

Appendix A

Initial Information

Options for Dropping Classes and Leaves from the University

There are times when life becomes overwhelming and it begins to have an effect on your academics. There are several options when this occurs. You may not meet the criteria for all of them but want to make sure you are aware of your choices. There are individual guidelines and forms that must be completed with approvals in most cases approved before taking effect.

Dropping Classes to decrease your academic demands. Dropping a class or classes has to be completed by a date indicated on the academic calendar. Sometimes if you can lessen the demands on your time you are able to maintain good grades and continue through the semester. Access will not allow you to drop your last class. To drop a class or classes you should speak to your advisor.

Incompletes are granted by the professor of each individual class. This is a good option if it is towards the end of the semester and you are in good standing in the class. Although your clinician may write a letter in support of this, it is the professor's decision to grant an incomplete and to determine how much of an extension you will receive. If they do grant an *Incomplete*, you will have extended time to complete the requirements. However, if you do not complete the requirements by the date agreed upon with your professor, the Incomplete could change to a failing grade.

Academic Withdrawal can be handled through your advisor and/or your academic dean. This must be done prior to the final withdrawal date. A withdrawal, whether it be Academic or Medical, must include all of your classes. The only way to drop individual classes is by utilizing the drop class process by the "Last day to drop a class". Your transcript will show "W"s. Refund amounts may vary slightly depending on which school are you enrolled. This information can be found on the registrar's website.

Medical Withdrawal has certain guidelines that are taken into consideration and polices that must followed before it is granted. Medical withdrawals are only considered for debilitating physical or mental illness. Medical withdrawals and regular withdrawals *appear the same on the student's transcript* but additional stipulations may be placed on Medical Withdrawals. Registration for future semesters is cancelled once a medical withdrawal is processed.

If you are requesting a withdrawal for a physical reason (i.e. major surgery or prolonged hospitalization) you are encouraged to visit with one of the physician medical directors at the health center. If you are unable to meet with the medical director you should make arrangements (obtain releases, etc) so that one of the physician medical directors can review your medical records and speak to your clinicians. All pertinent medical records (progress notes, operative notes, discharge summaries, labs and xrays) should be sent for review. A note requesting a withdrawal from a treating physician will not be sufficient. If it is determined that you meet the criteria for a medical withdrawal the Petition will be signed and submitted to the registrars' office.

Requests for reenrollment must be received in writing. You must again provide all treatment records to be considered for readmission.

WITHDRAWALS REQUESTED FROM CAPS:

If you are requesting to withdrawal for mental health reasons you will need to meet with a CAPS Staff clinician for an assessment. If you are in treatment in the community the assessment will include a conversation with your clinician. If you are hospitalized or unable to see a CAPS clinician, you will need to make arrangements (obtain releases, etc) so a CAPS clinician can speak to your clinicians. If it is determined that you meet the criteria for a medical withdrawal, the Petition to Withdrawal is submitted to the registrars' office. Your transcript will show "W"'s.

You must be in treatment and show three months of stability prior to returning. This means that at the minimum, you will not be eligible to return the semester immediately following your withdrawal.

There are certain criteria that must be met before you can return to the university after a medical withdrawal is granted for Mental Health reasons:

- ♦ You must show a minimum of three months of medical/mental health stability.
- ♦ Your treating clinician, hospital or team must recommend your return. You will need to sign a release allowing a CAPS staff member to speak to your clinician.
- ♦ You must meet with a CAPS staff member for an evaluation to determine your readiness to return and to approve your return to SMU.
- ♦ In addition to treatment, you must show that you are able to handle a structured day. This may be shown through employment, taking a class (perhaps at a community college) or volunteerism during the time of the withdrawal.

The Dean of Students will be notified of the recommendation for the "hold" to be removed after you have been approved by CAPS staff to return.

Once readmitted you must adhere to the agreed upon follow up treatment plan for six months following readmission. Failure to do so may result in a hold being placed upon your registration.

Leave of Absence is a temporary leave from the university. It can be taken for a variety of reasons, including medical reasons, family crisis, financial issues or academic difficulties. A Leave or Absence Request Form should be completed anytime you are planning on missing a semester of school (except for the summer

sessions.) A leave of absence can be for one semester or one academic year. It can be extended by contacting your academic department representative.

You will need to complete a Leave of Absence form in addition to the forms required for an academic withdrawal, a medical withdrawal or dropping classes. A leave can also be done prior to registration of classes. It does not automatically cancel your classes. If you are doing a medical withdrawal through CAPS, we will have you complete the form in our office. Any other time, you will need to go through your advisor.

All of the options include speaking to designated SMU departments, completing required forms, and obtaining the appropriate approvals. Please do not hesitate to ask your CAPS clinician if you have any questions.