

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 4, 2021

To: Deans, Directors and Chairs

From: Senate Academic Regulations Sub-committee

Subject: Request for Feedback on Proposed Withdrawal Regulation including Self-Late Withdrawal

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In November 2020, Senate Academic Committee brought forward to Senate a recommendation to temporarily change the University’s late withdrawal regulation for the 2020/21 academic year. This was approved by Senate.

Senate Academic Committee also considered a permanent change to the regulation. Before making a recommendation on a permanent basis to Senate, the Committee would like to provide Faculties and Academic Departments with an opportunity to review the proposal and provide feedback on these changes. Please find below a rationale for the change to the University Regulation X Withdrawal and a copy of the existing regulation and proposed regulation.

**We invite you to provide feedback on the proposed regulation change via email to** **navigator@lakeheadu.ca** **by Monday March 1, 2020.**

The Senate Academic Regulations Sub-committee would also be willing to meet with Faculty Councils to provide an overview of the changes and answer any questions. If this is of interest please request via email to **navigator@lakeheadu.ca****.**

Should you have any questions about the regulation or the process, please contact Andrea Tarsitano, Vice-Provost Students & Registrar at andrea.tarsitano@lakeheadu.ca or Richard Maundrell at rmaundre@lakeheadu.ca

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**Background & Rationale for Proposed Changes**

The 2019-2024 Academic Plan’s “Supporting Student Potential” strategy includes an action to *“ensure academic and non-academic policies, procedures and programs are accessible and accommodate diversity, with a focus on supporting student potential”*.

As noted within the Supporting Student Potential strategy:

*“Lakehead University serves a complex student body with diverse needs. Historically, over two-thirds of Lakehead’s undergraduate student population has faced multiple barriers to getting to university, including financial challenges, overcoming geographics and cultural barriers, and in some cases not only being the first in their family but the first in their community to pursue a university education.”*

The proposed changes to the University Regulation X Withdrawal, specifically the addition of a “self-late withdrawal option”, recognizes students may be impacted academically by their unique challenges and offers them an opportunity to minimize the impact on their academic progression without barrier for a defined number of credits.

This type of approach recognizes a number of issues faced by students, such as first year transitional challenges, extenuating and personal circumstances, mental health and stress, along with students who have fallen behind and/or not prepared to write their final exam. It also helps to address students who may choose not to pursue the petition process for a variety of reasons, as well as address the length of time a petition can take.

Late Withdrawal has become more accepted and promoted by universities as a way to support students. Within the Ontario university sector, McMaster University, University of Toronto and York University, for instance, have implemented similar mechanisms:

* [*McMaster University*](https://www.degroote.mcmaster.ca/student-news/new-late-withdrawal-policy/)*:* Introduced the option to help students who have fallen behind in a course and are not prepared to write final exams.
* [*University of Toronto*](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academics/late-withdrawal)*:* Approved a mechanism to assist students to remedy situations, particularly in their early years where personal or other circumstances means they are irretrievably behind in a course.
* [*York University*](https://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/course-withdrawal)*:* Provides students who are struggling in a course and/or have become overwhelmed by their circumstances to minimize the impact on their academic standing, reduce their course load and focus on successfully completing their other courses.

Students can pursue a late withdrawal, on their own without petition, for up to 3 FCE.

Providing students (with some exceptions) with a self-late withdrawal option is still a decision that must be strongly considered and weighed by students (e.g. impact on the student’s progression, financial costs). Academic advising to support student’s in their decisions is strongly recommended.

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**The following is the proposed approach to revise University Regulation X Withdrawal:**

Existing Regulation:

X Withdrawal

 (a) Withdrawal from Courses and/or the University:
Students who wish to withdraw from courses and/or the University must do so through Lakehead University's Web access. Students should refer to the course registration, addition and withdrawal dates in the Academic Schedule of Dates section of the Calendar for academic deadline dates, and students should also be aware of deadlines for the refund of fees.

(b) Withdrawals will not be permitted after the posted deadline date. The student will receive a mark based on the work completed and the mark will be counted as part of the student's average except in the circumstances described in Regulation V (g) above.

(c) Petitions:
Late withdrawal without academic penalty may be allowed in cases of illness or other compelling circumstances. A student seeking withdrawal for such reasons must petition the Registrar in writing within two months of the release of final grades, with supporting documentation. In the case of illness a Medical Certificate is required. The Registrar will then consult with the instructor or, if the instructor is not accessible, the Chair/Director of the instructor's academic unit. If the petition is granted, "W" (withdrew) will be assigned to the course. "W" is not considered a mark. In all other cases withdrawal from courses is not permitted after the deadline has passed.

**Proposed change:**

**X Withdrawal

(a) Withdrawal from a Course without Academic Penalty**Students may withdraw from a course with no academic penalty up to the Final Date to Withdaw (Drop) deadline. A course dropped by the deadline will not show on the student’s academic record. Withdrawing from a course may have financial penalties.

Students are required to withdraw from a course using myInfo. Discontinuing attendance, notifying an instructor, or other means do not constitute official withdrawal from a course.

Withdrawals will not be permitted after the withdrawal deadline date. Students will receive a mark based on the work completed and the mark will count towards the student’s average except in the circumstances in Regulation V (g) *Failure, No Withdrawal*.

**(b) Late Withdrawal:**Students who do not drop the course by the Final date to Withdraw (Drop) deadline may have the option to Late Withdrawal from a course. A Late Withdrawal will remain on the student’s transcript showing as “W” (withdrawn). No credit will be retained and they will not be included in the student’s average or considered an attempt. Removal of the W notation is not permitted and no refund of tuition fees shall be provided for courses dropped through the late withdrawal option.

***1. Self-Late Withdrawal:*** Students may Self-Late Withdrawal for **up to a total of 3 FCE** over the course of their studies at Lakehead up to the final day of the class.

Exceptions:

* The Self-Late withdrawal option does not apply for the following: Graduate level courses, students in a Master’s or PhD program taking an undergraduate course, JD program, practica/internships/co-op or other experiential learning placements, exchange or courses taken at another institution, or students undergoing an academic misconduct investigation.

***2. Petition for Late Withdrawal:*** Once a student has 3 FCE Late Withdrawals or should a student wish to be considered for withdrawal after the last day of classes, a Petition will need to be submitted for consideration to Enrolment Services. A Petition for Late Withdrawal is not automatic. Petitions must be submitted, along with supporting documentation demonstrating exceptional circumstances to support the request, within two months of the release of the final grades.

Exceptions:

* The Petition for Late withdrawal option does not apply for the following: students that have graduated from the university, exchange or courses taken at another institution, students undergoing an academic misconduct investigation or students requiring a retroactive accommodation.

**(c) Withdrawal from the University:**

**Undergraduate Students:**An undergraduate who wish to withdraw voluntarily from the University after they have registered for their courses must withdraw from their courses as per the X Withdrawal Regulations (a) and (b).

An undergraduate student not registered for two or more consecutive years must re-apply to enter a program of study and will be governed by the academic regulations and program requirements in effect at the time of readmission with the provisions of I General Regulations 1 (c).

Exceptions to this regulation are for undergraduate students registered in the Faculties of Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Natural Resources Management, and the Schools of Nursing and Social Work, where students are required to re-apply after one year of non-registration and will be governed by the academic regulations and program requirements in effect at the time of readmission. Students in the Faculty of Law must refer to the Faculty Regulations.

**Graduate Students:**Graduate students who wish to withdraw voluntarily from the University are to refer to the Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations.