

USF System   USF   USFSP   USFSM

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**Title:** SOCAT Health and Wellness Interventions  
**Responsible Office:** Student Affairs and Student Success

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## **I. INTRODUCTION (Purpose and Intent)**

In order to create a safe and healthy learning environment and to ensure the well-being of all its students and employees, the University of South Florida System (USF System or University) established the Students of Concern Assistance Team (SOCAT) within all USF System Institutions. The Students of Concern Assistance Team is the campus entity that accepts referrals regarding students or groups of students whose behavior is of concern to others and manages the Involuntary Health Related Withdrawal Policy.

A. SOCAT, will be the “Designated Committee,” working under the leadership of the “Designated Officer” responsible for the administration of this Regulation. This Regulation shall use the term “Designated Office(r)” to refer in a generic way to the designated office(r) responsible for administering this Regulation recognizing each USF System Institution may have designated the person or team with a different or no title.

B. Each USF System Institution will develop and maintain a copy of internal procedures to identify SOCAT membership and to administer this Regulation. Those internal procedures may reflect necessary modifications to this Regulation to reflect the specific characteristics of that entity.

## **II. STATEMENT OF REGULATION**

A. This Regulation establishes a process and procedure for the Involuntary Health Related Withdrawal (“Involuntary Withdrawal”) of students who engage in behavior that interferes with the living learning environment of the community and/or endangers the safety, health and well-being of the University community.

B. The Students of Concern Assistance Teams at any USF System Institution will have the responsibility for administering the “Return to Classes” as outlined in this Regulation. The Return to Class process is the same for an Involuntary Withdrawal due to extenuating circumstances process and the SOCAT-Assisted Voluntary Withdrawal (“Voluntary Withdrawal”) process; the

latter only being available at USF System Institutions with a student outreach services office collaborating with SOCAT.

### **III. INTERVENTION STANDARDS**

A. Prior to moving forward with any steps in the withdrawal process due to extenuating circumstances, SOCAT may outreach to a student to offer, or in some cases require, a well-being check-in appointment with a SOCAT member. During this appointment, the SOCAT member will discuss with the student the resources and services available that will assist the student in decreasing the student's behaviors of concern and that will support the student in experiencing personal and academic success. Additionally, the SOCAT member will discuss with the student the option for a Voluntary Withdrawal as well as the SOCAT-Assisted withdrawal. The options for support presented to the student to assist in achieving the student's academic and personal success or to assist in decreasing the student's concerning behavior will be considered reasonable options under the circumstances without imposing an undue hardship on the University or unacceptable risk of harm to self of the greater University Community.

B. While SOCAT will make a good faith attempt to monitor the student's engagement in and follow-up with these resources, it is the sole responsibility of the student to seek the support services. This includes seeking medical care or counseling, following the medical or treatment advice, and accurately reporting one's physical and mental conditions to the student's healthcare provider(s). SOCAT assistance in accessing these resources does not relieve a student of the student's personal responsibility to follow through with and adhere to recommendations. A student's lack of follow through and engagement with support resources may result in movement toward the Involuntary Withdrawal process if the criteria for the extenuating circumstances are met and the student's or the community's well-being is at risk due to the student's lack of follow through and engagement in support resources.

C. If SOCAT identifies a health or safety emergency, SOCAT may decide to initiate parental notification or consultation as part of its information gathering process or as part of its effort to work with the student to address the student's behavior of concern. Contact with the parents/guardian/significant others may be made by the SOCAT Chair, the Office of the Dean for Students (or equivalent at each USF System Institution) or other designated SOCAT member.

D. If it is determined that the student represents a direct threat to others, the case will be referred to the campus office responsible for the administration of the [USF6.0021 Student Code of Conduct](#) for the campus or USF System Institution.

E. Immediate Temporary Separation: If at any time it is deemed necessary, the USF System may invoke an immediate temporary separation from the USF System which may remain in place pending final determination of the Involuntary Withdrawal process. This may prohibit a student from attending classes, participating in registered student organizations or activities or entering any USF System property, campus or USF System affiliated housing.

#### **IV. INVOLUNTARY OR VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWALS**

A. Voluntary Withdrawal from active course enrollment with assistance from SOCAT, and/or its outreach services component, must be due to “extenuating circumstances” as outlined in the USF System and USF System Institution specific academic regulations. (Availability of this option may be limited to USF System Institutions with designated outreach personnel).

B. Involuntary Withdrawal from active course enrollment, will be initiated when the student’s condition/behavior creates a significant and imminent risk to the safety, health and well-being of the University community. Such risk includes engagement in behavior that directly endangers others, significantly disrupts the community, or poses a legitimate and life-threatening concern for safety.

C. Prior to invoking an Involuntary Withdrawal from classes, in an effort to determine the nature, duration, and severity of the concern for safety and whether reasonable modifications exist that would sufficiently mitigate the concern, SOCAT may:

1. Require the student undergo an individualized assessment at Student Health Services, which may include 2-4 sessions, by a licensed mental health practitioner. As part of this assessment, it will be requested that the student provide a signed Release of Information to permit SOCAT to contact the evaluating professional (as described above). The purpose of the voluntary assessment and the Release, is to allow the Designated Office(r) or other designated member of SOCAT (e.g., mental health or health professional) access to a summary of the concerns, recommended treatment interventions to reduce behaviors of concern, and recommendations regarding best environment and support options for the student’s well-being.

2. The student may elect to undergo a second assessment by an off-campus provider if they would like to seek a second opinion. The results of this assessment may be submitted to the SOCAT committee for consideration during their review. SOCAT is not required to delay review or subsequent decision making under the Involuntary Withdrawal process in order for the student to submit the student’s second assessment.

D. Failure of a student to complete the individualized assessment or to submit the required documentation to SOCAT shall not affect the validity of, or delay any decision regarding the preliminary steps in the Involuntary Withdrawal process made under this Regulation.

E. SOCAT will review the results of the assessment to determine whether reasonable supports will allow the student to meet the student’s essential academic and University community responsibilities while maintaining a safe college environment for all students. The results of the mandated assessment and recommendations are not binding on SOCAT, the Designated Committee, Designated Authority or the University.

1. If it is determined that the reasonable supports available will allow the student to meet the student’s essential academic and University community responsibilities while maintaining a safe

college environment, such supports will be communicated to the student either verbally or in writing. The student will be expected to engage in the supports as recommended by the treatment provider in order to maintain their ongoing well-being.

2. If it is determined that the supports needed to allow the student to meet the student's essential academic and community responsibilities and/or to allow the student to maintain a safe college environment are not reasonable in the University setting, or if the student refuses to engage in the reasonable supports that are available, the student will be notified in a manner selected by the Designated Office(r) that the Designated Office(r) is considering an Involuntary Withdrawal. Within three (3) days of the student being notified that the student may be involuntarily withdrawn from classes, the student may request in writing (e-mail or regular mail) an opportunity to meet confidentially with a subgroup of specific administrators which, depending on the campus or institution, could include one or more of the following: the Director of the Counseling Center, the Director of Medical and Clinical Services for Student Health Services and a senior student affairs officer (e.g., Vice President of Student Affairs and Student Success, AVP for Wellness, AVP/Dean of Students, or equivalent at each USF System Institution) and, if possible, such meeting will be arranged before the Involuntary Withdrawal is imposed.

F. This process is not a substitute for disciplinary action when there is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct nor will it supplant the USF System's policies for addressing violations of substance abuse and alcohol abuse. Additionally, Involuntary Withdrawal is not a disciplinary action. It is a remedial action taken to assist and protect individual students and the University Community.

G. Financial Implications: Regardless of the circumstances for withdrawal, [USF4.0102 Tuition and Fees](#), [USF4.0107 Fees, Fines, and Penalties](#), and [USF6.013 University Residence Halls](#), will apply with regard to tuition, fees, refunds and University housing.

## **V. RETURNING TO CLASSES AFTER A VOLUNTARY OR INVOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL**

A. A student withdrawing under this Regulation, whether voluntary (with SOCAT outreach assistance) or involuntary may have a Health and Wellness Hold placed on the student's account which must be removed in order to register for classes. In order to remove the Health and Wellness Hold, the student must successfully engage in the treatment recommendations in order to sufficiently mitigate the concern as outlined by SOCAT. This Health and Wellness Hold is put in place in order to ensure students do not Return to Classes prior to addressing the issues which led to either the SOCAT Assisted or Involuntary Withdrawal. The HW hold is reflected only on internal records and prevents the student from enrolling and attending courses in subsequent semesters until the student has resolved the hold.

B. The conditions for removing the Health and Wellness Hold will be outlined in writing to the student by SOCAT's Designated Office(r) at the time of the student's withdrawal and may include required documentation from licensed medical and/or mental health professionals. Students who

remain on leave for three (3) consecutive semesters are subject to the University readmission processes, which can be located in the [University Undergraduate Catalog](#) and/or [University Graduate School Policies](#).

C. To remove the Health and Wellness Hold, the student must submit a request to SOCAT to begin the Return to Classes process. This request and all its supportive documentation must be submitted to SOCAT, at least 30 days prior to the semester in which the student is seeking to Return to Classes. SOCAT will review the request to remove the Health and Wellness Hold and the supporting documentation for the purpose of evaluating the student's adherence to the outlined conditions and whether the student has mitigated the concern for safety posed at the time of the withdrawal. SOCAT will grant approval or disapproval of the decision to remove the Health and Wellness Hold and this decision will be relayed to the student. A student may be required to spend at least one semester out on leave; this will be determined on a case by case basis.

D. In exceptional circumstances, SOCAT may elect to request a second, independent opinion paid for by the USF System prior to rendering a decision regarding the Health and Wellness Hold and the Return to Classes. The purpose of this assessment is to gather further information regarding the student's current health and safety and the supports needed to allow the student to remain healthy in an academic environment. Inherent to this decision-making process is SOCAT's commitment to take into account an individual's past and ongoing medical or psychological condition which may contribute to the exhibited behavior that is in question.

E. A student seeking to Return to Classes at the University after voluntary or Involuntary Withdrawal due to extenuating circumstances, as described in Section IV (Involuntary or Voluntary Withdrawals), must satisfy the requirements put in place by SOCAT, if any; and then all academic requirements in place at the time of withdrawal from classes at the University.

F. Once the student has satisfied all conditions for "Return to Class", the student will be notified, in writing by the Designated Office(r), SOCAT Chair or a designee whether the request to "Return to Class" has been approved or denied. Additional requirements of suggested recommendations may accompany the approval notification. The student may contest these additional requirements, as per the processed outline in Section VI (Appeals).

G. In the event that a student is not approved to Return to Classes under those expectations or conditions outlines by SOCAT, the Designated Office(r), or designee, will communicate what additional information is needed to meet the conditions to return. The processes outlined in Section VI (Appeals), will be included an available to the student.

## **VI. APPEALS**

A. A student has the right to file a written appeal of SOCAT's decisions regarding an Involuntary Withdrawal or Return to Classes. The student may appeal in writing to the campus or institution senior student affairs officer (e.g. Vice President of Student Affairs and Student Success, or equivalent at each USF System Institution) or designee within (3) days of the date of the notice to

the student. The senior student affairs officer will consider the written appeal and render a final decision within ten (10) days or notify the student that additional time will be necessary to consider the appeal. The senior student affairs officer's decision is a final USF System action.

B. The appellate officer may grant a review of a SOCAT decision only if the appellate officer determines one of the following:

1. New evidence that was not available at the time of SOCAT's decision; or
2. A significant deviation from procedures that affected the outcome of SOCAT's deliberations.

## **VII. RECORDS**

A. SOCAT shall maintain such records as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out its responsibilities under this Regulation.

B. SOCAT will maintain centralized record keeping and/or database to manage information related to students referred for consideration under this Regulation. As students in the USF System may register for courses on multiple campuses or institutions, the central records process provides a mechanism for university system communication, when necessary.

C. At minimum, each SOCAT shall:

1. Ensure that all of its records (if not fully electronic) are stored in a safe place and under lock while not in use; and
2. Take responsible precautions to ensure that its records are accessible only as provided for in this Regulation; and
3. Provide for the destruction of its records in accordance with the State of Florida General Records Schedule for Public Universities and Colleges, GS5.

*Specific Authority: Art. IX, Sec. 7, Fla. Constitution. Fla. Board of Governors Regulations 1.001, 6.001, 6.0105; 1006.60, 1006.61, F.S.*

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*The USF System certifies that it has followed the Florida Board of Governors Regulation Development Procedure and has a record of written notices, comments, summaries and responses as required.*