

Retroactive Withdrawal Guidelines for College Students

This guide will benefit any young adult who experiences extenuating circumstances while in college who may be looking to have their grades retroactively withdrawn.



APPROPRIATE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Before applying for a retroactive withdrawal, you must understand what colleges and universities are willing to consider a reason to apply. Some institutions will be a lot more rigid while others are more open to learning about the student's struggles. A school's website will include the following as extenuating circumstances: death of an immediate family member, traumatic and unforeseen circumstances that are considered beyond a student's control, serious emotional instability, physical injury or illness that has resulted in the student's inability to complete academic responsibilities.



WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

It is easiest to think about writing this in a few paragraphs. First, you need to introduce to the Committee which semesters you are submitting for retroactive withdrawal. The body of the letter needs to be objective to what happened to you that made you unable to be a functioning student. The final paragraph is a summary and recap asking for consideration, and demonstrating insight, ownership, and change. Make sure there are no grammatical or spelling errors. If you want, you can print and sign by hand to make the letter more official.



IDENTIFY SUPPORTIVE PROFESSIONAL

If you were seeing a Therapist and they can speak to your struggles, ask your therapist to write a letter of support on your behalf. This letter needs to be on letterhead and include a signature. The letter needs to share how they knew you, in what capacity, for what length of time, and any clinical information regarding your work together. There are some professionals who's letter of support could actually hurt your application. Strongly consider who will be the best to show support!



UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT IF APPROVED

Retroactive withdrawals if approved will impact Financial Aid. You will want to consult with the Financial Aid Office to better understand what this means for you. Additionally, retroactive withdrawal means that entire semesters are removed from your transcript; even if you had one class with a good or passing grade.



MAKE COPIES AND SUBMIT FOR CONSIDERATION

Like all important documentation, you want make sure that you have a copy for yourself of your personal statement as well as the letter of support (if you were given a copy). Knowing that each institution has a Committee that reviews these applications once a month. Be prepared to wait.

