



MILITARY WITHDRAWAL POLICY

PURPOSE

In compliance with title 38, United States Code, as amended, and other federal and state legislation, to assure that academic institutions would not take adverse action against a covered member when a covered member withdraws or takes a military leave of absence during an academic term, resulting from the requirement to perform covered service, this policy provides for consistent application of the process for military leave of absence, eases communication during the process, and facilitates the re-enrollment process.

DEFINITIONS

Covered member: any student who is a servicemember of the U. S. Armed Forces (including National Guard and Reserve Components) enrolled in The Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (including all campuses).

- A Military Reserve is a person who is currently serving in one of the following services:
 - United States Army Reserve
 - United States Navy Reserve
 - United States Marine Corps Reserve
 - United States Air Force Reserve
 - United States Coast Guard Reserve

- National Guard is a person who is currently serving in one of the following services:
 - Puerto Rico Army National Guard
 - Puerto Rico Air National Guard
 - Army or Air National Guard of any other state or territory of the United States of America

Covered service: active-duty service or inactive-duty training as defined in Title 10 USC §101 or state active-duty as defined by Title 38 USC §4303.

Active duty, full-time training duty, full-time National Guard duty with entitlement to federal pay, inactive duty for training, or state active duty.

Short-term absence: absences for a short period, to be at most **the equivalent of two weeks of classes**. For a course that meets two days weekly, total absences may be at most four days of class. For a course that meets once per week, total absences may be at most two consecutive days of class.

Academic term: includes the first day of classes through the last day of final exams.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (PCUPR) recognizes that covered students who are actively serving in the Reserve or National Guard are required by their military contract to attend to military orders requiring mandatory training or serve at the request of the Governor.

Of their state to respond to natural disasters or other occurrences in which the use of the National Guard is in the state's best interest. Failure to attend these orders is punishable under law. Therefore, the PCUPR will not penalize covered students for complying with a covered service period.

This policy covers the process of applying for, managing, and returning from a student military leave of absence when called to a covered period of service and, where necessary, withdrawing (military withdrawal) from classes in which the covered student is enrolled to avoid academic or financial consequences, minimize disruptions or inconveniences, and ease their return to academic pursuits once their covered period of service is complete.

OPTIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES

Any covered student called to a military-covered service has several options regarding the student's coursework. Decisions can be made on a course-by-course basis during the academic term.

Option 1- Military withdrawal: The covered student may withdraw from one or more courses and receive a 100% refund of tuition and fees (see Financial Considerations of this policy). If the withdrawal is processed after the drop period, a W1 grade will be assigned for the course(s) as a notation that it was a military withdrawal.

Option 2- Incomplete grade: In agreement with the instructor, the covered student may receive an incomplete grade for the course and complete the coursework following the established institutional policy for incomplete grades.

Option 3—Re-enrollment: The covered student can re-enroll in the same courses with no additional tuition, student fees, or related charges for up to five (5) years after the student's release from the covered service period.

Option 4—Tuition and fees credit: The covered student may receive a credit for a subsequent academic term for tuition and fees paid during the term that the student could not complete due to covered service.

The covered student may initiate any of the above options with the PCUPR's Veterans Services office (or the designated office) while they submit their notification for the leave of absence. Students may also work with the Registrar's office to process the withdrawals and must provide the appropriate documentation, as requested.

PROCEDURES

I. Leave of Absences (LOA)

Covered students seeking a military leave of absence (LOA) must give written or verbal notice to the PCUPR's Veterans Services office as far in advance as reasonable. No notice is required if precluded by military necessity, such as service in operations that are classified or would be compromised by such notice. LOA is unavailable to students who have begun attending classes during the academic term.

1. Covered students will provide to the PCUPR's Veterans Services office a copy of their orders or alternate appropriate documentation from their military unit, indicating that orders will be forthcoming during the academic term in which the leave will begin. If a student is given orders that do not allow time for the student to notify the appropriate office, a person tasked (by written statement) with managing the service member's responsibilities while gone (spouse, family member, etc.) may notify PCUPR's Veterans Services office.
2. Once approved by the PCUPR's Veterans Services office (or the designated office), the request will be forwarded to the Registrar's Office so that the student's record will be flagged as a leave of absence for military service.
3. Management of Military Leave of Absence (LOA):
 - a. The PCUPR's Veterans Services office is the primary contact with the student while on LOA.
 - b. The student military leave of absence begins with the academic term in which the student received orders to covered service and ends with the start of the academic term immediately following their release from covered service. If the release from covered service is fewer than 30 calendar days from the beginning of the next term, the student may request an extension of one academic term.
 - c. A student military leave of absence can last up to five (5) years.
 - d. While on LOA:
 - i. The student's institutional accounts (including email) will remain active.
 - ii. The student will have access to necessary advising and assistance offices on campus (other than those for which a student fee is required).
4. Return from military leave of absence:
 - a. Students returning from military leave of absence will contact PCUPR's Veterans Services office and their academic department to notify their

intent to return.

- b. If needed, the academic department will arrange course enrollment per its policies and practices.
- c. The student will not have to reapply for admission to the university or any academic program in which the student was enrolled at the time of leave. If the program to which the student was initially admitted is no longer offered, the student must be admitted to the most similar program unless the student requests or agrees to admission to a different program.

II. Short-term military absence

1. Covered students are eligible for short-term military absence, **not to exceed the equivalent of two weeks of classes**. For online courses, the student must follow the established institutional distance learning courses policy (*Política y procedimiento de Asistencia y Bajas Institucionales para los Cursos de Educación a Distancia*).
2. The instructor will not take adverse action or penalize the student for missing class while in short-term military absence due to a military-covered service period. For practical courses, the practicum Supervisor will decide whether the student can continue with the practical course or if the student needs to withdraw.
3. The student must notify the instructor as soon as possible of any existing schedule or class conflict due to a military-covered service period.
4. Upon formal notification, the instructor will excuse the student from the class, labs, and clinics for the short-term military-covered period.
5. The covered student may ask the instructor of a course(s) the opportunity, to the extent practicable, to earn equivalent credit and demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of a schedule or class conflict due to a military-covered period of service.
6. If appropriate, the instructor will negotiate with the student for additional time to complete assignments or alternative dates for required assessments.
7. If a student disagrees with the faculty member's determination, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of the College. The decision of the Dean is final.
8. Students who must miss more than two weeks of classes may need to consider a military withdrawal.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Refunds will be made in the same proportion as payments were received to liquidate

the charges.

2. If applicable, tuition and fees will be recalculated to include only continued courses.
3. Tuition and fees paid by the student will be refunded to the student.
4. Tuition and fees paid by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on behalf of the student should be returned to the VA.
5. Students receiving financial aid paid by a third-party entity will be subject to the refund policies provided by the agencies sponsoring the aid.
6. The Financial Aid Office will advise students of the actions required to defer loan(s) repayments based on active military duty obligations.
7. Covered students will be guaranteed the opportunity to return under the original term of enrollment with no re-enrollment or other additional fees.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This policy may not address every circumstance that could arise when students are called to perform covered service. Supposing there is uncertainty in any provision of this policy, in that case, the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico reserves the discretion to interpret it according to the purpose for which it was established, the impact on the operations of the University, and good faith, unless any law provides otherwise.