Oops!

These instructions are for students whose actual class schedule on eLion doesn’t match what they thought their schedule was. Students can petition for other exceptions as well, but this is the list of most common requests:

- I missed the late drop deadline
- I thought I late dropped a class but now I find I didn’t
- I had extenuating circumstances and was unable to late drop by the deadline
- I missed the withdrawal deadline
- I thought I withdrew from all my classes but now I find I didn’t
- I had extenuating circumstances and was unable to withdraw by the deadline

NOTE: Students who have no classes on their transcript after the semester will either petition for retroactive registration or petition for retroactive late add, depending upon their circumstances. For more information about retroactive registration: [http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/retroactive_registration.cfm](http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/retroactive_registration.cfm)

So what do these terms mean?

- **Late dropping** means that a student intended to exit one or more classes but intended to have at least one class remaining on the schedule. The student intended to complete and receive grades for any remaining class/es.
- **Withdrawing** means that the student intended to exit all classes for the semester. As such, the student will not receive any punitive grades for the semester.
- **Retroactive Registration** means that the student did not have any classes on their transcript for a semester that has already ended.

To request a change to a class schedule after stated deadlines, read through this entire packet. Don’t skip the sections called Examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate Requests, and Sample Letters.

Petitioners will need to do three things:

1. Write a letter. State what is being requested and explain why the deadline could not be met. Details that should be included in the letter are in the section of the instructions called Student Request.

2. Gather documentation, such as doctor/hospital/medical records, other legal documents, etc, that support the student’s claim. The committee will not review petitions without supporting documentation. If documentation will include a supporting statement from the instructor/s, it must be a signed paper document on PSU letterhead or an email from the instructor’s PSU email account.

3. Complete the appropriate form. Use the live links in this document, or go to the Registrar’s Office, E130 Smith for a blank form, or find your required form here: [http://www.registrar.psu.edu/student_forms/index.cfm](http://www.registrar.psu.edu/student_forms/index.cfm)

When all three items have been gathered, please call the office to schedule an appointment--814-949-5035. Or students can mail everything back to:

Gina Baird, Penn State Altoona, E130 Smith Building, 3000 Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601
PETITIONS FOR EXCEPTIONS TO ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

When a student has not followed a University Faculty Senate policy or procedure and believes an exception to the policy may be warranted, he/she may submit a petition to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education Subcommittee on Academic Standards. A petition may be used to request an exception to any policy and/or to request a retroactive procedure. The committee does not grant petitions automatically. Strong, documented justification must be provided to establish the circumstances that warrant a retroactive action.

Course substitution and exceptions to degree requirements do not require a petition. A petition is not required for correcting registration errors (see Administrative Course Cancellation) or changing a grade if the request is made before the deadline.

Retroactive registration requests require a petition under the following circumstances: 1) if the request is submitted more than nine months after the end of the semester or session, 2) if the student never scheduled courses for the semester or session, 3) if the student cancelled his/her registration for the semester or session.

Instructions for Preparing a Petition

It is to the student's advantage to submit a complete, well-documented petition. A petition must establish why the student did not use existing University procedures before the established deadline.

Students are responsible for preparing the student request, obtaining supporting documents, completing University forms, and obtaining a transcript and relevant registration records, as described below.

Trauma drop/withdrawal procedures should be followed when a student's circumstances require unusual confidentiality (e.g., the victim of a sexual assault or violent crime). This procedure is streamlined to reduce the number of people involved in processing.

Student Request

The student should prepare a brief, factual letter (see sample letters) that includes the following:

- date the petition is submitted,
- PSU ID number,
- current address,
- current phone number,
- e-mail address,
- a clear statement of the requested action,
- a description of the conditions that warrant an exception, and
- the reason University policy and/or procedure could not be followed (see Examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate Requests—attached to the back of this packet).

Supporting Documents

Along with the student's request, he/she should provide documentation of the circumstances that he/she claims justify an exception to University policy. Some examples are hospital records, a letter from a physician, a statement from a counselor, a statement from a student financial aid adviser, or court records.

If the student's justification is based on a significant, prolonged medical problem and the student received care at University Health Services (UHS), the student may request verification of his/her condition for a senate petition by contacting his/her UHS primary care clinician. The director of UHS reviews all requests and decides on the appropriate recommendation.
If the student is alleging that his/her extenuating circumstance is the result of one or more of the following problems:
(a) unfair teaching practice; (b) misinformation from University personnel applying a University regulation, policy, or procedure; or (c) an administrative, advising, or clerical error then the student should provide documentation from the appropriate academic, administrative, or advising unit.

If the petition involves course work taken through the World Campus, a representative from World Campus will provide a letter of support, no support, or no recommendation. For information contact the World Campus at advising@outreach.psu.edu or call 814-863-3283.

**Transcript**

All petitions should be accompanied by the student's most recent official or advising transcript.

**University Forms**

When a form is required for an action, it is also required when this action is requested retroactively. The appropriate University form, as described below, should be completed and filed with the petition.

**Retroactive Grade Changes**: The petition must include a letter from the instructor of the course, supporting the change and explaining the circumstances surrounding the student's request. (Disputes are addressed through the grade adjudication process.) A request for a retroactive grade change should be accompanied by a grade change authorization form.

**Retroactive Late Drop/Add**: The petition must be accompanied by a completed registration drop/add form. (If the petition is approved, the $6.00 schedule adjustment fee will be charged to the student's account.)

**Retroactive Registration**: The petition must be accompanied by a completed registration drop/add form. The student must contact his/her instructors for the semester/session to ask that the instructor send a grade change authorization form to the petition submitter (detailed below). The completed grade change authorization form must accompany the petition.

**Retroactive Withdrawal**: The petition should be accompanied by a completed withdrawal form. If the student is petitioning for a withdrawal from more than one semester, a withdrawal form for EACH semester should be included.

**Submissions of Petitions**

Before submitting a petition for a retroactive drop, late drop, registration, or withdrawal, students should contact the appropriate offices. Students should submit materials as instructed below. **Students should not send petitions or supporting materials directly to the Faculty Senate office.**

The dean, executive director, chancellor, chief academic officer, or Registrar's representative reviews the student's petition and prepares it for submission to the Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education, 101 Kern Graduate Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802.

The submission must include the following:

- A cover sheet prepared by the dean, executive director, chancellor, chief academic officer, or Registrar's representative
- All supporting documents
- A transcript
- Forms (the original and one copy)
University Park

Degree candidates submit materials to the appropriate dean or the executive director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies if currently enrolled in that unit.

Provisional students submit materials to the executive director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies.

Nondegree-regular students submit materials to the college in which he/she hopes to enroll or, if undecided about a college, to the Division of Undergraduate Studies.

Nondegree-conditional students submit materials to the dean of the college in which he/she plans to enroll.

Other Penn State Campuses

Students at other Penn State campuses should submit their petitions to the appropriate office.

Evaluation of Petitions

Petitions are not reviewed on a regular schedule but are considered by members of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education and processed by the senate office staff as quickly as possible. The committee reads each petition and evaluates it based on its unique circumstances; there are no guarantees of approval on specific types of petitions.

If a student alleges that the failure of an eLion application resulted in his/her extenuating circumstance, the student's eLion transactions will be examined as part of the petition review process.

Notification

A letter indicating if a petition has been approved or denied is sent from the University Faculty Senate office to the student within three to five weeks from the date that the senate office receives the petition. A copy of the letter is sent to the college or office that forwarded the petition to the senate committee.

Approved Petitions

If a petition is approved, the senate office initiates the appropriate action(s) with the Registrar.

Tuition and Fees

The Office of the Bursar is notified if a student's account must be billed tuition and fees resulting from an approved retroactive action (e.g., retroactive registration). Tuition and fees are based on the current tuition rates, information technology fee, activities fee, and facilities fee (if applicable) as well as the student's current semester standing. A $50 late payment fee and a $250 late registration fee (if applicable) will be assessed for each semester approved for retroactive registration. After the student has paid the appropriate tuition and fees to the Office of the Bursar, the Registrar will add the courses and any grades already submitted to the student's record. If there are grades missing, the Registrar's office will notify the course instructor or department that a grade is needed.

Denied Petitions

If a petition is denied, the student may appeal the decision if he/she can provide additional information to support his/her case. To appeal, the student should resubmit his/her petition by following the original submission guidelines above and including any additional documentation or clarification.
EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE REQUESTS

Withdrawal

Consider the following scenarios for a student who was hospitalized and could not return to school:

1. If the hospitalization occurred before the end of the semester/session withdrawal deadline, she should withdraw before this date.
2. If the hospitalization occurred after the end of the semester/session withdrawal deadline (i.e., during the final exam period), a petition requesting a retroactive withdrawal may be appropriate. Documentation such as hospital records or a letter from her physician must be provided.
3. If the hospitalization occurred before the end of the semester/session withdrawal deadline but the student did not follow the withdrawal procedure, a petition would not be appropriate unless she could document the circumstances preventing her from accessing a computer or telephone.

Late Drop

If a student is requesting a selective late drop of one or two courses from a previous semester, the student must explain why his/her circumstances did not affect all of his/her courses. (For example, a broken leg might affect a volleyball course but not a calculus course.) In addition, the student must establish why the course was not late dropped before the semester/session late drop deadline. Documentation for this rationale must be provided.

Improving Grade-Point Average

If a student cannot document a reason that University procedures were not followed and his/her only justification for a retroactive procedure is to improve his/her grade-point average (e.g., for entry to major, law school, scholarships), the petition will be denied.
SAMPLE STUDENT LETTERS FOR FACULTY SENATE PETITIONS

These samples include all of the required elements for a student petition letter (date, a clear statement of the requested action, a description of the conditions that warrant an exception, the reason University policy and/or procedure could not be followed, student's name and signature, current address, PSU ID number, current phone number, and e-mail address).

Letter 1 (Request for a Retroactive Withdrawal)

January 22, 2010

Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education
Subcommittee on Academic Standards
University Faculty Senate Office
101 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802

To Vice-Chair of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education:

I am petitioning for a retroactive withdrawal from fall semester 2009 for medical reasons. In the third week of fall, I was diagnosed with mono at the University Health Center. Although I was able to keep up with my courses at first, sometimes I was too tired to go to class and I fell behind in my work. Luckily, my instructors were very understanding and allowed me to make up exams and turn in papers late. Although I was behind, I felt I could keep making up the work. Then, just as final exams were beginning, I was hospitalized with pneumonia. I realized then that I was just not going to be able to make up the work I had missed and turn in all of my final projects and take my final exams. I decided that I needed to withdraw, but it was already past the withdrawal deadline at that point. I would have requested deferred grades in order to complete the work next semester, but I will be having surgery on January 4 and therefore will not be able to do school work for an extended time. Under the circumstances, it will not be possible to complete the work by the deferred grade deadline.

I would appreciate it if the Faculty Senate would allow me to withdraw from last semester even though I missed the withdrawal deadline. I have enclosed documentation from the health center and from my family doctor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Q. Student
123 Old Main Street
State College, PA 16803
PSU ID# 912345678
E-mail: jqs999@psu.edu
Phone: 814-555-1212
Letter 2 (Request for a Retroactive Late Course Drop)

January 22, 2010

Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education
Subcommittee on Academic Standards
University Faculty Senate Office
101 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802

To Vice-Chair of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education:

I am petitioning to retroactively late drop Marketing 437 and 440 from fall semester 2009. On December 3, 2009, I was hit by a pickup truck on Route 322 in Lewistown, PA. I suffered a severe concussion and my left patella was broken in several places (please see attached medical documentation and the hospital records). Since the accident, I underwent two surgeries to have my kneecap rebuilt and another operation to have the hardware removed. I was unable to attend my classes for the rest of the semester. I was able to complete Marketing 426 and 428 from my home, but I was unable to complete Marketing 437 and 440 because both courses required a practicum, which I was unable to attend--thus, my reason for being selective in asking for a retroactive late drop of these two courses.

This letter serves as my formal petition for a retroactive late drop from the two courses and my explanation of the circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Q. Student
123 Old Main Street
State College, PA 16803
PSU ID# 912345678
E-mail: jqss989@psu.edu
Phone: 814-555-1212

Reference(s): Policy Stated in the Preamble to "Academic Policies and Procedures for Undergraduate Students" in The University Faculty Senate Policies for Students

Category: Academic Success and Difficulties

Source: http://handbook.psu.edu/content/petitions
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