

**SMUO Withdrawal Policy**

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| **Date Effective** | 21 November 2023 |
| **Approved By** | Academic Strategy, Portfolio and Student Experience Committee |
| **Date Approved** | November 2023 |  |
| **Review Date** | September 2024 |  |
| **Related Policies** | Break In Study Policy  | Withdrawal Policy | Refund Policy |

St Mary’s University is committed to improve student retention and maintain accurate student records for internal and external submissions. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive appropriate advice, academic, pastoral and financial, before the withdrawal process is initiated. The policy works in conjunction with the Leave of Absence and Module Drop policies and also provides a guideline for academic and professional services staff on how to process requests for withdrawal, within a timely manner.

**Scope and Purpose**

St Mary’s University’s Mission is to prepare students for flourishing lives, successful careers and social commitment through excellent, research-enriched teaching in a strong community of mutual respect, based on our Catholic ethos and identity.

Students who decide to withdraw from their programme of study should be supported to explore other options available to the, with withdrawal seen as a last resort.

All students considering withdrawal from their studies should seek academic advice and student guidance as soon as possible, from both their Course Lead and Student Services and Wellbeing before making the decision to withdraw. Advice and guidance can also be sought from Personal Tutors, Student Support Officers Coordinators and the Students’ Union.

**Definitions and Terminology**

For the purpose of this and associated policies.

**Student**: any person registered onto the programme, be it full-time or part-time, regardless of the number of modules registered onto at one time.

**Module Dropping**: requesting to withdraw from any module already enrolled onto, whether permanently or for a selected period, within their registration on the programme.

**Voluntary Withdrawal**: a student’s withdrawal from the entire programme following a withdrawal request, including all registered modules.

**Forced Withdrawal**: a student’s termination from the programme by the University, due to academic or other reasons deemed appropriate.

**Reasons for Withdrawal**

Students may decide to withdraw or may be withdrawn from their programme of studies at the University, for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:

* Student wishes to withdraw from their programme, which is referred to a ‘Self-Withdrawal Request’
* Student is withdrawn due to academic failure
* Student is permanently excluded as the outcome of a student disciplinary process, a criminal conviction panel or academic misconduct
* Student is withdrawn due to failure to abide by the university regulations e.g. non-payment of fees
* Student is required to withdraw due to external compliance issues
* Student fails (or ceases) to attend their programme, according to academic regulations
* Student fails to maintain their registration on the programme by renewing their enrolment, when required
* Death of a student

In the event of a Voluntary Withdrawal request and following the advice from the relevant university staff, the student is required to provide reasons for their decision to withdraw by completing the online withdrawal form, from the [student portal](https://evision.stmarys.ac.uk/urd/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn).

Once a student has been withdrawn from the University, either through a Voluntary Withdrawal or a Forced Withdrawal, they will no longer have access to the University systems and not permitted to submit or sit any programme assessments. Withdrawn students will be considered at the next assessment board and credit awarded where applicable.

**Student Withdrawal Process**

The Student Withdrawal Process is based with Registry to ensure that accurate student records are maintained at all times. With the exception of Self-Withdrawal Requests from students, all other forms of withdrawals are initiated by formal procedures such as Exam Boards, Student Disciplinary Processes, etc.

Students are permitted to withdraw from their programme of study at any time.

It should be noted that the date of withdrawal recorded would be the last date of attendance, as confirmed by the Course Lead or Course Coordinator, of which fee liability will be calculated from.

Voluntary Withdrawal

In the process of Self-Withdrawal Request, a student is required to complete the relevant withdrawal form from their student portal, which sends an automated notification to Registry Services.

Receipt of the withdrawal request will trigger the start of the withdrawal process and freeze the student’s tuition fee liability, where applicable.

Received requests will also be forwarded to the respective Course Lead, normally within 3-working days of receipt. The Course Lead will aim to meet with the student within 3-working days of receiving the email notification and request. At this meeting, they shall discuss with the student their reasons for considering a withdrawal, offer them advice on pastoral and financial support available to them and discuss alternative options available within St Mary’s, if their initial programme of choice is not suitable. Meetings will be held online via MS Teams or Zoom.

All information provided by the student in their withdrawal form should be treated with utmost confidentiality, as it may contain information pertaining to sensitive individual circumstances. A student will be provided with a disclaimer to allow the University to use the information provided anonymously, for monitoring and planning processes.

The Course Lead is expected to keep a written account of the discussion with the student and the options offered to help them come to a decision. They must also ensure that the student is aware that they can receive further advice from the relevant university parties including Students’ Union, Student Funding and the Fees Office.

Once the decision has been made for the student to withdraw, Registry Services shall process the request by updating the student’s records on SITS/e-Vision and notifying the relevant Faculty Operating Office and the Fees Office.

If applicable, Registry will inform the Student Loan Company of any changes to the student’s record and process the required Change of Circumstances.

Forced Withdrawal

In the process of a Forced Withdrawal, a student is not required to complete the withdrawal form. Notification of the withdrawal (or termination) from the programme and/or University is sent to the student from the relevant Registry Services contact e.g. Academic Misconduct, Academic Appeals, etc

If students have been advised that their studies are being terminated or forcibly withdrawn following a University Exam Board they will be given 10-working days of receipt of the email notification to appeal. Appeal hearings will take place via Zoom or MS TEAMS and students may be accompanied by a friend.

Further information on academic misconduct can be found in the [University’s Academic Regulations](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/policies/academic-regulations.aspx) document.

**Fees and Funding**

Any student who withdraws from their programme or has an approved leave of absence, will have their tuition fees recalculated on the following basis:

* Based on the start date on the programme and their last date of attendance
* Liability point as recognised by Student Loans Company (if applicable)

Students will also have the opportunity to request advice from the Fees office. Final notifications will be sent by the Registry Services office.

**Reporting**

Registry Services will be responsible for updating the Student Records System (SITS) and Student Loans Company (if applicable). Reports can additionally be produced to inform student withdrawals and leave of absences to the relevant departments and services including Student Services, Fees Office, Faculty Leads and PVC’s Office.

The Planning Office and departments will be able to access up to date information directly from the Student Records System.