

University of Florida Office of Health and Legal Professions Advising – A Guide for Pre-Health Students at the University of Florida

To Drop or Not to Drop a Class – That is the Question

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Here's how to get the answer: Read choices 1 & 2 and follow the prompts based on your situation.

- 1) I am passing my course with at least a C or better and I can realistically maintain that grade at the end of the semester.

Yes: Consider using all resources to help maintain your current status by seeing the Instructor, seeking tutoring or study skills advising, etc. - Refer to paragraph B

No: Refer to paragraph A

- 2) Is your current situation due to extenuating circumstances for which you had no control? medical illness or illness with immediate family? recent death of immediate family member? personal problems for which you have no control? etc?

Yes: Refer to paragraph C

No: Refer to paragraph A

- A) Have you exhausted all methods of getting help or used all available resources at UF?

Tutoring? Office visits with the instructor? Study Skills Advising? Group Study? Counseling Center? Career Counseling? See your academic advisor? See your undergraduate coordinator?

Yes: But still doing poorly and no earning a C or better and chances of raising current grade is not possible - Refer to paragraph C.

No: But at this point it is too little too late to make an impact to realistically raise my grade to a C or higher - Refer to paragraph C.

- B) You are currently earning at least a solid C or better in the course and it is very likely you can raise or maintain your current grade status by the end of the term.

If this is true, it is recommended you keep the course. There is no point in repeating a course for which you will receive a passing grade. It will take up additional time, especially if it is a science course or a course that is part of a sequence. Consider taking an additional upper division course related to the one you are earning a C in and earning a much higher grade in the new course. This demonstrates motivation to succeed a different level and illustrates your drive for excellence. For example, if you are earning a C in BSC 2010, you should complete BSC 2011 with a B+ or higher and then also take PCB 3063 (Genetics) and earn a grade of B+ or higher. This speaks more of your abilities and your motivation as opposed to just repeating a course.

If you decide to drop the course, know that grades of W tend to leave a more negative impression than a grade of C. There are several ways a grade of W can be interpreted: 1) you were failing the course or 2) you were not up to the challenge and you much rather give up than accept the consequence of earning a passing grade. In either case, the schools "KNOW" you are manipulating your GPA (since W's do not calculate into your grade average.) A pattern of W's on your transcripts will negatively affect your application profile. Exceptions are noted if is due to extenuating circumstances.

If you decide to drop the course, do not repeat it at a different school. By doing so, you are sending the

message you were not able to handle the course at UF and you rather complete the course from a different school that is not as challenging or rigorous compared to UF. Admissions committees take into consideration HOW you earned your total GPA. A pattern of courses taken outside UF will negatively impact the strength of your application.

- C) You are currently earning a grade of less than a C and it is not realistic or it is not mathematically possible to raise your grade to a C or higher by the end of the term or it is due to extenuating circumstances.

If this is true, it is recommended that you drop the course assuming you have available drops left. If not then you will need to file a petition requesting an additional drop with your college's advising office. Keep in mind petitions are not always approved, so you will have to do your best to earn at least a grade of D in case your petition to get additional drops is denied. Usually if you have an extenuating circumstance that can be verified by documentation, the petition is most likely approved.

If you have to petition for additional drops, then you have established a pattern of making poor judgment and shown inability to be successful or handle challenges. Exceptions are noted for those with extreme extenuating circumstances. Otherwise, you will need to re-evaluate why you have been dropping classes and reflect on why you are pursuing this path. If due to circumstances beyond your control, be prepared to provide an explanation either on your application or at the interview.

Reflect on how you got into your situation of having to drop courses and learn to find ways to prevent this situation from happening again in the future. You do not want to be in situation of having to decide about dropping another course.

Procedure to drop courses:

- 1) Get a Course Schedule Change Form from the Registrar's Office (Criser 222) or your Academic Advising Office.
- 2) Fill out the application to drop the course you no longer want to keep. Keep in mind that a Lecture and its related Lab course can count as one drop if dropped together on the same form.
- 3) Obtain the signature of the Dean of your college.
- 4) Submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office no later than the published deadline for processing.

*** College of Liberal Arts and Sciences students will not need to bring the completed forms to Criser Hall. Someone from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences office will deliver the forms for you.

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Final remarks:

The admissions committee reviews the entire academic record as a whole. One "W" will not have any effect especially if it occurred during your freshman year and there are no further occurrences in your academic career. A pattern of W's however will reflect badly on your academic ability and your ability to make good decisions. A pattern of W's and retaking courses at a different institution will show you are not up to the challenge and this should serve as an opportunity for you to explore a different career path. If you dropped courses due to extenuating circumstances, the schools are forgiving in those instances, provided that you showed academic excellence in later terms.