

College of Agricultural Sciences - Office for Undergraduate Education

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING FACULTY SENATE PETITIONS

Note: The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education does not grant petitions automatically. If strong documented justification is provided, petitions are granted for unusual circumstances that are beyond the student's control. Petitions are typically rejected if the main justification appears to be to raise the student's grade-point average (e.g., to get into a major or medical school).

Please discuss your intent to file a petition to the Faculty Senate with your academic advisor. Students are responsible for preparing the request letter, obtaining all supporting documents, university forms, transcripts and relevant registration records as described below.

Incomplete packets will not be accepted.

Complete packets should be delivered to:

Office for Undergraduate Education, Attn: K. Pletcher
101 Agricultural Administration Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802

The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education provides the cover sheet, reviews the packet, provides a recommendation and signs and forwards all materials to the Faculty Senate for their review. There are no set Faculty Senate meeting dates for reviews, student petitions are reviewed as they are received in the Faculty Senate Office.

Processing your petition will take **at least 3 weeks** from the date you submit it to this office (average is 4-5 weeks). The Faculty Senate Office will notify you of their decision via a letter sent to the address you provided. Please allow **another 2-3 weeks** (after the decision) for the Registrar to update your student record.

Each petition must contain the following information and forms:

- 1) **Student Letter** (*signed and dated*). The student should prepare a brief and factual letter with strong documented justifications that warrant the request.
 - a. **Student letter must also include the following (See Examples on Pages 4-5):**
 - i. Addressed to the *Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education*.
 1. Date the petition was requested
 2. Clear statement of the requested action(s)
 - a. Reason(s) that warrant the requested action
 - b. Reason(s) that the procedures in Policies and Rules could not be followed at the time that conditions warranted.
 - c. If the request is for a selective late drop of one or two courses from a previous semester, the student must explain why the circumstances did not affect all of courses that semester (e.g., a broken leg might affect a volleyball course, but not a calculus course).
 3. Student PSU ID number, current address, email address and phone number.
 - ii. If a retroactive withdrawal is requested, the student must explain why the withdrawal was not done before the last day of that semester's classes.
- 2) **Letter of support from advisor (or College faculty member)** with their level of support indicated.
- 3) **Memo(s) from student's instructors** (if applicable) involved in each request describing the situation.
- 4) **Documentation** – It is the ***student's responsibility*** to collect and submit, as part of the petition, any documentation that is relevant to the request.
 - a. If the petition involves illness, medical disorders, etc., the student must provide medical documentation. Information from the attending physician should establish the impact the medical condition had on the student's academic situation and it should be on letterhead and signature. University offices that can provide documentation include: University Health Services (UHS), Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Disability Resources (SDR), and Educational Equity.

- b. Documentation from the appropriate academic unit or advising unit is required if the justification for the request is given as one of the following: unfair teaching practice, misinformation from University personnel about a University regulation, policy or procedure, an administrative or advising error.
- c. If the petition is for retroactive withdrawal, an additional Student Aid Office form must be completed and added to the packet (*even if a student is not receiving aid*):
 - i. **Domestic students** must complete the **Student Aid Review for Retroactive Withdrawal**
 - International students** must complete the **International Student Form for Retroactive Withdrawal**

Note: International students MUST consult with both DISSA & DGOL offices even if they don't check the box at the top with their signature.

- 5) **Supporting University Forms:** [Forms available at http://www.registrar.psu.edu/student_forms/]
 - a. **Transcript.** Current unofficial transcript is required with each petition.
 - i. A transcript can be obtained from LionPATH under the '**Academic Records**' tab
 - b. Depending on the nature of the request, the following forms may be required:
 - i. **Registration Adjustment (Add/Drop) Form** (required in such cases as retroactive drop/add, request to exceed late drop credit limit, etc.) with appropriate signatures. **Students may not late drop or retroactively drop a class where there is an academic integrity issue in process**
 - ii. **Withdrawal Form** with appropriate signatures.
 - iii. **Grade Change Authorization Form** (these forms are not handled by the student but are initiated by the department in which the course was offered and forwarded to K. Pletcher to include in packet).
- 6) **Completed Checklist** for type of petition being submitted. See Faculty Senate website for appropriate check sheet: (<http://senate.psu.edu/students/petitions>).

Trauma Drop:

At University Park, if a student has been a victim of a violent crime (e.g., rape or physical abuse) and would like to petition to retroactively drop classes or withdraw from a semester for reasons related to the crime, a trauma drop/withdrawal is initiated by the student in consultation with the following appropriate people:

- Trauma drop/withdrawal procedures should be followed when a student's circumstances require unusual confidentiality (e.g., the victim of a sexual assault or violent crime). This procedure is streamlined to reduce the number of people involved in processing.
 - At University Park, a trauma drop is initiated by the student in consultation with the following individuals:
 - If the student has not met with a counselor at the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the student should consult with Margaret Lorah, Director, Gender Equity Center, 204 Boucke Building, 814-863-2027.
 - If the student has met with a CAPS counselor, the student should consult with this counselor; or the Trauma Drop Coordinator for CAPS, 501 Student Health Center, 814-863-0395.
 - At non-University Park campuses, a strong letter of support from a staff member, petitioning for trauma drop/withdrawal may be forwarded to the appropriate contact for processing. The appropriate contacts are:
 - The Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the student should consult with Margaret Lorah, Director, Gender Equity Center, 204 Boucke Building, 814-863-2027.
 - If the student has met with a CAPS counselor, the student should consult with this counselor; or the Trauma Drop Coordinator for CAPS, 501 Student Health Center, 814-863-0395.
 - A student letter is not required.
 - The appropriate University form (http://www.registrar.psu.edu/student_forms/index.cfm) must be submitted with this request.

Students are responsible for preparing the request, completing all required University forms, and obtaining supporting documents.

Preparation Check List for your Faculty Senate Petition

*(This check list is just for you as you gather and prepare your documents for your petition.
You must include the official Senate Check Sheet for your type of petition when you submit)*

- Student Letter – dated & signed
- Transcript (unofficial) – current
- Advisor Letter – dated & signed
- Medical Documentation (for petitions involving medical issues)
- Instructor Letter(s) – *if needed*- dated & signed
- University Form(s) as needed
- Other Documentation
- Registration Adjustment (Add/Drop*) Form available at: <http://www.registrar.psu.edu>

****Students MAY NOT late drop or retroactively late drop a class
where there is an academic integrity issue in process***

- Withdrawal Form (available at: <http://www.registrar.psu.edu>)
- Grade Change Authorization (department provides)
- Student Aid Office Review form (if request is for retroactive withdrawal)
- Completed Checklist for type of petition being submitted (<http://senate.psu.edu/students/petitions>)

Submit your completed packet for review and submission to the Faculty Senate:

College of Agricultural Sciences
Office for Undergraduate Education
Attn. K. Pletcher
101 Ag Adm. Bldg.

**Allow 4-6 weeks for a decision memo to be sent to the address you provided in your letter
Allow another 2-3 weeks after the decision, if granted, for the Registrar to update your student records**

Please consult a Penn State academic adviser for more detailed information.

SAMPLE STUDENT LETTERS FOR THE FACULTY SENATE

These samples include all of the required elements for a student petition letter (date, a clear statement of the requested action, description of the conditions that warrant an exception, the reason University policy and/or procedure could not be followed, student's name and signature, current address, PSU ID number, current phone number, and e-mail address).

Letter 1 (Request for a Retroactive Withdrawal)

September 1, 2020

Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education
Subcommittee on Academic Standards
University Faculty Senate Office
101 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802

To Vice-Chair of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education:

I am petitioning for a retroactive withdrawal from fall semester 2019 for medical reasons. In the third week of fall, I was diagnosed with mono at the University Health Center. Although I was able to keep up with my courses at first, sometimes I was too tired to go to class and I fell behind in my work. Luckily, my instructors were very understanding and allowed me to make up exams and turn in papers late. Although I was behind, I felt I could keep making up the work. Then, just as final exams were beginning, I was hospitalized with pneumonia. I realized then that I was just not going to be able to make up the work I had missed and turn in all my final projects and take my final exams. I decided that I needed to withdraw, but it was already past the withdrawal deadline at that point. I would have requested deferred grades in order to complete the work next semester, but I will be having surgery on January 4 and therefore will not be able to do schoolwork for an extended time. Under the circumstances, it will not be possible to complete the work by the deferred grade deadline.

I would appreciate it if the Faculty Senate would allow me to withdraw from last semester even though I missed the withdrawal deadline. I have enclosed documentation from the health center and from my family doctor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Q. Student
123 Old Main Street
State College, PA 16803
PSU ID# 912345678
E-mail: jqs999@psu.edu
Phone: 814-555-1212

Letter 2 (Request for a Retroactive Late Course Drop)

September 1, 2020

Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education
Subcommittee on Academic Standards
University Faculty Senate Office
101 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802

To Vice-Chair of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education:

I am petitioning to retroactively late drop Marketing 437 and 440 from fall semester 2019. On December 3, 2019, I was hit by a pickup truck on Route 322 in Lewistown, PA. I suffered a severe concussion and my left patella was broken in several places (please see attached medical documentation and the hospital records). Since the accident, I underwent two surgeries to have my kneecap rebuilt and another operation to have the hardware removed. I was unable to attend my classes for the rest of the semester. I was able to complete Marketing 426 and 428 from my home, but I was unable to complete Marketing 437 and 440 because both courses required a practicum, which I was unable to attend—thus, my reason for being selective in asking for a retroactive late drop of these two courses.

This letter serves as my formal petition for a retroactive late drop from the two courses and my explanation of the circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Q. Student
123 Old Main Street
State College, PA 16803
PSU ID# 912345678
E-mail: jqs999@psu.edu
Phone: 814-555-1212