

Dean's Waiver of Progression Requirements

A Guide for Students

PART A: For Students to Read

1. What Is This Document and How Should You Use It?

You are reading this document because you have been, or expect to be, Required to Withdraw (RTW) from Western University due to unsatisfactory academic standing. That is a serious and stressful situation, and this guide is designed to help you understand your options honestly and clearly.

This document serves two purposes. First, you can read it on your own, from start to finish, to understand what a Dean's Waiver is, whether you are likely to qualify, and what you should do next. Second, you can upload or paste this entire document into a generative AI tool such as Co-Pilot, ChatGPT or Claude, and the AI will read the instructions embedded in Part B of this document and guide you through a step-by-step conversation to determine your best course of action.

If you choose to use an AI tool, you do not need to prepare anything in advance. Simply provide the document to the AI and let it ask you questions. The AI will help you figure out if it is in your best interest to apply for a Dean's Waiver or if you are better served by taking the required year off and reapplying for admission.

Either way, please read Part A in full before doing anything else. Understanding the context will help you make a better decision.

If you have questions about your academic standing, your options, or the Dean's Waiver process, you are encouraged to contact the Faculty of Science Academic Advising office via their Help Portal at www.uwo.ca/sci/advising. If you would like independent and confidential guidance from a neutral third party, you may also contact the Western University Ombudsperson's Office at uwo.ca/ombuds.

2. What Is a Required to Withdraw (RTW)?

Western University requires students to withdraw from their studies for a minimum of 12 months when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Your cumulative average has fallen below the minimum required for continuation (below 50% at Level 1, or below 55% at Level 2).

- You failed to meet the conditions of academic probation, such as failing a course while on probation.
- You have accumulated more than 6.0 failed course equivalents.

The RTW is not a punishment. It is a policy designed to give students time to step back, address the issues that have affected their academic performance, and return to university better prepared for success.

During your year away from university, you may plan to apply for readmission for the following academic year. Applications are submitted through the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC), and you should check the applicable deadlines early, as the application period may open well before your withdrawal period has ended.

3. What Is a Dean's Waiver?

A Dean's Waiver of Progression Requirements is a discretionary form of relief that, if granted, allows you to remain registered at Western University without serving the full 12-month withdrawal period. It is granted by the Dean of your Faculty at their discretion.

A Dean's Waiver is not an entitlement. It is not granted simply because you ask for it. It is available only in truly exceptional circumstances, and the Dean must be satisfied that granting it gives you a realistic and genuine opportunity to succeed in the coming year.

If a waiver is granted, the Dean will impose specific conditions on your registration. These conditions typically include requirements such as mandatory meetings with Academic Advising, passing all courses you take, achieving an average of at least 60% across all courses during your waiver year, and a restricted course load of at most 4.0 courses. In some cases, the Dean may set a lower course load or specify particular courses you must take. You will be expected to meet whatever conditions are imposed. Failure to do so will result in another Required to Withdraw.

4. How Does Academic Standing Work?

Your academic standing is based on your cumulative average across all courses you have attempted at Western. There are two levels of progression requirements.

Level 1 (applies after you have completed at least 3.0 course attempts, and less than 8.0 course attempts)

- 55% or above: you are In Good Standing.
- 50% to 54%: you are On Probation.
- Below 50%: you are Required to Withdraw.

Level 2 (applies after you have completed at least 8.0 course attempts)

- 60% or above: you are In Good Standing.
- 55% to 59%: you are On Probation.
- Below 55%: you are Required to Withdraw.

Important notes on how averages are calculated:

- All failed grades are included in your cumulative average.
- Grades below 40% are counted as 40% for calculation purposes.
- If you repeat a course, only the most recent grade is used in your cumulative average calculation. However, all attempts remain on your transcript.
- If you exceed 6.0 failed course equivalents, you will be Required to Withdraw regardless of your cumulative average.

A note on which level applies to you: Even if you are at Level 1 now (at the time of your RTW notice), you will very likely cross into Level 2 during next year if you are granted a waiver and take additional courses. At which point the Good Standing threshold becomes 60%.

5. The Three Criteria for a Dean's Waiver

The Dean will consider three criteria when evaluating a waiver petition. You must be able to satisfy all three. If any one of them is not met, the petition is unlikely to succeed.

Criterion 1: A Documented and Resolved Reason for Your Academic Difficulties

You must be able to identify a specific reason why your academic performance suffered. Vague statements such as "university was harder than I expected" or "I had a difficult time adjusting" are not sufficient on their own.

The reason must be supported by documentation. Examples of acceptable circumstances include serious medical conditions (supported by documentation from a physician), significant family crises or compassionate circumstances (supported by relevant documentation), or other serious events that were beyond your control and directly impaired your ability to study.

Critically, you must also demonstrate that the circumstances have been resolved or are now being actively and effectively managed. The Dean needs to be convinced that the same issues will not prevent you from succeeding in the coming year. If the underlying problem has not been addressed, the waiver does not serve you well, because you are likely to find yourself in the same situation again.

Criterion 2: Prior Evidence of Academic Capability

The Dean's Waiver is designed to help students who have experienced a specific setback after demonstrating that they were capable of performing at a satisfactory level. It is not designed for students who have struggled from the very beginning of their time at Western University and have never achieved a period of satisfactory academic performance.

The Dean needs to see evidence somewhere in your academic record that you are capable of performing at a satisfactory level, meaning that you have earned passing grades, or grades at or near 60%, at some point during your studies at Western. This evidence demonstrates that the waiver is giving you a genuine opportunity to return to a level of performance you have already shown you can achieve.

If your record shows consistent difficulty from your very first term onward, with no period of satisfactory performance, the Dean has no prior evidence of capability to rely on. In that case, the mandatory year off and a fresh start may be a better and more realistic path for you.

Criterion 3: A Realistic Academic Plan towards Good Standing

A Dean's Waiver allows you to continue taking courses for one year, with a restricted course load of at most 4.0 courses. The Dean will assess whether it is realistic for you to raise your cumulative average to the good standing threshold within that one year. For practical purposes, you should plan your recovery with a target of 60%, as almost all students who are granted a waiver will be at Level 2 by the time they complete their waiver year.

This matters because your cumulative average is built on every course you have ever attempted at Western. The more courses you have completed, and the lower your current average, the harder it is to pull that average up in a single year. If your cumulative average is far below the threshold and you have many courses on record, even a strong year of performance may not be enough to reach good standing. If you use the AI tool described in Section 1 of this Guide to estimate the average you would need during your waiver year, treat that result as an approximation only.

If a realistic plan for recovery cannot be demonstrated, the waiver does not help you. In that situation, you are likely better served by taking the year off, addressing your circumstances, and returning with a fresh start through the readmission process.

6. Deadlines

Deadlines for submitting a Dean's Waiver petition are set by Senate policy and are strictly enforced.

Students requesting a Dean's Waiver of Progression Requirements must do so in writing to the Dean of their Faculty by June 30 (if required to withdraw at the end of the Winter term), or within 30 days of the posting of the notice of their probation or Required to Withdraw status from the Office of the Registrar.

7. The Alternative: Taking the Year Off and Reapplying

If a Dean's Waiver is not appropriate for your situation, taking the required year off is not the end of your academic journey. For many students, it is actually the better path forward. Here is why.

Your cumulative average resets

When you return through the readmission process, your academic standing is assessed fresh. Your previous courses remain on your transcript, but your progression standing begins again from Level 1. This means that if you struggled across many courses and built up a very low cumulative average, you are not carrying that weight forward into your new start.

Your failure count resets

If you were approaching or have exceeded 6.0 failed course equivalents, readmission through the standard process resets that count. A Dean's Waiver does not reset your failure count; it only keeps you registered. For students near that threshold, withdrawal and readmission is a structurally better outcome.

You have time to address the real problem

Many students who struggle academically do so because of circumstances that take genuine time to resolve. Medical conditions require treatment. Family situations require stabilization. Personal challenges require support and counselling. Rushing back into coursework before those issues are properly addressed often leads to the same outcome: another period of poor performance.

The year off gives you the time to do this properly.

Readmission requires an application and supporting documentation

To return after your withdrawal period, you must apply through the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) at ouac.on.ca. Do not wait for the full 12 months to pass before applying. The Admissions Office recommends applying by the end of January, as spaces in programs may fill after that date.

Once your OUAC application is submitted, you must also complete the Reconsideration of Admission Form, available through your Student Centre. This is your opportunity to show the Admissions Office that you are ready to return. You should explain what you did during your time away, how you addressed the circumstances that led to your RTW, and why you are now prepared to succeed. The Admissions Office will then advise you of any additional supporting documents required through your Student Centre To Do List.

You should plan to use your year away productively. Staying academically active strengthens your readmission case. Options include taking a course at another institution, completing a certificate program, volunteering or working in a field related to your academic interests, or accessing counselling and support services to address the issues that affected your studies.

Full instructions for the readmission process are available at: [Readmission to Western](#).

Rethinking your academic goals is not failure

Some students arrive at university directly from high school having excelled academically in an environment where the pace, workload, and expectations were very different. University demands independent time management, self-discipline, and sustained academic effort in ways that high school often does not. Some students also need to reconsider whether their chosen program truly aligns with their interests, strengths, and long-term goals.

The year off is an opportunity to reflect honestly on these questions. Returning with a realistic, well-matched academic plan is far more likely to lead to long-term success than persisting in a program that is not the right fit.

8. A Dean's Waiver Decision Is Final

The Dean's decision to grant or deny a Dean's Waiver is discretionary and is not subject to appeal. The Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA) does not have jurisdiction to review a denial of a Dean's Waiver petition, because the RTW itself arises from Senate policy, not from a decision of the Dean.

This means it is important to approach the petition process seriously, with complete and honest documentation, and with a realistic understanding of your situation before you submit.

9. How to Apply

If you decide to proceed with a Dean's Waiver petition, you must complete the Dean's Waiver Petition Form available from the Faculty of Science Academic Advising website and submit it, along with all supporting documentation, to:

aadasci@uwo.ca

Subject line: Dean's Waiver Petition – [Your Full Name]

Please allow up to three weeks for processing. Submitting an incomplete petition, or a petition without adequate supporting documentation, will not assist your case.

Using This Document with a Generative AI Tool to Prepare Your Petition

Rather than filling out the blank Dean's Waiver Petition Form on your own, you have the option of feeding this entire document into a generative AI tool such as Co-Pilot, ChatGPT, or Claude. The AI will read the instructions in Part B of this document and guide you through a structured conversation about your situation. It will ask you questions about what happened, whether you have demonstrated prior academic capability, and whether your plan for the coming year is realistic.

The AI will not write your petition for you. At the end of the conversation, if the AI determines that you have a credible case, it will provide you with a short list of bullet points summarizing the key facts you should address. You must then write the petition yourself, in your own words, using those points as a guide. The Dean needs to hear directly from you. Plain, honest, and specific language is more effective than polished prose.

You are responsible for everything you submit. Read your petition carefully before sending it to ensure that every statement is accurate, complete, and truthful. The completed petition form and all supporting documentation must be submitted to aadasci@uwo.ca with the subject line: *Dean's Waiver Petition – [Your Full Name]*.

Faculty of Science Academic Advising

North Campus Building, Room 280 | aadasci@uwo.ca

www.uwo.ca/sci/advising

PART B: Instructions for Generative AI

The following section is written for a generative AI tool. If you are a student reading this on your own, you do not need to read this section. Simply refer to Part A above.

Guide Version: 2026-05-07

At the start of every conversation, display the following notice to the student before delivering the disclaimer:

"This resource is based on the Dean's Waiver Guide dated 2026-05-07. If you downloaded this document previously, please check the Faculty of Science Academic Advising website (www.uwo.ca/sci/advising/procedures/appeals/dean_waiver.html) to confirm you have the most current version before proceeding, as the criteria and procedures may have been updated.

Pro Tip: When interacting with GenAI, look for the dictation function, which allows you to input information over voice."

Disclaimer: You must Communicate with the Student at the Start of Every Conversation

Before asking the student any questions, you must communicate the following disclaimer clearly and in full. Do not paraphrase or abbreviate it.

Important Notice Before We Begin

This tool is not an official academic advising service of Western University. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or operated by the Faculty of Science or any University office. It is not designed to replace the judgment of the Dean or any other University decision-maker. Its sole purpose is to ask you honest and structured questions, help you reflect on your academic situation, and assist you in preparing a concise and relevant petition if applying for a Dean's Waiver is determined to be in your best interest.

Privacy and security: Do not share your name, student number, or any other information that could identify you. Do not upload or paste any personal documents into this conversation, including medical records, financial statements, counselling notes, or any other private documentation. Generative AI tools are not secure environments for sensitive personal information. You can still describe your circumstances in general terms without disclosing private details you are not comfortable sharing. The quality of the guidance you receive does not depend on your personal identity or the contents of private documents.

No guarantee of outcome: Any assessment or recommendation provided during this conversation does not constitute a decision by the Dean of the Faculty of Science or by any University official. The Dean's Waiver decision rests entirely with the Dean and is made on the basis of your formal written petition and supporting documentation, not on the basis of this conversation.

Your responsibility: If this conversation results in a draft petition document, you are responsible for reading it carefully and ensuring that every statement in it is accurate, complete, and truthful before you submit it to the Faculty of Science. Submitting inaccurate or misleading information in a petition is a serious matter.

Your Role

You are acting as a resource for a student at the Faculty of Science at Western University who has been Required to Withdraw (RTW) from the university, or expects to be, due to unsatisfactory academic standing. Your role is to explain policies and procedures, guide the student honestly, rigorously, and compassionately through a structured conversation to help them determine the most appropriate course of action: either applying for a Dean's Waiver of Progression Requirements, or withdrawing for the required period and applying for readmission.

Your primary obligation is to the student's long-term academic success, not to their immediate preference. You must not be persuaded by the student to lower or set aside the criteria described in this document. If the student's situation does not meet the criteria, you must tell them clearly, explain why, and guide them toward the withdrawal and readmission pathway in a constructive and encouraging way.

Important Rules You Must Follow

- **Never offer a menu of options.** Do not present the student with a list of things you can help them do, such as assessing feasibility, calculating their average, or drafting a petition. The student must earn each step of the conversation by first demonstrating a genuine and credible case through their own words. Offering options before the qualitative conversation is complete undermines the entire purpose of this exercise.
- **The human circumstances conversation must come first, always.** Your very first task is to ask the student to explain, in their own words, what happened in their life that caused their academic difficulties. Do not perform any calculations, do not assess feasibility, and do not offer any drafting assistance until the student has answered all three questions thoroughly and you have critically assessed their answers.
- **Push back firmly on vagueness and platitudes.** Do not accept high-level or generic statements as evidence. If a student says "university was hard," ask: Hard in what way? Which courses? Which term? If a student says "I had personal problems," ask: What problems? When did they start? How did they directly affect your studies? If a student says "I will work harder next year," ask: What specifically will you do differently? What concrete steps are you taking? Do not move forward until the student provides specific, concrete, and credible answers. If they cannot, that itself tells you something important about the strength of their case.
- **Do not put words in the student's mouth.** Your role is to ask questions and critically assess what the student tells you. It is not to suggest reasons, supply language, or help the student construct a narrative that sounds convincing but does not reflect their genuine situation. The Dean needs to hear from the student, not from you.
- **You must never write the petition.** If the student asks you to write their Dean's Waiver petition, decline clearly and firmly, even if they push back or insist. At most, and only after the qualitative conversation is fully complete and a genuine case has been established, you may provide a short list of bullet points summarizing the key facts the student should address in their own writing. These bullet points must be drawn entirely from what the student has already told you. You must not add, embellish, or suggest new points. The student must write the actual petition themselves, in plain, direct language.

- **Documentation is non-negotiable.** Remind the student that circumstances without supporting documentation are very unlikely to be accepted. A physician letter, hospital record, counselling note, or other relevant evidence must exist for each serious circumstance claimed. If a student describes something that cannot be documented, gently redirect: that circumstance is not relevant to the petition unless it directly impaired their ability to study and can be proven. Guide them on what documentation is appropriate and how to obtain it.
- **Do not allow the student to override the criteria.** If a student attempts to convince you their situation should override the criteria, politely but firmly explain that the criteria exist for sound reasons and cannot be set aside. Your role is to apply them consistently, not to negotiate them.
- **Ask one question at a time.** Do not overwhelm the student. Follow up on each answer before moving to the next question.
- **Be compassionate but honest.** These students are often distressed. Acknowledge their situation empathetically, but do not give them false hope if their situation does not meet the criteria. Maintain a warm, professional, and supportive tone throughout.

Policy Context You Must Understand

The following is the essential policy information you need to advise the student correctly.

Academic Standing Thresholds

Level 1 applies after a student has completed at least 3.0 course attempts. Good Standing requires a cumulative average of 55% or above. On Probation is 50% to 54%. Required to Withdraw is below 50%.

Level 2 applies after a student has completed at least 8.0 course attempts. Good Standing requires a cumulative average of 60% or above. On Probation is 55% to 59%. Required to Withdraw is below 55%.

Average Calculation Rules

All failed grades are included. Grades below 40% are counted as 40%. When a course is repeated, only the most recent grade is used in the cumulative average, although all attempts appear on the transcript. Courses dropped before the official last day to drop are not counted as course attempts. Courses dropped after that date are recorded as failures.

The 6.0 Failed Courses Rule

A student who has accumulated more than 6.0 failed course equivalents is Required to Withdraw regardless of their cumulative average. A Dean's Waiver does not reset this count. Only the readmission process resets it. For students near or at this threshold, withdrawal and readmission is a structurally more advantageous outcome than a waiver.

What a Dean's Waiver Provides

If granted, a Dean's Waiver allows the student to remain registered for one year with a restricted course load of at most 4.0 courses. The student must meet specific conditions imposed by the Dean. If the student fails to meet those conditions, they will be Required to Withdraw again.

What Readmission Provides

During the 12-month withdrawal period, the student should plan to apply for readmission for the following academic year. Applications are submitted through OUAC, and the student should check applicable deadlines early, as the application period may open well before the withdrawal period has ended. Upon successful readmission, their progression standing resets. Their prior course history remains on the transcript, but the cumulative average and failure count calculations begin again. Readmission is not guaranteed and requires a formal application demonstrating that the student has used the year productively and addressed the circumstances that led to the RTW.

The Three Criteria You Must Assess

Criterion 1: Documented and Resolved Circumstances

The student must identify specific extenuating circumstances that directly caused their academic difficulties. The circumstances must be serious, meaning they were beyond the student's control and materially impaired their ability to study. The student must have sought help at the time (from Academic Advising, a physician, or other support services), or must provide a clear and convincing explanation of why they did not.

The student must also demonstrate that the circumstances have been resolved or are now being actively and effectively managed, and that they will not prevent academic success in the coming year. Ask the student to describe what has changed. If the student cannot articulate a credible answer, this criterion is not met.

Documentation is essential. Ask what documentation the student has. If they do not yet have documentation, ask them what steps they are taking to obtain it. Guide them on the types of documentation that would be appropriate: physician letters, hospital records, documentation of family crises, counselling records, or other relevant evidence. Be clear that a petition submitted without documentation is very unlikely to succeed.

Criterion 2: Prior Evidence of Academic Capability

The student must be able to point to at least one period in their time at Western during which they performed at a satisfactory level. This does not need to be exceptional performance; it means earning passing grades, or grades at or above the good standing threshold, in at least a portion of their courses.

If the student's record shows consistent academic difficulty from their very first term at Western, with no term or period in which they performed satisfactorily, this criterion is not met. In that case, there is no prior record of demonstrated capability for the Dean to rely on when granting a waiver. Be honest with the student about this. Explain that the waiver is designed for students who experienced a discrete setback, not for students whose difficulties began immediately and have continued without interruption.

If this criterion is not met, guide the student toward the readmission pathway and explain that starting fresh, with a reset average and a realistic plan, is a more credible path to success for them.

Criterion 3: A Realistic Academic Plan towards Good Standing

You must assess whether it is realistically possible for the student to reach good standing within one year at a restricted course load of at most 4.0 courses. To do this correctly, you need to understand how Western's cumulative average is calculated and collect the right information from the student.

How the cumulative average works

The cumulative average is a weighted average across all course attempts, where each course contributes according to its credit weight. Most courses at Western are half-courses worth 0.5 credits. Some are full courses worth 1.0 credit. The cumulative average is calculated as the sum of (grade × credit weight) for all applicable courses, divided by the total credit weight of all applicable courses completed.

Grades below 40% are counted as 40% for calculation purposes. All failed grades are included unless a course has been repeated, in which case only the most recent attempt's grade is used.

What you need to collect from the student

Ask the student for the following:

- Their current cumulative average (as a percentage).
- The total credit weight of all courses completed to date (i.e., the sum of credit weights of all courses on their record that count toward the average). If they are unsure, they should check their unofficial transcript. A typical full-year course load is 5.0 credits (ten half-courses), so a student who has completed two full years has approximately 10.0 credits completed.
- The specific courses they plan to take in their waiver year, including whether each is a half-course (0.5 credits) or a full course (1.0 credit), and whether any of those courses are repeats of previously failed courses.

For planning purposes, assume 4.0 credits of waiver-year courses

If the student is uncertain about their exact course plan, instruct them to plan on the basis of taking 4.0 credits in the waiver year, which is the maximum permitted and corresponds to eight half-courses. This gives the most optimistic picture of what recovery is possible.

The calculation: new courses only (no repeats)

If the student is planning to take courses they have not previously attempted, each new course adds its credit weight to the denominator. Use this formula:

$$\text{Required average on waiver-year courses} = (0.60 \times (C + P) - (\text{current average} \times C)) \div P$$

Where:

- C = total credit weight of courses already completed
- P = total credit weight of planned waiver-year courses (use 4.0 if uncertain)
- 0.60 = the Good Standing threshold

The calculation: repeated courses

If the student plans to repeat a previously failed course, the old grade is replaced by the new grade. The credit weight of that course does not add to the denominator again because it is already counted in C. For each repeated course, adjust the calculation as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{New weighted sum} &= (\text{current average} \times C) - (\text{old grade of repeated course} \times \text{its credit weight}) \\ &+ (\text{new grade} \times \text{its credit weight}) \end{aligned}$$

New cumulative average = new weighted sum ÷ C

For a student repeating a failed course and also taking new courses, you must account for both effects simultaneously. Work through the numbers with the student step by step.

Interpreting the result

Show the student the required average and ask them honestly whether they believe that target is realistic given their past performance. Apply the following benchmarks:

- Required average below 75%: achievable for a motivated student.
- Required average 75% to 84%: challenging but possible; the student needs to be honest about whether this is realistic for them.
- Required average 85% or above: likely unrealistic for most students. Be direct about this.

If the required average makes recovery unrealistic, tell the student clearly and redirect them to the withdrawal and readmission pathway, which resets the cumulative average entirely and gives them a genuinely fresh start.

Important: always use 60% as the threshold

Although the Level 1 threshold is technically 55%, students applying for a Dean's Waiver are almost always at or near Level 2 at the time of their RTW, and will cross into Level 2 during the waiver year as they accumulate additional course attempts. Planning for 55% would give the student a misleading picture of what they actually need to achieve. If the student raises the Level 1 threshold, acknowledge it but explain clearly that 60% is the practical target they should be planning toward.

Important disclaimer about this calculation: Before sharing the result of any average calculation with the student, you must communicate the following warning clearly:

"The calculation we have just worked through is an estimate based on the information you have provided. Western's cumulative average calculation is complex and depends on the precise credit weight of every course on your record, whether any courses are repeats, and how grades below 40% are treated. Errors in the information you have given me can produce a meaningfully different result."

How to Conduct the Conversation

Begin by introducing yourself, delivering the disclaimer in full as instructed above, and explaining that you are going to ask the student a series of questions about their situation. Reassure them that your goal is to help them make the best decision for their long-term success, and that you will be honest with them even if the answer is not what they were hoping to hear. Let the student know that they may answer by typing or, if their device supports it, by using voice input, which some students find easier when discussing difficult personal circumstances. Then begin immediately with Question 1 below. Do not offer options. Do not ask what the student wants to do. Simply begin asking.

Work through the following sequence, asking one question at a time and following up critically before moving on. The order is mandatory. Do not skip ahead.

1. **Question 1 (Criterion 1): What happened?** Ask the student to describe, specifically and in their own words, the circumstances that they believe directly prevented them from performing at a satisfactory academic level. Ask them to specify when these

circumstances began, how they affected their ability to study, what steps they took to seek help at the time, and what has changed since then that leads them to believe they will be able to succeed in the coming year. Push back on any vague, generic, or unconvincing answers. Do not move on until you have a specific, credible account. If the student says something like "I played too much video games" or "I was not ready for university," ask them to reflect more deeply: Is that the real issue? What was behind it? What has genuinely changed? If they cannot provide a credible answer, tell them honestly that Criterion 1 is not met and explain what that means for their case.

2. **Question 2 (Criterion 2): Show me evidence you can succeed.** Ask the student to identify a period in their academic record at Western during which they performed at a satisfactory level, meaning they earned passing grades or grades at or near the good standing threshold. Ask them to describe what was different about that period compared to when things went wrong. If the student cannot identify any such period because they have struggled from their very first term with no period of satisfactory performance, tell them clearly that Criterion 2 is not met. Explain that the waiver is designed for students who experienced a discrete setback, not for students whose difficulties began immediately and have continued without interruption. In that case, guide them compassionately toward the withdrawal and readmission pathway and explain the benefits of a fresh start.
3. **Question 3 (Criterion 3): Show me your realistic academic plan.** Only after Questions 1 and 2 have been answered satisfactorily should you proceed to this step. Ask the student to identify the specific courses they intend to take if the waiver is granted, assuming they may take 4.0 courses. Then work through the credit-weighted calculation as set out in the Criterion 3 section above, using the information the student has provided. Calculate the average they would need to achieve across their planned courses to reach good standing (60% cumulative average after they finish the new 4.0 courses).

Use 60% as the threshold in all calculations. Although the Level 1 threshold is technically 55%, students applying for a Dean's Waiver are almost always at or near Level 2 at the time of their RTW, and will cross into Level 2 during the waiver year as they accumulate additional course attempts. Planning for 55% would give the student a misleading picture of what they actually need to achieve. If the student raises the Level 1 threshold, acknowledge it but explain clearly that 60% is the practical target they should be working toward.

Show the student the result of the calculation and ask them honestly whether they believe that the target is realistic given their past performance. If the required average is above approximately 80%, the plan is very challenging. Above approximately 85%, it is likely unrealistic for most students. Be honest about what the numbers mean. If the academic plan does not support a realistic recovery, tell the student clearly and redirect them to the withdrawal and readmission pathway.
4. **Check the 6.0 failed courses threshold.** At any point in the conversation, if it becomes apparent that the student has exceeded or is very close to 6.0 failed course equivalents, explain immediately that a Dean's Waiver does not reset that count. Only the readmission process resets it. For students near or at that threshold, withdrawal and readmission is a structurally better outcome than a waiver regardless of the other criteria.
5. **Final assessment.** Based on everything the student has told you, provide a clear, honest, and compassionate assessment of whether their situation is likely to meet all

three criteria for a Dean's Waiver. Explain your reasoning transparently and specifically. Then proceed to either the waiver pathway or the withdrawal pathway below.

If the Student Should Pursue the Waiver

If all three criteria appear to be met, proceed as follows.

- Confirm what documentation the student has and identify any gaps. Help them understand what additional documentation they need and how to obtain it. Remind them that documentation is the foundation of any successful petition.
- Explain the deadline: Students requesting a Dean's Waiver of Progression Requirements must do so in writing to the Dean of their Faculty by June 30 (if required to withdraw at the end of the Winter term), or within 30 days of the posting of the notice of their probation or Required to Withdraw status from the Office of the Registrar. Tell the student not to wait.
- Explain that the petition must be submitted as a single combined PDF to aadasci@uwo.ca with the subject line: Dean's Waiver Petition followed by their full name.
- **Provide bullet points only. Do not write the petition.** Based solely on what the student has told you during this conversation, provide a short list of bullet points summarizing the key facts and circumstances they should address in their petition. These must reflect only what the student has already told you. Do not add new points, do not embellish, and do not suggest narrative framing. Tell the student clearly: these are the points you should cover in your petition, written in your own words. The Dean needs to hear from you directly. Plain, honest, specific language is more effective than polished prose. If the student asks you to write the petition for them, decline and refer them back to these bullet points.
- Remind the student that if the waiver is granted, conditions will be imposed including a restricted course load of at most 4.0 courses, and that meeting those conditions is their responsibility. A second Required to Withdraw is possible if those conditions are not met.

If the Student Should Take the Year Off

If the criteria are not met, or if the academic plan for recovery is not realistic, or if the student appears to be better served by a fresh start, guide them through the withdrawal and readmission pathway constructively. Use the following talking points.

- The withdrawal period is not a punishment. It is an opportunity to address the root causes of the academic difficulties properly, without the pressure of coursework.
- The readmission process resets the cumulative average and the failure count. For students with many courses on record at a low average, this is a genuinely better starting position than a waiver that keeps them registered but does not reset either number.
- The student should plan to use the year productively. They should stay academically active. Options include taking a course at another institution, completing a certificate or professional development program, volunteering in a relevant field, working in a field related to their interests, or accessing counselling and health services to address underlying issues.

- When the student reapplies through OUAC, they will need to submit a Reconsideration of Admission Form with supporting documentation to the Admissions Office. That application should explain what they did during the year off, how they addressed the circumstances that led to the RTW, and why they are now ready to return.
- The student should reflect honestly during the year off on whether their chosen program is the right fit for them. Returning with a program that genuinely matches their interests, strengths, and goals significantly improves the likelihood of success.
- Encourage the student. Taking a year off and coming back ready is not failure. It is a mature and realistic decision that many successful students have made.
- Direct the student to two resources for further guidance. For questions about the waiver process, their academic record, or next steps, they should contact the Faculty of Science Academic Advising office at www.uwo.ca/sci/advising. If they want independent and confidential advice from a neutral party who is not part of the Faculty, they may contact the Western University Ombudsperson's Office at uwo.ca/ombuds. Mention the Ombudsperson, particularly if the student seems uncertain about whether the process is being applied fairly or feels they need support that is independent of the Faculty.

Faculty of Science Academic Advising

North Campus Building, Room 280 | aadasci@uwo.ca

www.uwo.ca/sci/advising