

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM ACADEMIC AND SKILLS-BASED PROGRAMS

Policy Category	Academic
Policy Search Name	AC – Voluntary and Involuntary Withdrawal from Academic and Skills-Based Programs (2020)
*Anishinabek Standard	
<i>Place of Learning</i>	N/A
<i>Educators</i>	N/A
<i>Students</i>	<i>B. Students are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural UCCMM community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.</i>
<i>Curriculum</i>	N/A
Approval Date & Board Motion Number	7/22/2020 Motion #042-2020
Effective Date	7/22/2020
Previous Versions	Date initially approved: 7/22/2020 Date of last revision: 7/22/2020

*These are organizationally adapted standards from the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) and the Alaska Comprehensive Centre/Alaska Native Education approved by the Kenjgewin Teg Board of Directors, 2015.

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.1 Indigenous researchers, Indigenous service providers, and academic literature are increasingly aware of the significant role that various types of trauma play in the formation of individual and collective identities. This can result in negative student outcomes, weak school performance, and disengagement from school.

1.2 As a trauma-sensitive and trauma-informed place of learning, Kenjgewin Teg will support students in their decisions to access often multiple and often different programs at different points in time as eligible; Kenjgewin Teg will provide guidance and support student decision-making to choose and enroll in course(s) and/or program(s) that will explore or support a student’s educational and career goals. In using a strength-based outlook in supporting students who may be experiencing trauma, it is therefore plausible and likely that students may still have several points of access and entry at different points in time.

2.0 Definitions

“academic and/or skills program(s)”	for purposes of this policy, this refers to courses and programs where students earn credits toward and/or achieve graduation status; this also includes skills-based programs where similar graduation requirements and expectations have been identified as part of the program; e.g. a skills based program that includes OSSD credits; a post-secondary program from a college or university partner delivered by Kenjgewin Teg; a pre/apprenticeship skills program that identifies hours, work-placement, or others required for successful completion;
“ekinoomaagasiid”	is the Mnidoo Mnising dialect/Anishinabemowin word that refers to all students or learners (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) of Kenjgewin Teg
“ekinoomaagasijig”	is the plural form of <i>ekinoomaagasiid</i>
“trauma”	refers to the emotional, psychological, and physiological response from heightened stress that accompanies experiences of threat, violence, and life-challenging events; traumatic events range from one-time incidences to experiences that are chronic and intergenerational
“trauma-sensitive place of learning”	for the purposes of this policy, this refers to a safe and respectful learning environment that enables learners to build caring relationships with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and succeed academically while supporting <i>mino-bmaadziwin (living a good life)</i>

3.0 Application

3.1 This policy applies to all ***ekinoomaagasijig*** of Kenjgewin Teg enrolled in an academic and/or skills-based program.

4.0 Policy

Policy Objective

4.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure either voluntary or involuntary withdrawal decisions made by a ***ekinoomaagasiid*** and/or together with Kenjgewin Teg, are within a trauma-sensitive place of learning. Kenjgewin Teg recognizes with understanding that a learner may suddenly or progressively be unable to meet or continue in their academic and/or skills program for academic reasons; similarly, a learner may also suddenly or progressively be unable to meet or continue in their academic and/or skills program for non-academic reason(s), such as trauma.

Voluntary Withdrawal

4.2 An ***ekinoomaagasiid*** will be voluntarily withdrawn from an academic and/or skills program when one or more of the following occurs:

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- a) a learner may choose to share and advise of their decision to voluntarily withdraw from their academic and/or skills program of study with any member of the Kenjgewin Teg team; however, the learner will be positively encouraged to also meet with the Dean of Student Wellness and Supports to discuss program exit and a potential return to school plan
- b) in the event the Dean of Student Wellness and Supports is not available, another member of the Student Services and Support team will perform this role to help ensure the opportunity for a program exit and return to school plan is provided to the learner
- c) the program exit and return to school plan meeting will be a confidential discussion with the participating Student Wellness and Supports team member and the **ekinoomaagasisid**, and other supports as requested; the program exit and return to school plan meeting may result in completion of the required voluntary withdrawal form with learner signature
- d) with only broad category notification, the reason(s) for voluntary withdrawal will be noted on the required voluntary and involuntary withdrawal form
- e) the original signed withdrawal form document will be sent by the Student Wellness and Supports team within three days of completion, with the original document retained by the Registrar as part of learner record files and maintenance; as the withdrawal is voluntary, all efforts will be made to include learner signature
- f) an alternative result from the program exit and return to school meeting may be that a **ekinoomaagasisid** does not decide to withdraw after all from their academic and/or skills program; with Instructor support and inclusion in decision making, an immediate plan for academic remedial and non-academic supports as needed for enrollment in subsequent course(s) may or may not be possible; see related Academic Risk Policy

Involuntary Withdrawal

4.3 An **ekinoomaagasisid** will consider to be involuntarily withdrawn from an academic and/or skills program as follows:

- a) involuntary withdrawal will consider to have occurred when contact or notice with the learner by a member of Kenjgewin Teg via phone and email and third-party messages have proven unsuccessful over a period of three consecutive weeks, and/or an absence reaching 50% from one or more scheduled classes occurs, whichever comes first; the result of non-contact with a learner and non-attendance may result in a failing grade for that course(s)
- b) pending whether future contact with the **ekinoomaagasisid** is suitably made after an involuntary withdrawal decision has been made for the immediate course(s) affected, it may or may not be possible for a learner to return and continue in their program pending any pre-requisite requirements. A program exit and return to school plan meeting will determine whether this possibility exists or not

4.4 If the behaviour of a learner gives rise to a threat or risk of harm to him or herself, or to others, poses significant threat or risk to property, causes significant disruption to or interference with

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the educational process, interferes with the lawful and proper activities or functions of Kenjgewin Teg's place of learning, a collective decision by the Dean of Student Wellness, the appropriate Dean, and the Vice-President of Lifelong Learning will determine whether voluntary or involuntary withdrawal is required. Further,

- a) the Dean of Student Wellness and Supports will initiate referrals and access to other professional service agencies for learner support, as determined in each unique situation
- b) Kenjgewin Teg acknowledges that it has a reasonable duty to accommodate without undue hardship to support a learner with a learning, psychological or physical disability

4.5 With only broad category notification, the reason(s) for involuntary withdrawal will be noted on the required voluntary and involuntary withdrawal form. The original signed withdrawal form document will be sent by the Student Wellness and Supports team within three days of completion, with the original document retained by the Registrar as part of learner record files and maintenance; as the withdrawal is involuntary, it may not be feasible to have learner signature. The form will be signed by the appropriate Dean(s) affirming that involuntary withdrawal is required.

Short Term Extenuating Circumstances; Medical and Personal Health

4.6 There may be short-term extenuating circumstances where a learner may require academic consideration for a short-term period of time. This applies to extenuating circumstances where the ***ekinomaagaid*** anticipates a full recovery and return to previous levels of academic functioning within or less than three months. Examples of extenuating circumstances that can lead to a reduced ability to meet academic requirements due to physical or mental impairment include an extended unanticipated illness, a serious injury (e.g. concussion, broken bones), a required treatment (surgical procedure, significant side effects from new medication), serious injury or illness to a significant other, bereavement, traumatic event, or other significant personal crisis.

- a) if and as soon as it is determined that the short-term extenuation circumstance being experienced is likely to require accommodations for more than a short period of time, the learner will be referred to Student Wellness and Support Services
- b) depending on the ability of the learner to continue engaging in academic tasks, and the nature of the program the learner is in and related academic requirements, short term extenuating circumstances may require (voluntary or involuntary) withdrawal from a course (or courses) or may require a medical leave of absence. This is particularly important to note for learners in programs with required hours of attendance in course or placement sites, or with set pre-requisites for academic progress, or external regulatory body requirements.

4.7 The flexibility to apply professional judgement by the Student Wellness and Support team in these situations will be used because of the uniqueness of each learner's situation and circumstances. For this reason, the timelines identified in this policy can be modified, if needed, upon notification and rationale provided to the Vice President of Lifelong Learning.

4.8 Formal notification of voluntary or involuntary withdrawal to Kenjgewin Teg's post-secondary partner will occur upon receipt of the signed withdrawal form. The post-secondary partner's policies will apply as required next steps.

4.9 If the academic and/or skills program is not in partnership with another institution, no other notification is required.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The President is responsible for the overall management and operation of Kenjgewin Teg. The Vice President of Lifelong Learning is responsible for overall implementation of this policy for learners of Kenjgewin Teg. The Vice President of Lifelong Learning and Vice President of Anishinaabe Aadziwin teams will work closely together to support Kenjgewin Teg as a trauma-sensitive and trauma-informed place of learning.

5.2 If a position referred to in this policy is vacant, the policy will not be invalidated. Instead, the President shall designate the roles and responsibilities of that role to another team member(s) and will ensure that the Kenjgewin Teg staff and community is informed of the designation(s).

6.0 Evaluation Date - 10/31/2022

6.2 This policy will be reviewed every two years as part of the Board of Director’s policy review cycle and schedule. The evaluation date above represents the first date upon which this policy becomes eligible for review.

Related Legislation, Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner at Risk Educational Policy • Attendance Policy • Trauma-sensitive and Trauma-informed Place of Learning Philosophy
Policies Superseded by this Policy	None
<i>The official version of this policy is housed in the Office of the President. In case of discrepancy between an online version and the official version held, the official version shall prevail.</i>	