

College of Agricultural Sciences - Office for Undergraduate Education

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING FACULTY SENATE PETITIONS

Students need to discuss their intent to file a petition to the Faculty Senate with their academic advisor and then work with their advisor to put together a complete packet.

Please Note: The Faculty Senate committee does not grant petitions automatically. If you have strong justification for your request (documentation is required), petitions can be granted for unusual circumstances that are beyond a student's control. Petitions are not acceptable if the justification is just to raise your GPA.

Students are responsible for preparing a **complete** packet by obtaining all the supporting documents, university forms, transcripts and relevant registration records, etc., as described below. **Incomplete packets will be returned.**

Very Important – Use a Checklist: To ensure completeness, students should use the checklists provided to prepare their type of petition. See the Senate website for the appropriate check sheet: (<http://senate.psu.edu/students/petitions/>)

Each petition must contain the following information, forms, documentation and supporting information:

1. **Student Letter** - student prepares their letter (via this [petition letter link](#)) - that will require them to provide:
 - Clear statement of the requested action with all the justifications that warrant the request
 - Description of the conditions that warrants an exception and the reason why the University policy and/or procedure could not be followed or completed by the deadline
 - PSU ID number and email
 - Current address and phone number
2. **Medical Documentation** - If the petition involves illness, medical or mental disorders, etc., the student must provide medical documentation from their physician or professional (on letterhead and with signature). This documentation should indicate the severity of the condition and what effect this had on the circumstances described in the petition.
3. **Other Supporting Documentation examples** (*as needed depending on the nature of the request*):
 - Statements from a counselor, court records, hospital records, newspaper articles, documents from appropriate academic, administrative, or advising unit.
 - Letters from student's instructors involved in each request describing the situation.
 - Letter of support from their advisor (or a faculty member) with their level of support indicated is also helpful
4. **Transcript** - A current unofficial transcript is required with each petition.
5. **Supporting University Forms:** (*available at <http://www.registrar.psu.edu/> under Student Forms*)
 Depending on the nature of the request, the following forms may be required for your petition request:
 - Registration Adjustment (Add/Drop) Form** (required in such cases as; retroactive drop/add, request to exceed late drop credit limit, etc.) with appropriate signatures. *Please Note: students may not late drop or retroactively drop a class where there is an academic integrity issue in process*
 - Withdrawal Form** with appropriate signatures.
 - Grade Change Authorization Form** - these forms are not available online and are not handled by the student, but the student is to request that forms be completed by the department in which the course was offered and the dept. will then forward them to K. Pletcher to include in packet.
6. If the petition is for **Retroactive Withdrawal** and the student received student aid, an additional **Student Aid Office form** must be **completed** and added to the packet. A completed form requires the student to meet with a Student Aid office member and get their signature on the Student Aid form **before** submitting it with their packet.
 - 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 box at the top with their signature.

Complete packets should be delivered or *emailed to: *Office for Undergraduate Education, Attn: K. Pletcher, 101 Agricultural Administration Bldg., University Park, PA*
 *Email: kjs8@psu.edu

The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education will review the packet for completeness and forward the packet to the Faculty Senate for 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 on your request via email. Please allow **another 2-3 weeks** (after the decision) for the Registrar to update your student record.

See next page for tips to help you make a stronger and complete petition packet

- Students should present their case in a way that demonstrates how their extenuating circumstances affected their academic performance.
- Students should also explain steps that they are taking that will prevent them from being in the same situation again (if applicable).
- Do not mention the need to improve your GPA. The focus should be the extenuating circumstances, and how they affected your academic performance, etc.
- Provide written documentation for each and every extenuating circumstance mentioned in your student letter.
 - Students do need to provide at least one piece of supporting documentation in order to have your petition submitted. If you don't provide the documentation requested, the academic unit will not support the request when making a recommendation to the Senate committee.
- Your supporting documentation should be as official as possible, meaning that letters should contain letterhead and signatures, and emails should contain the header with To/From/Date/Subject.
- Be sure that the petition documentation reflects the semester(s) for which you are requesting a retroactive action.
 - For instance, providing a letter for being seen by a physician during the Fall 2020 semester is not necessarily helpful if the student is requesting a retroactive withdrawal for the Spring 2020 semester, unless the letter specifically states that the student's issues started during the Spring semester and continued.
- For medical documentation, a letter from the student's health care provider describing the diagnosis, severity, duration, and timeline of an illness/injury and ideally explaining how the illness/injury may have affected their academic performance is always much more helpful than providing appointment dates, lab results, or after visit summaries.
- Letters of support from an instructor or adviser who were aware of a student's extenuating circumstances are always helpful.
- Be sure that the petition makes good sense. If there is documentation provided but the Senate committee cannot figure out how it relates, it is not helpful.

See <https://senate.psu.edu/students/petitions/> for additional information and FAQs.