



Undergraduate Medical Education Withdrawal from the program Procedure

Category	Academic
Responsibility	Academic Director, UGME
Consultation	Program Manager Office of Student Services Student Academic Management Committee University Registrar Governance
Approval	Associate Dean
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Purpose:

This policy establishes clear, fair, and consistent rules and procedures for withdrawal from the Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) Doctor of Medicine (MD) Program, including Retroactive Withdrawal. It aligns with University of Saskatchewan regulations governing academic courses, assessment, and withdrawal, while recognizing the unique features of an integrated, cohort-based medical curriculum.

Accreditation 9.10 Student Health and Patient Safety: A medical school has effective policies and processes to address situations, where a student's personal health may pose a risk of harm to patients. These policies and processes are clearly communicated to students.

Scope:

This policy applies to all students registered in the Doctor of Medicine (MD) Program at the College of Medicine, at all distributed learning sites, and applies to both Pre-Clerkship and clerkship phases.

Related policies include:

- [Academic Withdrawal published deadlines](#)
- [Promotion and Graduation](#)
- [UGME Leave of absence](#)
- [UGME Academic Appeal Policy](#)
- [Academic course policy section 8.3](#)
- [Medical Student Performance Record \(MSPR\)](#)

Principles:

Compassion, Academic Integrity, and Public Accountability:

This policy provides compassionate and equitable consideration for students experiencing serious circumstances beyond their control, while ensuring the consistent application of academic standards and maintaining public trust in UGME assessment, promotion, and academic records.

Student Well-Being and Patient Safety:

Decisions will balance learner well-being, educational progression, and obligations to clinical learning and patient care environments.

Equity-Informed Decision-Making:

Processes will be timely, transparent, and equity-informed, with reasonable accommodations provided in accordance with UGME policy and applicable process.

Withdrawal from the MD Program refers to the termination—whether temporary or permanent—of a student’s registration in the Doctor of Medicine (MD) Program. Withdrawal is an alternative grading status that appears permanently on a student’s academic transcript as a “W.” A withdrawal carries no academic standing and does not contribute to or effect the calculation of a student’s academic average.

Procedure:

A. Academic Withdrawal

A student-initiated withdrawal in accordance with published add –drop deadlines, resulting in a transcript notation of ‘W’ where applicable.

If a student withdraws from the class after the [add-drop deadline](#) but before the withdrawal deadline for that class, the class remains on their transcript and is shown as a withdrawal.

If a student withdraws from a class before the [add-drop deadline](#) for a term, the listing of the class is deleted from their transcript.

Students are expected to monitor their academic progress and wellbeing and to initiate Academic Withdrawal within published deadlines when difficulties arise. The College is responsible for ensuring that [withdrawal deadlines](#) are clearly communicated, and that reasonable access to advising and support services is available.

For academic Withdrawal students submit withdrawals notify Academic Director and Program Manager. Students are encouraged to discuss the withdrawal options with year chairs and member of the office of Student Affairs and submit confidential supporting documents to the [Office of Student Affairs](#) only.

For Academic Withdrawal, students must comply with university and program-specific withdrawal deadlines. A ‘W’ appears without academic penalty, though progression in the program may be delayed.

Students are responsible for withdrawing through the University system and for any refund requests or refund appeals, which are subject to university policies.

B. Administrative Withdrawal

Administrative Withdrawal is a non-voluntary outcome of decisions made under UGME promotion, academic standing, or professionalism policies determinations by the Student Academic Management Committee. An administrative withdrawal from the MD program mandated by the Student Academic Management Committee (SAMC), in which a documented return-to-program plan is established outlining the conditions under which a student may be eligible to apply for re-entry to the program. This form of withdrawal, the student's registration in the MD program is withdrawn, and re-entry is contingent upon the student meeting the specified conditions outlined in the return to program determined by the SAMC.

- Administrative withdrawal due to non-promotion does not, in itself, constitute an academic grade. Course or rotation grades recorded prior to the effective date of withdrawal remain unchanged, and any courses or rotations in progress at the time of withdrawal will be recorded as "W" in accordance with university regulations. Grade recorded as earned (e.g., Pass, Fail)
- No change in grades unless separately addressed through:
 - Retroactive Withdrawal (RW), or
 - Appeal under Academic Appeals policy

C. Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence is a time-limited, approved interruption of training recorded administratively on the academic transcript as 'Leave of Absence.' It does not constitute withdrawal from the MD program, carries no academic credit or grade, and is intended to support a student's eventual return to training.

D. Retroactive Withdrawal

A Retroactive Withdrawal is an academic appeal to withdraw from a term after the withdrawal deadline has passed or after the academic term has ended, typically to address a failing grade resulting from exceptional circumstances.

A Retroactive Withdrawal from a term may be granted by the College when one or more of the following conditions are met:

- The student received a failing grade due to serious personal circumstances that significantly impaired their ability to act within required academic timelines.
- Verifiable UGME administrative or procedural error prevented the student from withdrawing within established deadlines.

Decisions regarding Retroactive Withdrawal must balance compassionate consideration of circumstances beyond a student's control with the responsibility to protect the credibility, consistency, and fairness of the UGME academic record.

Retroactive Withdrawal is reserved for situations in which the student was unable, rather than unwilling, to act.

Retroactive Withdrawal is not a remedy for poor academic performance, dissatisfaction with assessment outcomes, or unsuccessful remediation.

In reviewing requests, decision-making bodies focus on whether the student retained the capacity to act within required timelines. Capacity refers to the ability to think clearly, make decisions, and take action, and may be compromised by circumstances such as significant illness, acute high-impact distress, hospitalization, or comparable crises.

Where a student is determined to have retained capacity, despite the presence of hardship, illness, or stress the threshold for granting a Retroactive Withdrawal is generally not met.

A Retroactive Withdrawal may be considered only where circumstances clearly demonstrate that the student was not reasonably able to make decisions or take action, including requesting assistance or withdrawing the applicable deadline. Difficulty accessing support services, delayed support, or missed opportunities for assistance without demonstrable loss of capacity does not meet the threshold for Retroactive Withdrawal.

E. Examples

Retroactive Withdrawal may be considered if:

- Student was very ill or in crisis and could not think clearly, communicate, or manage deadlines.
- Student was hospitalized or experiencing a serious mental health emergency.
- Student condition prevented them from understanding or acting on withdrawal deadlines.

Retroactive Withdrawal is generally not approved in the following circumstances:

- The student did not seek assistance despite retaining the capacity to do so, including the ability to communicate concerns, request guidance, or initiate withdrawal within required timelines.
- The student missed emails, meetings, deadlines, or appointments, but evidence indicates they retained decision-making capacity during the relevant period.
- The student chose not to access available academic, wellness, or program supports, or declined recommended interventions, without being prevented from doing so by illness, crisis, or loss of capacity.
- The student was aware of academic difficulties or program expectations and had reasonable opportunities to act but elected not to do so.
- In these circumstances, the threshold for Retroactive Withdrawal is typically not met, as the student is considered to have been able, though unwilling or hesitant, to act.

Timing and Submission

Requests for Retroactive Withdrawal must be submitted **within 30 calendar days** of either:

- the end of the applicable academic term, **or**
- the resolution of the incapacitating circumstance that prevented timely action, whichever is later.

Requests submitted outside of this timeframe will be considered only where compelling justification is provided, explaining both the circumstances that prevented timely submission and the reason for the delay.

Evidence and Documentation

Supporting documentation is required for all Retroactive Withdrawal requests and must clearly address the nature, timing, severity, and functional impact of the circumstances described. All confidential documentation must be submitted directly to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) **ONLY**.

Students may provide relevant contextual information within their SAMC application; however, they are not required to disclose protected or confidential health information in that application.

Documentation must demonstrate how the student's circumstances materially impaired their ability to engage with academic responsibilities, including, but not limited to:

- understanding academic requirements and deadlines,
- communicating with the College or program representatives,
- seeking assistance or support, and
- Initiating a withdrawal within established timeframes.

A diagnosis alone, without an accompanying explanation of functional impact, does not meet approval criteria. Documentation must specifically describe the timing and extent of impairment as it relates to the academic period under review.

Procedures

Students are responsible for the timely submission of Retroactive Withdrawal requests and for ensuring that all information provided is complete, accurate, and supported by appropriate documentation. Applications must be submitted to the Academic Director in accordance with established timelines. Please use the questionnaire in Appendix A at the end of the procedure to submit your request. The questionnaire will also help determine whether your circumstances may meet the criteria for a retroactive withdrawal. Be sure to answer all questions completely and accurately.

Students are strongly encouraged to work with the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) to confirm the completeness of their application and to facilitate appropriate coordination of documentation and review.

The Associate Dean, UGME holds delegated authority to determine whether a request meets the threshold for consideration. Requests that do not meet this threshold may be denied without referral to the Student Academic Management Committee (SAMC).

Where a request is complex, novel, or otherwise warrants committee review, the Associate Dean, UGME may refer the matter to the Student Academic Management Committee (SAMC) for final determination. SAMC is responsible for the consistent, timely, and policy-based application of Retroactive Withdrawal criteria.

Approved Retroactive Withdrawals are implemented by the Office of the Registrar following formal authorization by the UGME program. Updates to the student's academic record are coordinated through the Program Manager.

Procedural Non-Compliance

Procedural non-compliance by the student may be considered in the assessment of a Retroactive Withdrawal request and may adversely affect the outcome, particularly where the student retained the capacity to comply with established academic procedures and timelines.

Institutional or administrative non-compliance of the procedures does not, on its own, determine the outcome of a Retroactive Withdrawal request and does not automatically justify approval.

Care must be taken not to conflate institutional imperfections with student incapacity. Doing so risks repositioning Retroactive Withdrawal from an exceptional measure intended to address loss of capacity to a corrective mechanism for procedural dissatisfaction or systemic concerns. Such a shift would undermine the integrity and intended purpose of Retroactive Withdrawal.

Appeals and Review:

Decisions may be appealed in accordance with College of Medicine and academic appeal policies.

Conclusion:

Retroactive Withdrawal represents a balance between compassion and academic integrity. Consistent application of this policy ensures fairness, credibility, and trust in UGME academic programs.