

Policy Number/Title:	3.6.4 Withdrawals (Recipients of Federal Title IV federal aid)
Effective Since:	10/12/2016
Last Revision Approved:	07/30/2025
Responsible Office:	Financial Aid; Enrollment Management and Marketing

1. Scope:

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2. Definitions:

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3. Policy:

Federal regulations provide that students must earn their federal financial aid award amount(s). Federal financial aid includes: Pell Grant, Supplemental Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Direct Loan (Subsidized and Unsubsidized), Parent PLUS Loan, Graduate PLUS Loan, and TEACH Grant. Winthrop University awards and disburses a student's financial aid at the start of each term (period). However, a student is not considered to have "earned" that entire financial aid award unless the student completes more than 60 percent of the period. The financial aid office is required to perform a Return of Title IV calculation for students who do not complete their entire period as a result of an Official Withdrawal or an Unofficial Withdrawal.

Official Withdrawals

An official withdrawal occurs when a student withdraws from all courses at Winthrop University. Students should review the Withdrawal Form listed on the Office of Records & Registration's Web site.

A student's withdrawal date is determined based upon when a student began the official withdrawal process or provided official notification to Winthrop University of his/her intent to withdraw. If a student did not begin the official withdrawal process (e.g. emergency medical withdrawal), Winthrop University would use the date that it became aware that the student ceased attendance/participation. Winthrop University will try to determine the student's last date of attendance/participation in an academically-related activity in circumstances where Winthrop University believes the student stopped attending classes before the withdrawal process began.



Academically related activities include but are not limited to: physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students; submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam, an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that is assigned by the school; participating in an online discussion about academic matters; or, initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Unofficial Withdrawals

If a student who began attendance/participation and has not officially withdrawn, fails to earn a passing grade or earned F in at least one course offered over an entire period, Winthrop University must assume, for recipients of federal Title IV aid that the student has unofficially withdrawn.

Winthrop University will try to determine the student's last date of attendance/participation in an academically-related activity. If a student's last date of attendance/participation is unable to be determined, Winthrop University will use the midpoint of the period.

4. Procedures:

Official Withdrawals - The financial aid office is notified by the Office of Records and Registration when a student officially withdraws from Winthrop University.

Unofficial Withdrawals - At the end of each grading period, the Office of Financial Aid generates a report to determine which students are considered to have unofficially withdrawn. The Office of Financial Aid contacts each student's professors to determine the last date of attendance/participation. If a student's last date of attendance/participation is unable to be determined, the Office of Financial Aid will use the midpoint of the student's period. When timing allows, the Office of Financial Aid notifies students who appear to have attended less than 60% of the payment period. Students are given approximately two weeks to provide proof of an academically-related activity later in the semester before the Office of Financial Aid proceeds with the Return of Title IV calculation.

The Office of Financial Aid uses the Return of Title IV statutory formula developed by the Department of Education for both official and unofficial withdrawals. The formula determines the percentage of the period completed by the student by calculating the number of calendar days completed in the period divided by the total number of calendar days in the period. Scheduled breaks of at least five consecutive days (e.g. spring break) are excluded from this calculation. The percentage of the period completed is then applied to a student's federal financial aid to determine how much of the financial aid was "earned." If the amount of financial aid "earned" is less than the amount of financial aid the student received, the "unearned" funds must be returned no later than 45 days after the date Winthrop University determined the student withdrew. For example, if a student has



attended 20% of the period, it will be determined that the student has “earned” 20% of his/her federal financial aid and the other 80% percent will be returned as “unearned.” Federal Title IV financial that is “unearned” is returned in the following order: Unsubsidized Direct Loan, Subsidized Direct Loan, Graduate PLUS Loan, Parent PLUS Loan, Pell Grant, FSEOG, and TEACH Grant. In rare circumstances, if the amount of financial aid received by the student is less than the amount the student “earned,” the student may be eligible to receive a post-withdrawal disbursement of the “earned” aid that the student was eligible for but did not receive.

Any fee adjustments provided by Winthrop University as a result of a student’s withdrawal do not impact the Return of Title IV statutory formula. Refer to Fee Adjustments for Courses Dropped/Withdrawals for further information.

5. Resources:

Records and Registration - Withdrawing from a Course/Withdrawing from the University:

<https://www.winthrop.edu/recandreg/withdrawing-from-a-course.aspx>

Student Account Services – Fee Adjustments

<https://www.winthrop.edu/student-account-services/fee-adjustments-for-courses-dropped-withdrawn.aspx>

6. History of Revisions:

07/30/2025	Minor Revisions
10/12/2016	Policy first established

7. Approvals:

President Signature/Date: