

<b>University Policy on Course Add/Drop and University Withdrawals/Leave of Absence</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b> Fall 2021 semester	<b>Last Revisions:</b> <i>Leave of Absence</i> – July 2015; Spring 2017 <i>Withdrawal and Drop Policy and Procedure</i> – October 2018 (DRAFT) – supersedes both above policies  <b>Works in conjunction with:</b> <i>Last Date of Attendance policy</i> (01/01/2015)
<b>Student Policy</b>	<b>Access:</b> University wide - public	Positions responsible for compliance: Provost (designee), Registrar

### ***Student Financial and Academic Liability for Adds, Drops, Leaves of Absence, and University Withdrawal***

When a student registers it is understood that he or she will pay in full all charges assumed at registration. Failure to attend classes does not alter the charges or entitle the student to a refund. Students will not be permitted to receive grades, transcripts, or diplomas until their student account is satisfied in full. In the event that Niagara University has to hire a collection company or attorney to collect delinquent accounts, the student must reimburse Niagara University for reasonable collection fees, or attorney fees, and court costs.

#### **Terms to be familiar with:**

**Block Tuition for Undergraduate Students:** Niagara University full-time undergraduate students pay a block tuition rate entitling them to register for 12 to 18\* credits hours per semester at a predefined tuition based on their academic program. **Students may drop courses and add courses and incur no additional charge in the published block cost of their academic program as long as they remain within this credit range.** *\*Students approved and registered for more than 18 credit hours are responsible for the cost of the additional credit hours with the exception of Military Science credit.* Anything under 12 undergraduate credit hours is considered part-time and not eligible for block tuition.

**Open Drop/Add (ODA):** The period of time after pre-registration and before the Restricted Drop/Add (RDA) period starts. Typically, ODA ends on the last day of the first week of the semester during the academic year. Students may drop and add courses freely during this period. Students are encouraged to seek the counsel of their advisor.

**Restricted Drop/Add (RDA):** The period of time after ODA which requires instructor permission to add a course, **but does not require instructor permission to drop a course.** Dropping a course during RDA does not result in a 'W' on the student transcript. Typically, RDA is the second week of the academic calendar.

**Dropping or Adding a course:** During ODA, a student who **drops a course** has the course removed from their schedule and transcript. No record of the enrollment remains on a student's academic record. During ODA periods students have the ability to drop and add courses freely and without instructor permission. Please refer to the appropriate refund schedule to determine financial liability.

During RDA, if a student drops **a course** there is no record of enrollment that remains on the student's academic record. However, to add a course during RDA, permission of the instructor is required.

Any student who wishes to drop a course (or courses) during ODA or RDA must fill out the on-line form, or inform the registrar; Whenever adjusting a class schedule for the semester, a student is strongly encouraged to seek the counsel of their academic advisors. The date of notification submission will serve as the last date of attendance in that class regardless of the processing of the request.

If the student has a unique status on campus (e.g., Athlete, Vincentian Scholar, NUOP) the student is strongly encouraged to check with the director of the affiliated program, along with the academic advisor, prior to dropping any course. as it may result in a change in status from full time to part time.

**Dropping/Withdrawing from courses that result in a change of status:** If a full-time undergraduate student drops courses that results in a change of status from full time to part time (part time student <12 credit hours during the liability/refund period) then their financial liability will be based on the difference between the full-time/block tuition they were originally charged and the P/T tuition of the courses for which they remain registered. Shifting from full time to part time status may affect a student's status as an athlete, may affect scholarships that are available, and may alter the financial aid package and the amount of federal and state aid available.

**Withdrawing from Niagara University:** A student who drops all coursework after the RDA period is considered to be withdrawn or on leave. (Note: if the student's intent is to return to Niagara after a defined absence it is classified as a leave, please see our Leave of Absence Policy). A student who drops all coursework (university withdrawal or university leave of absence) during or after RDA, will be subjected to a tuition refund based upon the refund table appearing below.

Regardless of whether a student withdraws from a few courses, withdraws from all courses, or takes a leave of absence from the University after RDA, they will receive an automatic "W" on all enrolled courses until the posted deadline where a student is required to be passing a course in order to receive a "W" for that semester. After this deadline, a student may still withdraw or request a leave of absence from their courses up until the last day of class (prior to the reading day). They will receive a "W" for courses they are passing or an "F" for courses they are failing at the time of the request. The Records Office will confirm the withdrawn course standings with the instructors. This deadline is typically around week 11 of the semester (but please confirm on the semester academic calendar <https://www.niagara.edu/academic-calendars>).

In order for a student to withdraw from the University or take a leave of absence from the University, approval is required. **Students must complete the appropriate forms (withdrawal from the University**

or Leave of Absence) and the date of submission (or requested date of leave if approved) would serve as the last day of attendance for grading and tuition refund purposes.

Universal Tuition Refund Eligibility: Depending on the date of a complete withdrawal form, a leave of absence form or change in enrollment status (e.g., full time to part time status) a student may be eligible for a partial refund of their tuition costs in accordance with annually published refund rates available with Student Accounts. **Traditional Fall and Spring Semesters, and courses that run for 10 weeks or more will follow the traditional refund schedule.** Students enrolled in Summer Sessions that run less than 10 weeks, Saturday sessions, or accelerated instructional modules less than 10 weeks will be refunded on a class basis utilizing the appropriate chart.

**TRADITIONAL FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS**

Week (from the beginning of Classes)	Percent of Tuition Refunded for Withdrawals and Leaves
1 <sup>st</sup> Week (ODA)	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Week (RDA)	80%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	60%
4 <sup>th</sup> Week	40%
5 <sup>th</sup> Week	20%
6 <sup>th</sup> Week on	0%

*\*ODA-Open Drop/Add Period RDA-Restricted Drop/Add Period*

**SUMMER, SATURDAY AND ACCELERATED MODULES**

After:	Percent of Tuition Refunded for Withdrawals and Leaves
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	40%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	0%

*\*Resident students that either withdraw from Niagara or choose at some point to leave the residence halls and commute are subject to the refund policies of the Office of Residence Life for Room & Board expenses.*

If a student should decide to withdraw from a course after the open first week drop/add period and is added to a course in the restricted, second week period, they will be refunded for the course dropped according to the above schedule and will be charged according to the tuition and fees schedule for any course added.

**Ontario Programs**

Ontario programs will abide by the refund schedules provided here with one exception: Refund for Ontario-based courses will be 100% for the first and second week, per provincial requirements, and will match the refund schedule for the third week and the weeks thereafter.

**ONTARIO TRADITIONAL FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS**

Week (from the beginning of Classes)	Percent of Tuition Refunded for Withdrawals and Leaves
1 <sup>st</sup> Week (ODA)	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Week (RDA)	100%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	60%
4 <sup>th</sup> Week	40%
5 <sup>th</sup> Week	20%
6 <sup>th</sup> Week on	0%

**ONTARIO ACCELERATED MODULES (8 OR FEWER CLASSES)**

After:	Percent of Tuition Refunded for Withdrawals and Leaves
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	40%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	0%

**Leave of Absence**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the Niagara University community and its students with a specific course of action regarding approved instances (both planned and immediate) when a student plans to take a temporary leave from Niagara University with the intent on returning within 1-2 semesters. The goal is to provide seamless reentry upon the leave’s conclusion without any need for reapplication to the university.

*IMPORTANT: Although a student does not have to reapply upon returning after the leave, Niagara’s policy is not an approved Title IV leave of absence; they won’t be considered as having in-school status during their leave for repayment status; these students are treated and reported as a withdrawal for Title IV purposes.*

**POLICY**

A student may need to request a temporary leave from the university on the basis of medical needs, military service/deployment, planned academic pauses based on course offerings, and unforeseen personal reasons/circumstances. This leave may be planned in advance and intentional where the student requests a leave for a semester or two at the conclusion of the current term in progress, or it may be of an immediate nature arising within the current semester due to an unforeseen circumstance. In both cases, the student - if approved - withdraws from the University under the normal withdrawal guidelines and dates above, but they will not need to re-apply upon their return.

Niagara University believes that arranging and returning from a Leave of Absence/Graduate Academic Pause should be a clear and supportive process, and to that end, has implemented the below-listed procedures and guidance.

*Planned/Intentional Leave of Absence:* For leaves beginning at the conclusion of a semester where no coursework is affected, the leave shall typically not exceed 1 year (2 academic semesters). As long as a student is in good academic standing at the conclusion of the current semester preceding the requested leave, seamless re-entry is granted upon their return to Niagara.

1. *Medical Leave:* All students begin by filling out the on-line leave of absence form. Medical leave for physical or mental health-related reasons will require the submission of a letter from a physician or a statement of support from Niagara's Director of Health Services.
2. *Military Leave:* Students should supply a copy of their military orders or appropriate documentation to the request. In the case of extended military deployment, a student can extend their leave by corresponding with the university in the interim. The student, direct family, or an appropriate officer of the US Armed Forces or Department of Defense can deliver this extension request.
3. *Planned and Intentional Leave for Personal Reasons:* A request for a break in studies for a planned personal reason such as bereavement, travel, employment, or other appropriate reasons should be clearly stated on the application. Leaves of longer than one academic year will not be granted; students should withdraw and will be required to reapply through the admissions process when they are ready to return.
4. *Graduate Academic Pause:* A graduate student who is purposefully skipping a semester of instruction (summer not included) due to course availability in the following semester identifies themselves and is granted a seamless leave requiring no additional requirement for re-entry beyond notification to the Registrar upon preparing for registration for activation. After one semester, if a student does not return in accordance with the pause they will be required to reapply in accordance with the University withdrawal process.

*Immediate or Emergency Leave of Absence:* For unforeseen situations that arise whereas a registered student seeks a leave in the midst of a semester and action must be taken on current in-progress coursework, leave shall typically not exceed 1 year (2 academic semesters). Since the student is attending class, the timing of the request will help determine how the leave will be processed. Requesting a leave provides students in a time of urgency or crisis with a quick way to withdraw from all their coursework while providing a path to return.

1. *Medical Leave:* All students begin by filling out the on-line leave of absence form. Medical leave for physical or mental health-related reasons will require the submission of a letter from a physician or a statement of support from Niagara's Director of Health Services.
2. *Military Leave:* Students should supply a copy of their military orders or appropriate documentation to the request as soon as possible. In the case of extended military deployment, a student can extend their leave by corresponding with the university in the interim. The student, direct family, or an appropriate officer of the US Armed Forces or Department of Defense can deliver the initial request if deployment is immediate.

*Emergency Leave for Personal Reasons:* Outside of a health or military reason, a Leave of Absence may be granted for extreme and justifiable personal reasons during a semester (family health issues, bereavement, etc.). A clear and detailed request must be submitted in writing. A supplemental individual meeting, although not required, may be requested. Approval of a committee consisting of the University Registrar, the Dean of Students, and the Director of Financial Aid will decide based on the merits, the circumstances, and in consultation with other campus offices and resources deemed relevant.

*Involuntary Leave:* In extraordinary circumstances when a student is unable or unwilling to take a voluntary leave of absence, the Dean of Students or a designee may invoke an involuntary leave of absence. For this to occur, it must be determined that the student's actions pose a direct threat to the safety of others and/or disrupt the living/learning environment for other students. Before an involuntary leave is considered, the Dean of Students will consult with the student and his or her parents) or guardian(s) and encourage a voluntary leave of absence.

Prior to placing a student on an involuntary leave, the Dean of Students or a designee will meet with the student and explain the reasons for consideration of the involuntary leave. The student will have an opportunity to respond through an individualized and objective review process. In determining whether an involuntary leave is necessary, the Dean of Students will confer with campus officials who can help evaluate whether a student's behavior poses a direct threat to the safety of others or disrupts the learning environment for other students. The Dean of Students or designee may require an assessment by health care and/or mental health professionals who can assist in making an informed decision. In all cases, reasonable accommodations that would mitigate the need for an involuntary leave will be considered. For instances where a student's behavior is judged by the Dean of Students or designee to pose an immediate and substantial disruption or threat to the safety of others, the dean or designee may take immediate action to place the student on an involuntary leave.

A student who is placed on involuntary leave may appeal the decision to the Vice President for Student Affairs within five (5) business days. The appeal must be received in writing and explain why the student believes the decision is inappropriate. The decision of the Vice President will be communicated to the student in writing and is considered final.

*Coursework and Billing Implications:* Since a mid-semester leave may have academic or financial implications, the university will make clear all student obligations at the time of approval.

1. The date of the leave's request -if approved- will be treated as a student's *Last Day of Attendance* for billing purposes in accordance with the university's aforementioned payment/refund schedule (see above).
2. The approved last date of attendance will also determine whether a student's course is dropped or marked with a W or F in accordance with the university's withdrawal policy and deadlines.

Note: Late semester personal leave of absences requested **after** the semester's *Last Day to Drop a Class without Instructor Permission* are not encouraged. If a student is not passing a course, the grade will result in a "F" unless the students can make arrangements with their instructor for an Incomplete ("I") being granted. In cases where confirmation of class status is required, the Registrar's Office will seek out all confirmations allowing students to focus on the situation at hand. A student will have a deadline of two months after their return from absence (as requested on their leave) to complete the coursework. If a student is passing at the point of the request, then a "W" may be applied to the course if the student wishes not to pursue the possibility of an incomplete with their instructor. If the student does not return to Niagara, or fails to complete the work by the deadline, the incomplete courses will become F's after the deadline has passed.