



Leave of Absence/Withdrawal

A **leave of absence** is a temporary absence from the University for one semester or more with the intention of returning to complete the degree. If you drop all courses and intend to return in a following semester, this is considered a leave of absence by immigration.

A **withdrawal** from the University is to permanently stop pursuing a degree at Widener.

Immigration regulations require that International Student Services (ISS) updates the SEVIS record of F-1/J-1 students when they withdraw or do a leave of absence. Failure to inform ISS of your intention to withdraw or pursue a leave of absence will result in your SEVIS record being terminated for “*unauthorized early withdrawal.*” This is a negative termination that will result in a flagged record at the port of entry which will impact all reentries to the U.S. in the future.

Once you complete the form on the second page and speak with ISS, you may drop your courses. Do **not** drop your courses until you speak with the Director or Assistant Director in ISS. Once you drop your courses, F-1 students have **15 days** and J-1 students have **30 days** to leave the U.S. Students *must* leave the U.S. during a leave of absence or withdrawal. (Medical leaves are processed differently, and you should complete the Reduced Course Load form, *not* this form, for a Medical Leave of Absence).

An approved leave of absence or withdrawal results in termination of your SEVIS record for “authorized early withdrawal.” Although your record will be terminated, an authorized early withdrawal does *not* result in a flagged record.

- If you will return for classes **within 5 months** of the withdrawal/leave of absence date, it is possible to have your SEVIS record reactivated. ISS can explain and help you with this process. *This option is for F-1 students only; J-1 students may not have their record set back to active.*
- If your date of return is **beyond 5 months** (or you are on a J-1 visa), you will need to request a *new* I-20/DS-2019, provide new financial documents, repay the SEVIS fee, obtain a new visa and reenter the country. This also means that the time clock for off-campus work permission starts over. F-1 students will have to be in the U.S. on the new I-20 for **two semesters** before they will be eligible for CPT or OPT. Time spent on the previous I-20 does not count.

If you have any questions, please contact us:

Kandy Turner, Director
610-499-4498 kkturner@mail.widener.edu

Melody Reichoff, Assistant Director
610-499-4499 mmreichoff@mail.widener.edu

Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Form

Name: _____ Widener ID: _____

Widener Email: _____ Tel. #: _____

The reason for the leave of absence/withdrawal is (Check one):

- _____ Personal
- _____ Family emergency
- _____ Financial
- _____ Home country military service
- _____ Other: _____

Date you wish to stop your studies: _____/_____/_____
(month) (day) (year)

Date you will leave the U.S.: _____/_____/_____
(month) (day) (year)

Are you planning to return to Widener? ___ yes ___ no ___ unsure

If yes, list semester and year: _____ _____
(fall/spring/summer) (year)

*Please sign below to certify that you have **read** all the information in this packet and **understand** the F-1 regulations regarding leave of absence/withdrawal.*

Signature: _____ Date: _____