



Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**  
**VPAA 09-04**  
**August 18, 2009**

**HSU Policy on Issues Related to Withdrawing from Courses**  
Effective Fall Semester 2009

With the more-stringent requirements placed on course repeats and withdrawals for undergraduate students by [Executive Order 1037](#), the faculty are strongly encouraged to provide students, when possible, with graded feedback in every course *before* the census date (the last date to drop without a “W” being added to the transcript). Because of unclear language about when during the semester students may withdraw from courses or the university for catastrophic reasons in the Executive Order, HSU has provide the following definitions as addendum to the policy: 1) defines “catastrophic withdrawal,” 2) clarifies that students may request these types of withdrawals at any time after census, and 3) creates a new grade “WC” for these catastrophic withdrawals.

For non-catastrophic withdrawals, a definition of “serious and compelling” is added to ensure that the same standards will be applied by faculty and department chairs.

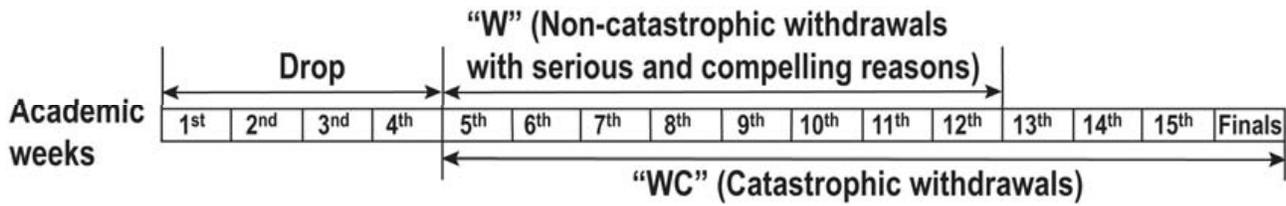
Also, a student’s eligibility for Financial Aid can be seriously affected by withdrawals. Faculty members are urged to remind students to consult the Financial Aid office before withdrawing from a class.

**Definitions and policies for different types of withdrawals:**

- **Drop:** Disenrollment from a course before the census date. Not recorded on the student's transcript.
- **Withdrawal (W):** Disenrollment from a course after the census date but prior to the last 20% of instruction (the beginning of the 13th week of classes in the regular semester). Requires documentation of a "serious and compelling" reason for withdrawing, and must be approved by the faculty member teaching the course and the department chair. If granted, a grade of "W" appears on the student's transcript. EO 1037 limits undergraduate students to a total of 18 units with a grade of "W," effective Fall 2009.
- **"Serious and compelling" reason for withdrawal:** Examples include psychological problems, loss of care for dependents, inappropriate behavior of someone else in the classroom, and serious reversal in the student's financial situation. Documentation must be provided. (Note: reasons such as doing poorly in a class, taking too many units, being too busy to do the work, not liking the class, not knowing how or when to drop are *not* considered to be “serious and compelling.”) In considering serious and compelling reasons, faculty and department chairs should give careful consideration to a student’s extenuating circumstances while also following this rigorous definition of “serious and compelling.”

- **Catastrophic Withdrawal (WC):** Disenrollment from a course or from the campus after the census date due to catastrophic events clearly beyond a student's control, such as severe illness or injury, being called to military service, consequences of the death of a close family member. Formal documentation of the event must be provided, and requests must be approved by the faculty member teaching the course, the department chair, and the appropriate college Dean or designee. If granted, a grade of "WC" appears on the student's transcript. Catastrophic Withdrawals do not count toward the 18-unit limit for withdrawals. This is the only category of disenrollment permitted during the last 20% of instruction (the beginning of the 13th week of classes in the regular semester).

**Diagram showing when different types of withdrawals are permitted:**



Academic Senate (Approved 4/21/09, #19-08/09/EP)  
President Richmond (Approved 5/14/09)