Process for applying for a ‘discontinue not to count as failure’ (DC) grade

Students who experience severe and ongoing illness or misadventure, which prevents them from continuing their studies after the relevant withdrawal and census dates have passed, may apply for discontinuation from a unit(s) of study with a grade of ‘DC’ – Discontinued not to count as failure.

A student must have ‘legitimate grounds’ to have been unable to reasonably complete their studies due to circumstances that occurred or became worse after Week 7 (the DC deadline week). Unless the circumstances are exceptional, students will need to show that prior to Week 7 they had reasonable prospects of completion of the unit(s) of study (eg. attending classes) by providing documentation that demonstrates it was not until after Week 7 that their circumstances changed which made them unable to complete their unit(s).

‘Legitimate grounds’ includes prolonged serious illness or misadventure. DC grades cannot be granted for periods of short-term illness or misadventure lasting up to 20 working days. These circumstances need to be addressed by applying online for Special Consideration.

A grade of DC carries no academic penalty, but students remain liable for HECS or fees for the unit of study. In some situations they may be eligible to apply for a refund of course fees. This is explained in more detail further below.

Key dates:

Please note that many units of study are allocated different sessions which have different census dates as well as different ‘DC’ and ‘DF’ grade deadlines. These are available to check at the bottom of this webpage, by selecting the link ‘Session dates – for coursework students’.

Applying for a ‘discontinue not to count as failure’ grade after the DC deadline:

1. Student emails their Course Coordinator to inform them of their situation and intention to apply for a DC.

2. Student completes and submits the Application for a discontinue not to count as failure (DC) grade together with supporting documentation to either Sydney Medical School Student Services (SMS) for Medicine students or Sydney School of Public Health Office for Teaching and Learning (SSPH OTL) for School of Public Health students, as appropriate, who then forward the application form to the relevant Course Coordinator.

3. The Course Coordinator considers the application and makes the decision to recommend a ‘DC’ or ‘DF’, as considered appropriate, in consultation with the relevant Unit Coordinator(s) - noting that:
i. If the student withdraws post-census, but within the ‘DC’ (Discontinued not to count as failure) grade deadline, a ‘DC’ grade will automatically be allocated and no change to the grade is required;

ii. If the student withdraws post-census but after the ‘DC’ grade deadline and within the ‘DF’ (Discontinue -Fail) grade period, their grade will automatically result in DF when they withdraw, however the SMS Student Services or SSPH OTL can manually change this grade to ‘DC’ if they are directed to as appropriate by the Course Coordinator;

iii. The student cannot withdraw after the ‘DF’ grade period ends – however, if judged as appropriate, their grade can be amended with the upload of the Unit of Study marks at the end of the semester.

iv. When assessing DC applications, the Course Coordinators take into account the student’s academic record and any special consideration claims they may have lodged during the semester.

v. If the student is registered with the University Disability Services, any reasonable adjustments are also taken into consideration. Please note: A student registered with Disability Services must notify the Faculty if they wish this information to be taken into account with their application.

4. The student is advised of the decision by the Course Coordinator via email (cc: SMS Student Services or SSPH OTL as appropriate and any relevant Unit Coordinators) within two (2) weeks of receipt of the application form.

5. The Course Coordinator requests the student withdraw from the relevant unit(s) of study in their Sydney Student portal. This is done via the ‘My Studies’ tab, selecting ‘Units of Study’, then clicking on the ‘Other Options’ tab and following the prompts to withdraw from a unit of study.

- **Note:** Students will encounter a message noting “serious financial and academic implications if discontinuing after census date” when they withdraw from their unit(s) of study, and they should be advised to expect this and proceed anyway. If the student has any difficulty withdrawing from the units of study they should be advised to email, as appropriate to their enrolment, either SMS Student Services at medicine.pgassist@sydney.edu.au or the SSPH OTL at sph.enquiries@sydney.edu.au.

- **International students must inform the International Office** of the adjustment to their study load which might affect their visa requirements before withdrawing from any unit(s) of study, but can then process their withdrawal as above, if deemed appropriate by the International Office.
6. To ensure the resulting grade is changed from DF to DC where appropriate, Course Coordinators must inform SMS Student Services at medicine.pgassist@sydney.edu.au (for Medicine students) or SSPH OTL at sph.enquiries@sydney.edu.au (for SPH students).

**Statement and supporting documentation**

All applications for a **discontinue not to count as failure (DC) grade must** include an attached statement explaining how the student addresses ALL of the following criteria, as well as all supporting documentation that:

1. demonstrates why the student was not able to complete the unit of study for unforeseeable reasons;
2. demonstrates that circumstances beyond the student’s control prevented them from withdrawing from/discontinuing the unit by the seventh week of the relevant semester;
3. demonstrates that circumstances beyond the student’s control prevented them from using the University’s established procedures for special consideration for illness or misadventure;
4. provides documentation completed by a registered medical practitioner or counsellor (or other professional as applicable) using the **Professional Practitioners Certificate** or other appropriate documentation that specifies the extent and period of impact on the student’s ability to study, appropriate to the period for which a DC grade is sought;
5. demonstrates, in instances where a DC is sought for discrete units rather than all units in a semester, that there is a specific impact in relation to that particular unit that distinguishes it from performance in other units of study successfully completed in the same semester.

**Applying for a Refund of Fees**

Under some circumstances, students who are granted a grade of DC after the census date may be eligible for a refund of fees or re-credit of a FEE-HELP balance.

**Domestic students** should contact the [HECS and Domestic Fees Office](mailto:hecs@sydney.edu.au) with a completed [application form for refund of course fees under special circumstances](https://www.sydney.edu.au/education/student-finance.html) in the Student Centre.

**International students** should contact the [International Office](mailto:international@sydney.edu.au).