



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Executive Committee of Faculty Council (November 5, 2020)  
Faculty Council (December 2, 2020)

**From:** Professor Daniel Posen  
Chair, Committee on Examinations

**Date:** November 6, 2020

**Re:** Extension of Late Withdrawal Policy for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021

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### REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a major policy matter that will be considered by the Executive Committee for endorsing and forwarding to Faculty Council for vote as a regular motion (requiring a simple majority of members present and voting to carry).

### BACKGROUND

Remote learning due to COVID-19 has presented a challenging learning environment.

In Winter 2020, the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering (FASE) allowed students to have their grades reported on the transcript on a credit/no credit (CR/NCR) basis or to drop courses after seeing their final grades. The transition to remote learning was a sudden, unexpected and highly disruptive change to that semester, justifying the extraordinary (and temporary) change in policy. For subsequent semesters, the decision was taken not to extend the policy from Winter 2020, since all courses for Fall 2020 were designed for remote learning from the start. Nevertheless, there have been numerous anecdotal accounts of students continuing to struggle with the challenges of this new remote learning experience, justifying some additional latitude.

In late October 2020, the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS) [announced](#) that it would be extending its deadline for CR/NCR and late withdrawal (LWD) until January 15 – after students have seen their final grades; FAS has made no other change to their existing policies, beyond the deadline extension.

FASE does not traditionally allow students to opt for CR/NCR, however FASE does have an existing LWD policy ([Academic Regulations](#) section VIII subsection 8). The proposal below extends the deadline for LWD *and* relaxes certain limits on the existing policy. There is currently ***no proposal*** to re-introduce CR/NCR.

Students considering LWD should be aware of existing policy ([Academic Regulations](#) section V): “Reducing the academic load to less than a full load as defined by a student’s year and program of study will make the student ineligible for certain scholarships and Dean’s Honours list.”

## **PROPOSAL**

For Fall 2020 and Winter 2021, undergraduate students in all engineering programs may withdraw from up to 1.0 credits per semester (i.e., without academic penalty) after they are able to see their final grades. The transcript notation LWD will appear on the student’s transcript in place of the grade earned, and no credit will be retained for the course.

For Fall 2020, the deadline to select LWD is January 15, 2021. For Winter 2021 the deadline is May 14, 2021. Deadlines may be extended by the Standing Committee on Examinations for courses where grades are not released by at least one week prior to the LWD deadline.

This proposal applies to all courses taken by Engineering undergraduate students at the University of Toronto. It is a change to the current LWD policy, in that it also applies to core courses as well as technical electives, CS/HSS electives and free electives. In addition, the LWD deadline date has been extended in this proposal beyond the current deadline.

This proposal will supplement the current LWD policy in the following ways:

### *Case (1): Students in Years 2-4*

For students in Years 2-4, the selection of LWD in Fall 2020 or Winter 2021 does not count against a student’s three-year limit of LWD in two half-credit courses (as per existing regulations).

### *Case (2): Students in Year 1 Engineering Science*

Students in Year 1 Engineering Science may still drop up to three half-credit courses in a single semester (1F or 1S) as part of a transition to a Core-8 program (as per existing regulations) and the extended LWD deadline date described above will apply.

### *Case (3) Students in Year 1 Core8/Track One*

For students in Year 1 Core- 8 / Track One, the proposed policy supersedes the existing LWD policy, which allows LWD in up to two half-credit courses over the combined 1F and 1S semesters.

## **PROCESS AND CONSULTATION**

An informal survey of undergraduate students conducted by Eng Soc representatives, and garnering 2,675 responses, found that a majority of respondents would “personally benefit from the option to allow Engineering students to late-withdraw from any of their fall 2020 courses after grades are released in January 2021” (61% “yes”; 17% “possibly”).

This proposal was discussed with Chairs and Directors during a regular FASE COVID-19 planning meeting, and subsequently approved by a majority vote in the Standing Committee on Examinations.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR FACULTY COUNCIL**

THAT the extension of the Late Withdrawal Policy for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 as described in Report 3676 Revised be approved.