



MEMORANDUM

To: Executive Committee of Faculty Council (April 8, 2025),
Faculty Council (April 29, 2025)

From: Professor Vladimiros Papangelakis
Chair, Undergraduate Assessment Committee (UAC)

Date: March 19, 2025

Re: Late Withdrawal for Core Courses in Upper Years

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

This proposal concerns the Faculty's policy on late withdrawal without supporting documentation (Academic Regulations Section VIII Subsection 7). Under this policy a student may withdraw from courses after the withdrawal deadline, provided that the late withdrawal request is submitted prior to the start of the Faculty's examination period. If the request is approved, "LWD" will appear on the student's transcript for the corresponding course; courses with an LWD are not factored into the calculation of GPA and sessional average, or into assessment of academic standing.

Students in upper years (Years 2 – 4) are allowed to withdraw late, without penalty, from a maximum of two half-credit (0.5 wt) elective courses. This would be the Years 2 to 4 total and does not include courses withdrawn under this policy in Year 1. Currently, this applies to **technical electives, CS/HSS electives and free electives** taken at the University of Toronto. **Late withdrawal from core courses is not allowed.**

In recent years, the Committee has seen a number of cases in which a student faced significant ongoing health-related challenges with core courses. Although they would go into the final exam period with very little prospect of passing the course, they have no choice but to write the final exam. After failing the course(s), the student would then petition for retroactive withdrawal (WDR). It should be noted that when reviewing petitions, the Committee does not usually grant WDR of selective courses within a term, even with valid documentation and

sufficient reasoning unless there is clear evidence and documentation that a particular course was impacted more than others.

Therefore, the current restriction of LWD to electives for upper-year students essentially forces some students to take a final exam, fail a course, petition for WDR, and receive a retroactive withdrawal from the whole term. This results in undue stress on students who are already facing significant challenges, increased workload of advisors and the Committee to review petitions, and the potentially undesired outcome of withdrawing from all courses even when the request is granted.

Addressing these concerns associated with the current policy will allow students more responsibility for their academic planning and reduce the need for intervention by the Undergraduate Assessment Committee. Furthermore, this policy will also address a current inequity that results in students in programs with a greater proportion of core courses, who have less flexibility to use the LWD option.

PROPOSED

We propose to update this policy to allow for LWD of core courses for upper-year students. The Academic Regulations (Section VIII, Subsection 7 Late Withdrawal Without Supporting Documentation) will be updated as follows:

This policy applies to students wishing to withdraw from courses after the withdrawal deadline, but prior to the start of the Faculty's examinations period.

Case (1): Students in Years 2–4

*Students are allowed to drop, without penalty, a maximum of two half-credit (0.5 weight) courses during their program, excluding any courses dropped under this policy in Year 1. This applies to **core courses**, technical electives, CS/HSS electives and free electives taken at the University of Toronto.*

This document proposes no changes to the LWD policy in the first year (Cases 2 and 3) but updates the wording for Case 3 (Year 1 Core 8 & Track One).

Case (2): Students in Year 1 Engineering Science

Students are allowed to drop a maximum of three half-credit courses in:

- a. Term 1F as part of a transition to term 1S in a core-8 program, or*
- b. Term 1S as part of a transition to term 2F in a core-8 program.*

Case (3): Students in Year 1 Core 8/Track One

Students are allowed to drop a maximum of two half-credit courses over all combined Year 1 terms.

The procedures to request LWD in elective courses will remain the same. Students must make the request through their academic advisors. Students requesting LWD for a core course are required to discuss this matter first with their academic advisor before their request can be processed. Petitions to the Undergraduate Assessment Committee are not required.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

This proposal was approved by the Undergraduate Assessment Committee on March 12, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL

THAT the proposal to extend late withdrawal to core courses in upper years be approved as described in Report 3784, effective September 2025.