



ECU STUDENT GUILD GUIDE TO

WITHDRAWING WITHOUT PENALTY

FINANCIAL AND ACADEMIC PENALTY DATES

All courses at ECU have a Financial Penalty date (Census date) and Academic Penalty date that you need to be aware of if you are considering to withdraw. These dates are listed below and are on ECU's website.

Teaching Period	Last date to withdraw without Financial Penalty (Census date)	Last date to withdraw without Academic Penalty
Summer Session	15 January	21 January
Semester One	1 April	2 May
Winter Session	15 July	19 July
Semester Two	1 September	3 October



*Scan to view dates on the ECU website. Whilst we make every effort to ensure these dates are correct they may be subject to change.



SHOULD I WITHDRAW FROM ONE OR MORE UNITS IN MY COURSE?

If you are thinking of withdrawing from one or more units, the Guild strongly recommends you do so before the relevant penalty date. If you withdraw after these dates you will receive an automatic fail grade and will be liable for your unit fees. However, if you need to withdraw from one or more units after the penalty dates you can still do so if you meet ECU's eligibility criteria for the Withdrawal Without Penalty (WWP) process.

Applications for the WWP process must be lodged within 12 months of the unit discontinuation date or the last day of the semester you were enrolled in the unit. Applications can be considered outside this period, however you must submit a Request Form first which must be approved before a WWP can be lodged (<https://askus2.ecu.edu.au/s/article/000002009>).

To be eligible for the WWP process you must not have successfully completed the unit, or completed the final exam and/or final assessment in the units. You must also be able to demonstrate, with independent supporting evidence, that you experienced special circumstances that meet all three of the following conditions

1. The circumstances were beyond your control. Circumstances are beyond your control if a situation occurs which a reasonable person would consider is not due to action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which you are not responsible. This situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.
2. The circumstances made their full impact on you after the Financial Penalty (Census) date
3. The circumstances have made it impracticable for you to complete the requirements for your unit(s) of study. Circumstances include:
 - a) **Medical circumstances.** For example, where your medical condition has changed to such an extent that you are unable to continue studying;
 - b) **Family/personal circumstances.** For example, death or severe medical problems within a family, or unforeseen family financial difficulties which can be substantiated, so that it is unreasonable to expect you to continue your studies;
 - c) **Employment-related circumstances.** For example, where your employment status or arrangements have changed so that you are unable to continue your studies, and this change is beyond your control.

Your application must also include supporting documents from an independent, professional service provider such as a doctor, counsellor, or employer. Statements from family members or friends are not accepted. Independent documents should also be in an official format (eg: medical certificate or company letterhead displaying an ABN, author's contact details, position, date of the document etc.)

Some examples of supporting evidence are: Death Certificates, Funeral Notices, Mental Health Plans, Police Reports (not just a reference number), letters from employers, or a completed ECU Medical/Health Professional Assessment Form from your GP, Psychologist, Counsellor or other Health Professional. The Guild recommends that you and your Health Professional complete the Medical/Health Professional Assessment Form as these are designed for WWP applications.

Please make sure the Health Professional completes all areas in the form and clearly marks the correct boxes. Forms that are only partially complete may be rejected. Notes in the additional information section should also clearly articulate the reason your Health Professional supports your application.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for the WWP process go to the Student Portal and submit the online form and your supporting evidence, as per the screenshot below. The Medical/Health Professional Assessment Form can also be found under My Forms. Ensure that you tick the boxes for both Financial Penalty and Academic Penalty in your WWP application. You will be eligible for both if you meet the Special Circumstances criteria.



Guild Advisory Officers (GAOs) can provide guidance on whether you meet the criteria for a WWP application.

GAOs can also provide you with a template letter and help you to write a statement. You can book in here for an appointment with a GAO or email studentassist@ecuguild.org.au

The Guild suggests that you write your application in a MS Word document first to have a record of your application as well as sufficient space to explain your situation clearly and how you meet each of the criteria.

KEY LINKS

BOOK WITH A STUDENT SUCCESS OFFICER:
<https://studentportal.ecu.edu.au/s/my-appointments>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT STUDY LOADS:
<https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/student/my-studies/international-students/study-and-enrolment-loads>

YOUTH ALLOWANCE OR AUSTUDY LOADS:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/study-loads-for-austudy-and-youth-allowance?context=22441>

ECU GUILD ADVISORY SERVICE:
www.ecuguild.org.au



WHEN WILL I GET A RESPONSE?

You will be advised on the outcome of your application within 20 working days of ECU receiving your application. ECU may contact you during this time to request further information within a 7 day deadline. If you need more time, please ensure you advise ECU immediately and request that they allow you to have an extension or to resubmit a new application. If your application is unsuccessful then you can request a review within 28 days of being notified of this decision. A GAO can also help write your appeal on the decision.

If you have lodged an Academic Progression Status Review (APSR) then your WWP will be processed first, as the outcome from your WWP may change your Academic Progression Status and an APSR may no longer be required.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING

International Students must consult with a Student Success Officer first before withdrawing from any units. International Students are generally required to study a full-time course load within the timeframe of their current Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). However, Student Success Officers can approve an underload where there are Special Circumstances. You can apply for a Reduced Study Load via the ECU student intranet, but we recommend that you book in with a Student Success Officer first to discuss your situation.

Domestic students in receipt of Youth Allowance or AUSTUDY may have their payments reduced or cancelled if they are enrolled in less than three units. More information is available on the Services Australia website.

If you are unsure whether you should withdraw or not you can always speak with a GAO for advice. Rather than withdrawing, it may be better to request an extension for your upcoming assessments, or apply for Special Consideration or a result appeal instead. GAOs can help with these applications too.

International Students who are seeking a refund, rather than credit, will need to lodge a Refund request. There are numerous rules around this process and a GAO can assist with this also.