency situation. This information should be detailed enough to provide sufficient information to make a decision regarding your hardship withdrawal application. Be sure to include any and all dates that relate to your emergency situation.
3. Official documentation that supports your personal statement of hardship. (see Hardship Withdrawal Documentation Requirements).
4. A completed *Rationale Form* with the reason for not complying with the restriction(s).
5. For partial hardship requests, include justification and documentation of why only the identified courses were impacted.

Appealing a Decision of the Dean of Students or Hardship Withdrawal Committee

If you are appealing the decision of the Dean of Students or the Hardship Withdrawal Committee the following items are needed:

1. A separate intent to appeal statement that specifically addresses the issues raised by the initial decision.
2. Any additional documentation that supports your appeal must also be provided.

Checklist for Hardship Withdrawal Appeal:

- Application for Hardship Withdrawal Appeal
- Personal Statement of Hardship Appeal (if you are applying for some of your courses, provide a justification of why your hardship impacted only some of your courses)
- Official Supporting Documentation (any additional supporting documentation if appealing the decision of the Dean of Students or Hardship Withdrawal Committee)
- Rationale Form* of why you are not adhering the Hardship Withdrawal Policy restriction(s)

Please note:

- Approval of Hardship Withdrawal status does not guarantee the student a grade of "W". Whether a student receives a "W" is the final discretion of the instructor for the course.
- The Hardship Withdrawal Appeals Committee meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each 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.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

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

- When registering for classes for the term, consider personal responsibilities, lifestyle, and course demand 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 404-463-9023 or visit the website at www.gsu.edu/deanofstudents.

Office of the Dean of Students
Student Center, Suite 300
404-463-9023
404-463-9072 (fax)

Website address: www.gsu.edu/deanofstudents