

Withdrawal Policy—Proposal

Current Withdrawal Policy:

Effective fall 2008, all undergraduate students are limited to four course withdrawal-passing (WP) grades during their enrollment at UGA. After the fourth withdrawal, the student will receive a WF, which computes as a grade of F in the student's G.P.A. The complete policy can be found in the UGA Bulletin at <http://bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/ind/courses9.html>.

Review of Policy:

Policies were reviewed prior to implementation of the new student information system. The withdrawal policy was evaluated for effectiveness and feasibility of implementation in the new system.

Reason for the current policy: to reduce the number of students shopping for classes. It was assumed that students were enrolling in more classes than they intended to complete and keeping the preferred courses while withdrawing from the others after the drop/add period.

Effectiveness:

The implementation of this policy has not had a significant impact on the number of withdrawals. The total number of withdrawals from 2003 to the present has not changed significantly. There was a slight decrease in withdrawals in 2012 after a change in the HOPE policy. The HOPE revision imposed a hard cap of 127 hours. Withdrawals count toward HOPE hours, and it is assumed that with fewer HOPE hours allowed to complete their programs of study, students are less likely to waste those hours on withdrawals.

While the change in the withdrawal policy that limited the number of withdrawals to four did not impact the total number of withdrawals, the number of WFs increased significantly. There was an average of 193 per year between 2003 and 2008. After 2008, there has been an average of 827 WFs per year, which is a 300% increase. It is clear that the policy did not have the intended impact of reducing withdrawals but did have the unintended consequence of increasing WF grades. These grades are computed as an F in the student's G.P.A.

Withdrawal Policies at Peer and Aspirant Institutions:

The majority of peer and aspirant institutions do not have a limit on withdrawals. None of our peer or aspirant institutions have a WF grade. Three institutions permit faculty to give a grade that computes as an F prior to the withdrawal deadline if the student is failing at the time of withdrawal.

All institutions have withdrawal deadlines that range from the midpoint to the last day of class. Most institutions have a withdrawal deadline between 7 and 9 weeks into the semester. After the withdrawal deadline, a withdrawal is not permitted, and students receive a grade in the course. All institutions make exceptions in the case of hardship.

Recommendation:

Proposed Withdrawal Policy:

W: Withdrawal Without Penalty

Students who withdraw from courses before the withdrawal deadline (two weeks after the midpoint, as specified by the official calendar) will receive a W grade. Withdrawals from courses will not be permitted after the withdrawal deadline except in cases of hardship as determined by the Office of Student Services. (Under this new policy, students will no longer be limited to four withdrawals.)

Feasibility of Implementation in the New System:

Customization of Baseline Banner will be required to implement the current policy, involving significant technical and financial resources. The proposed policy is recommended as a pilot. If there is a negative impact, we can use the resources necessary to implement the current policy.