



Withdrawal Without Penalty

Student Guide



WHAT? What is Withdrawal Without Penalty (WWP)?

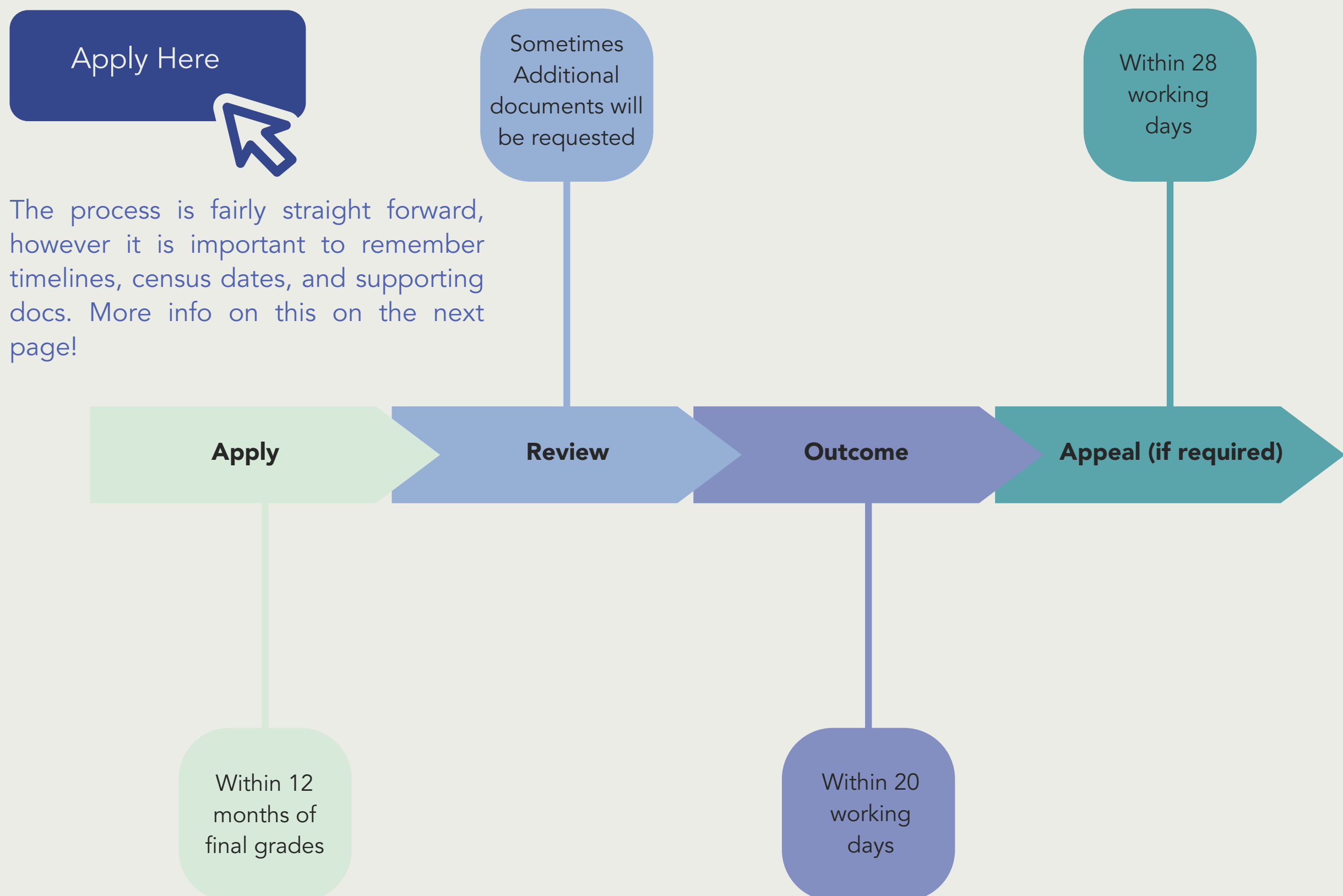
Withdrawal without financial penalty (WWFP) is a rule under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 that allows Commonwealth Supported (CSP/HELP) students who need to drop a subject after a certain date or fail it to have unit fees refunded. If you have special circumstances and meet certain tests, you won't have to pay for the subject or take on any loans. This applies to both domestic and international upfront fee-paying students. It's like getting rid of the debt or getting a refund for the money you already paid.

Withdrawal without academic penalty (WWAP) is another option at QUT. It's not a law, but a QUT policy. It lets students with special circumstances remove a failing grade from their academic record. The same tests used for WWFP apply to WWAP, but there may be some exceptions for really extraordinary situations. However, it's important to know that WWAP doesn't work for cases involving confirmed cheating or misconduct.

Special circumstances don't include not knowing or understanding the requirements of the CSP/HELP schemes or being unable to repay HELP debt.

The decision to get rid of CSP/HELP debt is made by universities, as authorised by the Minister of Education.

WHEN? Process & when to apply



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HOW? Eligibility & Evidence

To be eligible for Withdrawal without Penalty after the census date, you need to have experienced special circumstances. Special circumstances are situations that are beyond your control and are considered unusual or uncommon. These circumstances have a significant impact on your ability to meet the requirements of your study, but this impact may not become fully apparent until after the census date.

Special circumstances can include situations where:

- The circumstances were already present before the census date but worsened afterward.
- The full extent of the circumstances only became clear after the census date.
- These circumstances can make it difficult or impractical for you to complete the study unit as planned. It might prevent you from engaging in necessary private study, attending lectures or tutorials, meeting course requirements, submitting assigned work, or taking exams.

To meet the special circumstances test, you need to demonstrate that your circumstances meet all three elements mentioned above.

As a student, it's important to provide evidence that supports your claims in a valid and reliable way. This evidence should come from independent sources, not just your own statements. While personal statements can add context, they need to be accompanied by supporting documentation.

- If you're getting documentation from a professional or employer, make sure it's on their official letterhead. And if the documentation is in a language other than English, you'll need to get an official translation.
- When providing documentation, remember to include the date it was written and the dates when the circumstances occurred. If the documentation refers to past events, the professional should mention whether they were aware of the circumstances at that time.

While it's your responsibility to provide evidence, the staff who review your case can also consider any documentation you've provided for other university processes, such as taking leave, getting academic concessions, or previous withdrawal without penalty. Your circumstances will be considered as a whole, taking into account the perspective of a reasonable person. This means looking at the evidence you provide, your personal statement, any supporting documentation, information from your student record, and input from QUT staff.

Medical

When it comes to medical circumstances, it's important to have proper support from a registered medical professional like a doctor. They can provide you with a medical certificate, letter, or report to back up your situation.

Here are some things to keep in mind when checking a medical certificate:

- Make sure the certificate clearly mentions when the circumstances happened. Was it after the census date?
- If not, does the certificate explain if the circumstances got worse? If they did, when did the worsening start? Is it after the census date?
- If the certificate refers to past events, does it clarify if the medical professional saw you during that specific time?
- Look for clear details in the certificate about your medical condition. It should explain how it made it difficult or impractical for you to complete your study requirements. This is especially important if your condition wasn't previously disclosed or if it's not easy for others to understand how it affects you.
- If you have an ongoing or pre-existing condition, the certificate should mention whether the circumstances are unusual, uncommon, or abnormal for you. Did the worsening come as a surprise? Were you managing your condition well before, with no expectation of it getting worse? Did you notice any changes before the census date?

Keep in mind that brief and generic medical certificates that only mention the occurrence of a condition after the census date or simply state that studying became impractical are not enough. You need more specific details and explanations to properly support your situation.



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Employment

Choosing to take on a job or accepting a job offer is generally not considered beyond your control. However, certain situations can arise that are considered special circumstances. For example, if your partner loses their job, you may need to work more or increase your hours, which can be considered beyond your control. Sometimes, additional work duties, relocation, or higher responsibilities can also be seen as beyond your control. This happens when your employer provides evidence that there was no other option for you, or if refusing these changes would put your job at risk.

To be eligible for special consideration, there needs to be a significant impact on your ability to meet your study requirements. This usually happens when you have long work hours or extensive travel that makes it impractical for you to keep up with your studies.

When it comes to documentation, you may need to provide a letter from your employer. The letter should be on official letterhead, clearly stating the dates and position of the person who wrote it. Other documents that can support your case include redundancy notices or mandatory armed service notices if you're in the military (don't forget to consider the Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001 for armed services personnel).

Family & Personal Circumstances

Sometimes unexpected things happen in life personally or with family that can make it difficult for you to continue studying for a period of time.

Family & Personal circumstances & supporting documents to include:

- The death or serious illness of a close family member or friend. For example, if a family member passes away or someone you care about gets very sick, it can be really tough to focus on your studies. A death certificate or medical certificate to show the loss or illness of a family member will be sufficient.
- Significant medical problems within your family. If someone in your family is dealing with a serious health issue, it can have a big impact on your ability to study. You'll need to show medical reports or letters from doctors to confirm the significant medical problems within your family.
- Family or relationship breakdown. Sometimes families go through difficult times, and if your family is going through a breakup or facing other challenges, it can affect your ability to concentrate on your studies. An example of documents can include legal documents or letters to prove a family or relationship breakdown.
- Severe disruption to domestic arrangements. If something happens at home that causes major upheaval, like a natural disaster or a sudden loss of housing, it can be really hard to focus on your studies when your living situation is unstable. Documentation or reports to demonstrate severe disruption to domestic arrangements can include police reports, eviction notices, insurance claims.
- Being a victim of a crime or accident. If you have experienced a traumatic event, such as being a victim of a crime or getting injured in an accident, it can take time to recover and get back to your normal routine. Include police reports or accident records if you have been a victim of a crime or accident as your supporting documentation.
- The collapse of a family business. If your family's business experiences a major setback or fails completely, and you need to be involved in sorting things out, it may be unreasonable to expect you to continue studying at the same time. Financial records or official documentation related to the collapse of a family business will be appropriate.

Remember, special circumstances are meant to help you during difficult times, so don't hesitate to reach out and seek support. Your well-being and ability to cope with these challenging situations are important, and there are people at the university who are here to help you.



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WHY? Explains why your application may have been rejected and how to appeal

The decision could be based on various factors, such as incomplete documentation, failure to meet the eligibility criteria, or insufficient evidence of special circumstances.

To get a better understanding of why your application was rejected, I recommend booking an appointment with an Academic Advocacy Officer. Keeping in mind we are an independent service that can review based on the information that you provide us. (eg. email trails, supporting documents and original application).

It's important to remember that each case is unique, and the decision-making process considers a range of factors. By discussing your situation, you can gain insights into the specific reasons behind the rejection and explore any possible options moving forward.

Here's what you need to know about how to appeal a WWP rejection:

- You have 28 days from the day you receive your WWP outcome to lodge an appeal. To do this, you'll need to email Student Administration via fees@qut.edu.au
- In case you need more time to gather additional documentation to support your appeal, you can request an extension beyond the initial 28 days.
- The final decision regarding your appeal will be made by the Director of Student Administration. Their decision is considered final for both international and domestic fee paying students.
- If you're a CSP/HELP student, you have the option to lodge a further appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) if you're not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal process.
- Make sure to review the information provided in your WWP outcome correspondence. It will contain details about your appeal rights and how to proceed. You can also find helpful information on the WWP section of the HiQ and Corporate websites.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help you throughout the appeal process.

APPROVED!

For CSP/HELP students:

When a Withdrawal Without Penalty (WWP) is approved, it is handled as a remission process. The QUT system reverses the fee amount that you were originally charged. Additionally, the HELP deferral reversal reverses the HELP debt that was reported to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). If you made an upfront payment, that payment will be left as a credit on your account, which can be refunded to you later.

For domestic and international fee-paying students:

When a Withdrawal Without Penalty (WWP) is approved this effectively reverses the fee amount that you were originally charged. Any payments you made towards the fee will be unallocated and become a credit on your account, which can be refunded to you if needed.

In simpler terms, if your WWP application is approved, any fees you paid or HELP debt you incurred will be reversed, and any payments you made will be available as a credit that can be refunded to you.



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