

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION – STUDENT AFFAIRS
POLICY NUMBER – SA 3.41
POLICY TITLE – VOLUNTARY MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL POLICY
SCOPE OF POLICY – USC UPSTATE
DATE OF REVISION – DECEMBER 1, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER – DIRECTOR OF CARE MANAGEMENT
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – DEAN OF STUDENTS

PURPOSE

The Voluntary Medical Withdrawal policy shall provide a clear, compassionate, and consistent framework for individuals who experience any physical or psychological health concerns that impair their ability to meet academic requirements in a given term. The policy ensures that affected individuals can modify their enrollment (or final grades) without facing penalty. The policy supports academic integrity by offering a structured process that balances the individual's needs with the University's academic standards and expectations.

DEFINITIONS

- 1. Last Day to Withdraw:** the last day to receive a W (withdrew) when withdrawing from courses. Courses withdrawn after this date receive a WF – and receive a GPA penalty of a failing grade for the course. This date can be found on the University's [academic calendar](#).
- 2. Partial Withdrawal:** a withdrawal from fewer than all courses for a given academic term.
- 3. Post Semester Withdrawal:** a withdrawal from all courses that occurs after the last day of classes.
- 4. Pre-existing/chronic condition:** a physical or mental health issue that was diagnosed or treated before the student enrolled in the semester for which you are requesting a Voluntary Withdrawal for Medical reasons.
- 5. Emerging Condition:** a physical or mental health condition that was diagnosed or treated during the semester for which the student is requesting a Voluntary Withdrawal for Medical reasons.

POLICY STATEMENT

University of South Carolina Upstate students may apply for a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal due to physical and/or psychological condition(s) that makes it difficult for the student to be academically successful and able to meet their responsibilities as a student.

Voluntary Medical Withdrawal will only be considered when a licensed medical or mental health provider recommends the clinical need to withdraw from courses.

Students may take as much time as they need away from the University to recover from the condition that qualified them for Withdrawal for Medical Reasons. However, students who do not take classes for one or more consecutive semesters must reapply for admission through Admissions.

PROCEDURES

I. Timing to Withdraw for Medical Reasons

1. Students in academic programs who are limited in the number of course attempts (e.g., Nursing, Psychology) may utilize this process at any point during or after the academic term.
2. Students who are not impacted by limited course attempts should utilize this process after the Last Day to Withdraw.
3. Students are encouraged to initiate the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal process as soon as possible; an earlier initiation day may help prevent students from receiving final grades that will impact academic standing (academic probation, academic suspension).

II. Eligibility

1. Any student that is experiencing a documented medical condition that significantly interferes with their ability to function academically.
2. The condition may be:
 - a. Emergent, or
 - b. Pre-existing/chronic, for which the student must demonstrate efforts to manage the condition (e.g., ongoing treatment, regular medical oversight).
3. Students typically utilize the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal only once per medical condition. Students attempting to utilize the voluntary medical withdrawal process more than once for the same medical condition will need to demonstrate the following:

- a. Medical documentation and efforts to address acute condition, or
 - b. Medical documentation of a chronic condition, and how the status of the chronic condition changed (worsened) during the academic term for which they are requesting a voluntary medical withdrawal.
4. A licensed medical or mental health provider, using the Medical Provider Form, must recommend a voluntary medical withdrawal.
 5. Students wanting to voluntarily withdraw may be impacted differently based on their student status, financial aid status, and housing status. Some students who may be differentially impacted include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Those receiving financial aid or certain scholarships
 - b. Those receiving military benefits (Chapter 35)
 - c. Student athletes (in connection to NCAA eligibility)
 - d. International students (visas)
 - e. Students living on campus (and needing to be enrolled full-time).

Students whose enrollment, housing, and financial status may be impacted will be notified by the Director of CARE Management and/or other University Officials prior to the student's submission of a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal to the Registrar's Office. Once a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal form is sent to the Registrar's Office, it cannot be revoked.

III. Documentation to Voluntarily Medically Withdrawal

1. Students and/or their designee may contact the Dean of Students Office / Director of CARE Management to initiate the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal process. The Dean of Students Office can be contacted by calling 864-503-7743.
2. Students wanting to initiate a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal should utilize the Medical Provider Form to ensure that all appropriate and necessary medical information is provided for review.
3. Any medical documentation provided to the Dean of Students Office is kept by the Dean of Students Office. All records will be retained securely and in accordance with university recordkeeping policies and HIPAA/FERPA regulations.
 - a. The Dean of Students Office only shares medical documentation with the Director of Health Services and/or the Director of Counseling Services in making determinations regarding a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal.
 - b. Medical documentation is not shared with any other party involved in the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal process.

- c. The Dean of Students Office will be responsible for all notifications to the student and/or their designee (per Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) release and/or designated emergency contact).
4. The student may supplement the Medical Provider form by providing a personal statement. That personal statement should speak to how the medical condition is currently impacting the student.
5. Upon review of a student's medical documentation, a student's request may be preliminarily accepted, rejected, or a request for additional information may be made by the Dean of Students Office.

IV. General Requirements and Processing

1. A student's request for a voluntary medical withdrawal involves a serious and significant medical condition. As such, voluntary medical withdrawals are considered to be a request to withdraw from all courses.
 - a. Any request for a partial withdrawal will need to include an additional justification as to how or why the medical condition did not impact their ability to progress in all courses. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. A student being able to complete online courses vs being able to attend and complete in-person courses,
 - ii. A medical condition interfering with specific course requirements but not all coursework.
 - b. The general difficulty of a course in comparison to other courses is not grounds for withdrawal for medical reasons.
2. The Dean of Students Office will assist the student in completing all appropriate confidentiality releases (FERPA and HIPAA waivers), obtaining medical documentation using the Medical Provider Form, and providing guidance on drafting a personal statement.
3. The Dean of Students Office will provide the Director of Counseling or the Director of Health Services, as appropriate, with the available documentation, personal statement and Medical Provider Form for review. The appropriate Director may also consult with the off-campus provider, if one exists.
4. The Director of Counseling Services and/or Director of Health Services will offer their recommendation to the Dean of Students Office. The withdrawal determination is based on available documentation, severity and onset of the condition, and its impact on the student's ability to meet their responsibilities as a student.

5. Should the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal be approved, the Dean of Students Office will assist the student or their designee in completing the Withdrawal for Medical Reasons Form
6. The Dean of Students Office will then seek the signatures of all faculty necessary to complete the form. Once all faculty have signed, the Academic Dean of the student's college will sign the withdrawal form.
7. Once the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal is approved by the Academic Dean of the student's college and fully signed, the Dean of Students will notify the Registrar, who administers Withdrawal (W) grades.
8. The Dean of Students will also notify the CARE Team, the Office of Housing & Residential Life if the student lives on-campus, the student's academic advisor and Department Chair, and other campus entities and departments as indicated.

V. Deadlines to Withdraw for Medical Reasons

In alignment with the post-semester withdrawal policy, a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal request will be considered up to three years after the final grade is assigned.

VI. Denial for Medical Reasons / Appeals

1. If a student is denied, they may speak with their Academic Advisor and Academic Dean and request the appropriate non-medical withdrawal. The student will then be responsible for obtaining all faculty signatures. The withdrawal will then be counted as one of two allowed course attempts.
2. If a student's voluntary medical withdrawal has been denied by the Dean of Students Office and consulting offices (Counseling Services or Health Services), a student may appeal in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs within seven (7) business days, describing how they meet the criteria listed in Section II of the Procedures in this policy.
3. Appeals of decisions where a faculty member does not agree to the voluntary medical withdrawal and to change a student's grade to a W, must be submitted via the [academic grievance process](#).

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

AUGUST 2021 – NEW POLICY APPROVAL

DECEMBER 1, 2025 – FORMATTING, SIMPLIFICATION OF PROCEDURES