

# AO 16: Compassionate Withdraw or Drop

NS recognizes that students may experience unexpected or unforeseen circumstances outside of their control that significantly impact their ability to be successful while attending the University.

In the interest of compassion, student success, and persistence, a student may be administratively dropped or withdrawn from courses if extenuating or exigent circumstances exist and the student is unable to request, through the existing process, a medical or late withdraw petition.

## 16.1 Eligibility

An administrative compassionate drop or withdrawal is granted when NS determines that a student's health, safety, and academic success have been compromised due to extenuating or exigent circumstances, and the student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to follow existing processes to withdraw.

## 16.2 Documentation

Thorough and credible documentation is ideal in determining the context and impact of extenuating or exigent circumstances. However, a preponderance of evidence is the evidentiary standard for determining if the event or circumstances occurred and the student's academic ability has been compromised: that it is more likely than not that the event occurred, and more likely than not the circumstances compromised the student's ability to be successful in the affected term.

While documentation and validation are key in determining eligibility, the primary reviewer will act with compassion when communicating with the student, their family members, or any other person assisting in the process.

In some cases traditional forms of documentation may not be readily available, and requesting such documents may lack tact or benevolence. If the primary reviewer is able to verify events based on news reports, media releases, widespread social media acknowledgement, or verbal conversations with witnesses or people with first-hand knowledge of the events, and the primary reviewer believes the information meets the preponderance of evidence standard, no additional documentation, other than a written statement from the primary reviewer, will be requested or required to process the withdrawal. The primary reviewer's statement should be detailed, thorough, and clear.

## 16.3 Authorization to Request a Compassionate Withdraw

If a student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to follow existing processes in place to withdraw, and no power of attorney or similar document exists giving another person authority to request such an action, a spouse, dependent, or parent may request that NS withdraw the student for compassionate reasons.

## 16.4 Financial Impacts

All efforts will be made to minimize financial impacts related to any outstanding tuition and fees or financial aid that must be returned as a result of the withdrawal.

## 16.5 Request Process

1. The Director of Academic Advising (or designee), as the primary reviewer, receives information that may lead them to believe a student is eligible for a compassionate withdrawal.
2. The primary reviewer (or designee) conducts a fact-finding effort and confers with appropriate institutional officials, family members, or others with knowledge of the situation as necessary to ascertain the circumstances.
3. The primary reviewer determines if the student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to request a withdrawal through existing processes.
4. If the student is incapacitated or unable to communicate, the primary reviewer contacts the next of kin to provide potential options for a compassionate withdrawal or drop.
5. If a withdrawal or drop is requested by the appropriate person, the primary reviewer attempts to get as much supporting documentation as necessary to meet the preponderance of evidence standard.
6. Once enough information or supporting documentation is received to meet the preponderance of evidence standard, the primary reviewer completes the Request for Medical Withdrawal Form or a Petition for Exception to Policy (for requests that the student be dropped with no grades).
7. The primary reviewer sends approved petitions with documentation to the Office of the Registrar for processing.

## 16.6 Right to Amend

A student has the right to request that NS reverse the drop or withdrawal and reinstate the original grades earned in their course(s) if a compassionate withdrawal or drop was requested by a person other than the student.

## 16.7 Related Information

- Request for Medical Withdrawal Form
- Petition for Exception to Policy Form

### 16.7.1 Revision History

- Approved by Dr. Vickie Shields on 8/18/2022 and President DeRionne Pollard on 9/28/2022.