

# Withdrawal Policy and Return of Title IV Refund Policy

*The Financial Aid Office encourages you to read this policy carefully. If you are thinking about withdrawing from all classes prior to completing the semester, please contact the Financial Aid Office to see how your withdrawal will affect your financial aid and/or student account balance.*

## Withdrawal or Lack of Attendance

Students receiving Title IV federal funding who withdraw, drop out, fail all classes, or take a leave of absence may be required to return all or a portion of their financial assistance awards. Title IV funding refers to federal aid such as Pell grants, SEOG grants, Direct loans (both subsidized and unsubsidized), and PLUS loans. Federal regulations require that students who withdraw from CIU or stop attending classes return the unearned portions of their Title IV aid to the federal government. The amount of aid that must be returned is based on the percent of the semester a student has completed. By attending class, students “earn” a portion of the financial assistance that has been disbursed to their student accounts. At the time a student withdraws or ceases to attend CIU, a return to Title IV refund calculation will be done in order to determine the amount of financial assistance a student has earned and, if necessary, what amount must be returned to the federal government.

## General Rule

If a student withdraws before completing sixty percent (60%) of a period of enrollment (i.e. fall term, spring term), his/her Title IV aid **will** require an adjustment, which may have an impact on the student’s account.

If a student withdraws after completing more than sixty percent (60%) of a period of enrollment (i.e. fall term, spring term), all federal aid is considered to be earned by the student and no financial assistance refund will be required.

## The Process

The official Withdrawal Policy is coordinated by the Office of the University Registrar. Official notification from the student is any notification that is provided in writing or orally to a designated campus official. Acceptable official notification includes telephone, e-mail, or in person. Any campus official who receives notification from a student that he/she intends to withdraw from all classes is responsible for notifying the Office of the University Registrar of that declaration. When a student contacts the Office of the University Registrar, he/she will be instructed to complete a Withdrawal from University form and return it to the Office of the University Registrar. Upon receipt of the official withdrawal form from the Office of the University Registrar, the Financial Aid Office will perform the return to Title IV refund calculation. The following section will be used to determine the date of student withdrawal.

## Determining Withdrawal Date

A student’s withdrawal date is determined based upon one of the following:

- The date the student began the official withdrawal process as noted on the Withdrawal from University form **or**
- The last date the student attended class or engaged in academically related activity (submitted an assignment, was active on the course website, participated in a course activity, etc.), if the student did not complete an official Withdrawal from University form. If no documentation can be produced that supports the student’s last date of academically related activity, the withdrawal date will be the midpoint of the semester.

Once the withdrawal date is determined, a Title IV refund calculation will be performed. All unearned Title IV aid funds will be returned to their respective programs within 45 days of the determined date of withdrawal. Funds will be returned in the following order:

- Unsubsidized Direct Loan
- Subsidized Direct Loan
- Graduate PLUS Direct Loan
- Parent (PLUS) Direct Loans
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant
- Other Title IV aid

Only aid that is final and disbursed is eligible to be included in the total Title IV funds used. For instance, if a student fails to sign a

promissory note and her/his Stafford loan has not yet been disbursed, the student may no longer be eligible for those funds.

### **Post-withdrawal disbursement**

Post-withdrawal disbursements can be used to credit outstanding charges on a student's account in the rare cases when federal funds were not yet applied. If the amount disbursed to the student is less than the amount the student earned, the amount may be considered a post-withdrawal disbursement. Columbia International University has 30 days from the student's withdrawal date to offer any available post-withdrawal disbursements to the student. The student must accept or decline some or all of the offered disbursements within 14 days of the date that the University sends notification of post-withdrawal disbursement eligibility. If the student does not respond to the University notice within the 14-day period, no portion of the post-withdrawal disbursement will be credited to the student's account. CIU is required to contact a withdrawn student prior to making a post-withdrawal disbursement of loan funds and explain to the student (or the parent of the student in case of a parent PLUS loan) his/her obligation to repay the funds if the funds are disbursed.

The student will be notified by email that a Title IV refund calculation was performed. Adjustments on the student's account can be viewed through CIU Online. If there is any outstanding balance on the student's account, the student is responsible for making payment arrangements with the Office of Accounting.

### **All F's**

A student who receives grades of "F" in all classes at the end of the semester may be subject to the Return to Title IV Policy dependent upon whether they earned the F's or if they ceased attendance during the semester. If a student is receiving Title IV funds and receives "F" grades in all courses, the Registrar's Office will contact the student's course professors, to verify if the student earned the F's or if they ceased attendance (unofficial withdrawal) during the semester. If the professors determine the student ceased attendance and they are able to verify the last date of attendance or academically related activity the school will use the later of either the midpoint of the semester or the date of the last academic activity as the withdrawal date. The later of those dates will be certified as the withdrawal date.