

**A
GUIDE
TO
PETITIONS**

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA**

Guide to Petitions

What is a Petition?

A petition is a request to the Committee on Standing for an exemption from a rule, regulation or deadline of the University Toronto Mississauga, as set out in the Academic Calendar.

These rules, regulations and deadlines are needed to manage registration, assessment and records for a large, diverse student population. They are made known to all students, faculty and administrators in a transparently equitable manner in section 7.18 of the calendar (www.utm.utoronto.ca/regcal). Students are responsible for knowing the rules and regulations and the university will apply these rules and regulations fairly and equitably to all students.

U of T Mississauga acknowledges that, from time to time, students encounter unforeseen and uncontrollable situations that can severely interfere with their capacity to fulfill their academic obligations. Through the petition procedure students may seek a remedy for the academic consequences that may result from such situations. Students who encounter uncontrollable situations — for example, illness or overwhelming domestic difficulties — should seek academic advising at an early stage and adjust their course load if necessary. Petitions arising from failure to prioritize academic responsibilities or from inattention or carelessness will not be granted.

Advising

Students should not hesitate to seek clarification about any of the rules and regulations in the Academic Calendar from an academic advisor in the Office of the Registrar or from the faculty advisor in the academic departments.

U of T Mississauga Office of the Registrar staff members are available to assist in clarifying and interpreting the rules and regulations and can advise students regarding petition procedures and issues along with referring them to skilled services on campus.

Academic progress is of paramount importance and if students are experiencing difficulties, they should not allow embarrassment, shyness or cultural factors to prevent them from seeking advising, whether academic, personal or financial.

Please note: All supporting documentation provided by a student along with information exchanged at advisory meetings will remain confidential. Petitions are reviewed in confidence by or on behalf of the Committee on Standing.

Staff members in the Office of the Registrar are not required to support all requests and may inform a student when the request is unlikely to be granted due to lateness or insufficient grounds.

It is also important to note that all information discussed with academic advisors concerning petitions and appeals will be shared with Petition Staff as well as the Committee on Standing if it is deemed pertinent to the case. Information submitted through petitions (including personal statements, medical documentation, etc...) is reviewed and assessed by the Committee on Standing.

Filing a Petition

- ❑ Meet with an academic advisor at the Office of the Registrar (if advising is required).
- ❑ Submit a petition request using the online petition form.
 - The petitions checklists were developed to assist students in submitting a complete and comprehensive petition for consideration by the Committee on Standing.
- ❑ If a student is planning on booking a flight home, it is pertinent that they look at the exam period published in the Academic Calendar so that they know when they are expected to be available to write exams.
 - Petitions will not be accepted for missed final exams to accommodate personal/vacation plans or employment obligations.
- ❑ Within the online petition form, write a clear and concise statement (no longer than two pages) stating the reasons why compliance with the rule, regulation or deadline is/was not possible, or why special consideration is being requested.
- ❑ Documentation must be provided within 72 hours of a missed examination or within one week of initiation of an online petition for all other requests. Students are also required to declare their absence on ACORN on the day of the missed final examination (or by the day after at the latest).

Deadlines

Important deadline dates for petition submissions:

Missed exam: Within 72 hours of the missed final examination.

Late withdrawal: 6 months after the end of the academic term when the course was taken. October for Fall/Winter Session courses and February for Summer Session courses.

Course Overload: Before the start of academic term and not later than the first day of classes for an academic term.

All petition matters are urgent and petition requests should be initiated with the Office of the Registrar without delay. Specific deadlines have been established for filing petitions and will not be waived.

Students are expected to submit petitions to the Office of the Registrar within the deadlines outlined under "Examinations" as well as the petition checklists. Failure to submit petitions by the deadline outlined by the University may result in a refused petition request. If a petition is submitted late, students are expected to explain the extenuating circumstances that caused their lateness.

All supporting documentation should be submitted immediately for the processing of petition requests. Delays in receiving documentation will lengthen the response time for petition decisions. For certain petitions other departments need to be contacted. This process can be expedited with immediate supporting documentation accompanying petition requests.

Before submission of a petition request students should ensure they have fulfilled all of the requirements listed on the petition checklists. The petition checklists were developed by the UTM Petitions staff in order to assist students submit complete and comprehensive petitions for faster consideration by the Committee on Standing. Complications in the petition decision process will be limited if students follow the steps outlined within the checklist(s).

Confidentiality

All student records, including your petition request and submitted documentation are confidential. The University has a strict policy on this, and only those staff members who have access to relevant portions of an official student academic record are for purposes related to that staff member's duties.

Petition staff members may need to consult with instructors or the academic department staff to clarify the particulars of a student petition prior to the Committee on Standing reaching a decision.

Petitioning is an evidence based process. When reviewing all petition requests, the Committee on Standing is not made aware of the student's identity (name, student number, gender etc...). Instead each petition request is assigned a case number so that the Committee focuses on the petition request and the submitted documentation.

If your reason for submitting a petition involves extremely personal and sensitive circumstances, it is strongly recommended that you seek academic advising to discuss how to present your situation in writing and the appropriate documentation to corroborate your request.

Departmental Consultation

Petitions requiring information about the grading scheme, student performance, or a recommendation or statement of support from the department are referred to the department by e-mail to the departmental undergraduate assistant.

The Committee decision may not always conform to a department's recommendation. The petition is referred to the department to obtain information about the student's progress or to confirm statements the student may have made about advice given or about a sequence of events involving departmental staff. The instructor's or department's comments are important facets of the petition process; however, if the student's request falls within the parameters of the guidelines for granting exceptions to the rule/regulation, the Committee on Standing must be seen to be fair and consistent in its decisions. Its decisions can only be as good as the information with which it is provided.

Students are reminded that, although receiving the support of instructors and departments regarding their petition requests can be considered strong support, this does not guarantee the approval of the student's request. The Office of the Registrar, Petitions Office and Committee on Standing still maintain the final decision regarding whether a petition satisfies the criteria for approval.

Petition Types

Extension of time beyond end of course

Deadline: the last day of the regular examination period.

All term work completed during the regular academic term (including requests for extensions/special consideration) is handled by the course instructor/academic department (please refer to your course outline). When term work is not completed by the end of term, (up to and including the last day of the regular examination period) then students may consider submitting a petition.

Instructors have the authority to grant extensions of time for term work that will be completed up to the end of the examination period. However, instructors are under no obligation to grant such requests for extensions if they judge there are insufficient grounds.

If term work cannot be completed by the end of the examination period, or if an instructor refuses a request for an extension at the end of term, a petition is required.

Students should not petition matters involving term work such as the organization of a course, grading practices or the conduct of an instructor. These matters fall under the authority of the department offering the course and should be raised with the instructor or the departmental office.

Students are expected to continue working on any outstanding term work while waiting for a decision from the Committee on Standing.

Deferred Examinations

Deadline: 72 hours after the missed examination.

Petitions concerning final examinations must be filed online (www.utm.utoronto.ca/forms) and supporting documentation submitted within 72 hours of the missed exam.

Only the Verification of Illness or Injury form will be accepted in support of petitions that cite illness as the reason for the request.

The form must indicate that the student was examined and diagnosed at the time of the illness and/or injury, not after the fact.

Documentation submitted for missed final examinations must show that the physician was consulted on the day of the missed examination or immediately after (i.e., the next day).

Frequently asked questions regarding the use of this form and who can fill it out may be found here.

If you have missed your examination due to non-medical issues, please refer to the Documentation section of this guide for examples of acceptable supporting documentation for a petition request to defer your final exam.

Students are also required to declare their absence on ACORN on the day of the examination (or by the day after at the latest).

Note there is a fee of \$70 for each deferred examination petition approved.

The Committee on Standing will not consider requests to defer final examinations based on vacation, personal plans, or employment obligations. Students cannot re-write an examination that they have already attempted.

Standing Deferred (SDF) and on Probation:

Students who finish the Fall-Winter session or the Summer session on probation and who have been granted deferred standing in a course, are advised to enrol in a maximum of 5.0 further courses (Fall/Winter) minus the weight of the course in which they have been granted a further deferral. Students on academic probation (less than 1.50 CGPA) are advised not to enrol in summer session courses.

Late Withdrawal without Academic Penalty

Deadline: 6 months after the end of the academic term when the course was taken.

A Late Withdrawal without Academic Penalty (WDR) pertains to a student withdrawing from a course after the drop deadline published by the University of Toronto Mississauga. Students requesting late withdrawal by petition must show, through strong supporting documentation, that they were unable to complete the course due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control.

Petitions for a WDR must be filed within six months of the end of the session (end of exams) in which the course was taken. Exceptions to this deadline can only be made if a student can demonstrate, through documentation, that extenuating circumstances prevented them from submitting the petition by the deadline (e.g., being mentally or physically incapacitated).

Late withdrawal petitions are not granted if the student has completed the course (i.e., written the final examination or completed the final major assignment/test in courses without a final exam).

Please note that when Late Withdrawal without Academic Penalty is granted, a notation of 'WDR' is placed on the academic record in lieu of a course grade.

This type of late withdrawal differs from the Late Withdrawal after the Drop Date policy (LWD). Students may request to withdraw from a course via the LWD option from a total of no more than 3.0 credits, provided such a request is made

by the last day of classes in the relevant course and if they have not written the final exam (or final test/assignment, in those courses without final exams). Supporting documentation is not required to be considered for LWD.

Students who are granted an LWD or WDR in course are still responsible for paying full fees. Non-attendance is NOT the same as dropping a course. If a student does not attend class, he/she is still responsible for all fees associated with that course and will be assigned a grade.

Students who have been sanctioned for committing an academic offence in a course are not permitted to request LWD or WDR from a course.

Course Overload

Deadline: Before the start of the academic term.

Petitions requesting a course overload must be submitted online prior to the start of the term in which the student wishes to take a course overload. To submit a course overload petition students must fall under either of these categories:

1) Graduating and have a MINIMUM CGPA of 1.85 and:

- Want to enrol in more than 2.0 credits in the summer AND are intending to graduate at the next November convocation.

OR

- Want to enrol in more than 6.0 courses in the Fall/Winter AND are intending to graduate at the next June convocation.

2) Not graduating:

- But have a CGPA of 2.70 with mitigating reasons for requiring a course overload.

Note: Students will not receive special academic consideration of any kind due to their granted course overload.

Lift of Suspension

Students who have a Cumulative GPA (CGPA) of 1.50 or higher are assessed to be in "good standing". Those who have a CGPA of less than 1.50 are assessed as "on probation". Students on probation are at risk of academic suspension. They are strongly urged to consult an academic advisor in the Office of the Registrar before registering for courses. They should consider a reduced course load during the Fall-Winter session and should avoid compressed, intensive summer courses.

Students' academic status is reviewed at the end of the Fall/Winter and the Summer academic sessions. If you have been placed on probation, and are unable to maintain an Annual GPA (AGPA) or Sessional GPA (SGPA) in the

Summer session) of at least 1.70, while your CGPA remains below 1.50, you will be placed on suspension.

While no one welcomes a suspension, it is necessary for some students to take a break to sort out the financial/personal/medical issues that prevented them from being successful in maintaining good academic standing with the University. A one year suspension will occur when students first receive suspension for not reaching academic minimums as previously outlined, and a three year suspension will apply if a student is unable again to maintain an A/SGPA of 1.70 while their CGPA remains below 1.50, after resuming studies from their first suspension. Petitions for suspension lifts or early return (for three year suspensions) are seldom granted. The University encourages students on suspension to utilize the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre to create an academic plan to ensure a successful return after the suspension has ended.

Students who are experiencing on-going medical, personal/domestic or substance abuse issues are strongly encouraged to seek assistance with the Health & Counselling Centre. If extenuating circumstances have prevented a student from meeting his/her academic obligations, supporting documentation, which states this, should be submitted for a suspension lift petition for the Committee on Standing to consider.

The deadline to submit a petition regarding an academic suspension is required in advance of the session in which the student would like to resume courses. It is recommended that students, in their petition request, detail what unforeseen events led to their academic difficulties, and outline the steps taken/being taken by them to attain academic success in resuming their undergraduate studies. Supporting documentation is required.

Exception to Degree/Distribution Requirements

Courses undergo a full and rigorous review by the Division's Curriculum Committee and are taught at the designated level and discipline areas. Students are required to complete the distribution, degree and program requirements outlined in the Academic Calendar. Students who submit petitions for exception to Degree/Distribution Requirements should explain why their situation warrants special consideration compared to other students. It is recommended that students speak with an academic advisor in the Office of the Registrar. This will allow the student to explain their proposal and see whether it warrants submission.

Other

The "Other" category is to be used carefully and students are advised to make sure, before selecting, that their petition does not fall under the jurisdiction of one of the other petitionable areas. Please only submit a petition under the "Other" category if instructed to by an academic advisor or by the Petitions Office staff.

Academic Dishonesty

If it is determined that information provided for a petition is altered or misrepresented, a student can be held accountable under the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) which outlines the behaviour that constitutes academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from the Office of the Registrar.

Fees

Petition fees are mandatory and non-negotiable. Please see the respective sections for more information regarding applicable fees (e.g. fee cost, payment methods etc.). If students find themselves having financial complications they should refer to the Financial Aid Department at the Office of the Registrar by coming in for a walk-in financial advising appointment.

Appeals

If your initial petition request is denied by the Committee on Standing, students are allowed three methods of appeal: Committee on Standing, Academic Appeals Board Subcommittee, and Academic Appeals Board of Governing Council. These methods occur in a step-by-step fashion and no student is allowed to bypass any one of these steps.

1) Committee on Standing (COS)

Students should submit an appeal to the Committee on Standing who reviewed their initial petition request. In their appeal, students are expected to present new information, not submitted within the initial petition request, along with their appeal statement. The UTM Committee on Standing is composed of faculty members from various departments within the University who have volunteered their time at behest of the Dean. In addition, representatives from the Office of the Registrar shall attend hearings in a non-voting capacity unless circumstances require otherwise. The Committee on Standing must hear all cases (petitions) before they can be appealed to the Academic Appeals Subcommittee. Please note students do not appear at the Committee on Standing meeting and, therefore, must present the most effective written appeal possible.

Deadline: Appeals are to be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for consideration by the Committee within 90 days of the original petition decision date.

2) U of T Mississauga Academic Appeals Subcommittee (AAS)

Students may appeal the decision of the Committee on Standing to the U of T Mississauga Academic Appeals Subcommittee. This committee considers appeals against decisions made by the Committee on Standing with respect to petitions from undergraduate students relating to exemptions from academic regulations or standards pertaining to courses at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Students appealing the decision of the Committee on Standing may request the appropriate form from the Office of the Registrar (AAS Form). An appeal to the AAS must be launched within 90 days of the Committee on Standing appeal decision. The faculty members comprising the AAS are selected with due consideration to continuity, discipline relevance and quorum needs and serve for a term of at least three years which is subject to re-appointment. Students are required to present their case in person, at a meeting convened to hear such cases. At the meeting, it is the responsibility of the student to convince the committee that due to circumstances beyond their control, they should be exempt from an academic regulation.

Appeals pertaining to courses offered on other University of Toronto campuses come under the jurisdiction of the Academic Appeals Committees of the respective campus where the student is registered.

3) Academic Appeals Committee of Governing Council

If a student wishes to petition the decision of the Academic Appeals Subcommittee, then they must bring forward their case to the Academic Appeals Committee of Governing Council. The Academic Appeals Committee of Governing Council is normally chaired by a professor from the Faculty of Law, and the membership of the committee includes academics and students from various constituencies of the University. This is the final avenue of appeal within the University of Toronto and requires that the appeal of the U of T Mississauga Academic Appeals Committee be made in writing to:

Academic Appeals Committee of Governing Council
Simcoe Hall
27 King's College Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1

Please note that a meeting with an academic advisor at the Office of the Registrar is recommended prior to submitting an appeal at any level. The provision of supporting documentation is also essential in this process and strengthens any case.

Supporting Documentation

Petitions must be supported by original documentation; photocopies and faxes are not acceptable.

It is the responsibility of the student to provide medical or other supporting documentation. Any cost incurred in obtaining documentation (e.g. a doctor's note) is the responsibility of the student.

If illness is cited as the reason for the petition, it must be accompanied by an original U of T Verification of Student Illness or Injury form ([available at www.utm.utoronto.ca/forms](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/forms)) stating that the student was examined and diagnosed at the time of the illness and, in the case of exams, on the day of the exam or immediately after (i.e. the next day), and must indicate a serious degree of incapacitation on academic functioning (e.g. unable to attend classes, write a test/examination). A statement from a physician that merely confirms a report of illness and/or disability made by the student is not acceptable.

If support has been obtained from someone other than a practitioner listed on the U of T Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (www.utm.utoronto.ca/forms) then a Verification of Extenuating Circumstances form (www.utm.utoronto.ca/forms) is acceptable.

Other documentation can include, but is not limited to: letter of support from AccessAbility, automobile collision or police reports, death certificate, and supporting documentation from employers, lawyers and other related personnel.

IMPORTANT: The Office of the Registrar verifies the authenticity of ALL verification of illness or injury forms by contacting medical clinics. Students who submit forged documentation are subject to severe academic penalties.

When in doubt, students are encouraged to seek advice in the Office of the Registrar regarding appropriate documentation for their petition requests.

Response Time

Provided that all appropriate documentation has been submitted and, depending on the type of petition, most petitions will be answered within two weeks after submission of supporting documentation.

Contact the Office of the Registrar with questions or concerns if a decision seems to be unduly delayed. Note that some petitions, especially those that required input from instructors and departments for grade breakdowns or departmental comment, confirmation or approval, will take longer.

NOTE: Students are responsible for providing an accurate UTOR e-mail (@utoronto.ca) address on the petition. Although the petition decision will be e-mailed to them, it is their responsibility to check on the online petition system for the result of their petition. Claims that petition decisions have not been received will not be considered as a reason for further petitions.

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