

Interrupting your Studies

A Guide for Students

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Introduction

If you experience serious personal, medical or financial issues during your study, you can apply to suspend your studies. We call this 'interruption'.

Interruption applies to exceptional circumstances only. You need approval to interrupt your studies – it is not an automatic right.

If you are considering interrupting your studies, you must contact the Academic Records team or Student Services **as soon as possible** to seek advice.

This guide provides you with more detailed information on how to apply to interrupt your studies and the impact it will have. The full interruption policy is detailed in the Academic Regulations [Appendix 9 – Interruptions Policy \(http://ehu.ac.uk/appendix-9-interruption\)](http://ehu.ac.uk/appendix-9-interruption).

What is interruption?

We define interruption as an approved period during which you suspend your studies and are not required to engage with your programme. This means you do not attend lectures or tutorials and you do not submit assessments or sit examinations.

We can only approve interruption if you are experiencing extraordinary circumstances which are impacting your ability to study. This usually means there are serious personal, medical or financial issues affecting you.

Occasionally, we may approve interruption if you request to undertake an extended period of work experience that is not associated with your programme.

Interrupting your studies is not an automatic right - you must apply and gain approval for this. You may also need to provide evidence to support your application to interrupt your studies.

The following are **not** grounds for interruption:

- inability or failure to engage with or progress your studies
- taking the opportunity to repeat periods of study or improve assessments already undertaken, as this could provide an academic advantage over your peers

You can only apply to interrupt at a programme level. You cannot apply to interrupt for one specific module, unless you are undertaking a module as part of stand-alone study.

How long does an interruption period last?

Depending on your course structure, the minimum interruption period is one semester or equivalent. The maximum interruption period is one calendar year.

In exceptional circumstances, the Academic Registrar may directly approve a longer interruption period. Alternatively, we may advise you to withdraw and apply to return to study at a later date. In all cases you must seek clarification from Academic Registry.

Am I eligible to apply for interruption?

If you are experiencing exceptional circumstances that impact your ability to study, you are normally eligible to apply to interrupt your studies.

However, interruption is *not available* if:

- you are a new student within the first two weeks of your start date. If you are unable to continue at this stage, you should contact Academic Registry to discuss restart as an option

- it is after the fourth week of your term or semester. In exceptional cases, the Academic Registrar may agree to interruption if this will not give you an academic advantage on your return

You should refer to information on exceptional mitigating circumstances (EMC) if any of the following apply to you:

- you are at the end of your scheduled programme of study and have outstanding assessments, modules or placements
- you are an education trainee on placement
- it is your programme's main assessment period. This is usually at the end of each semester or the end of the academic year

For more details, please visit www.edgehill.ac.uk/registry/difficulties/exceptional-mitigating-circumstances.

In rare circumstances it may not be possible to allow interruption. For example, there may be known changes that will impact on our ability to offer the same programme to you on your return. In these circumstances, we will advise you on the options available so that you can make an informed decision before applying to interrupt.

What else do I need to know before I apply?

Please be aware of the following before you apply to interrupt your studies.

Your period of interruption counts towards the maximum time limit for registration.

We may not approve an interruption request if

- it would lead to you exceeding the maximum registration period
- it would breach any professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements around completion timeframes

If you have any outstanding assessments, they will be recorded as part of your interruption agreement so that you are clear about your overall position before interrupting your studies.

You do not have to complete assessments while interrupting your studies. However, if you do want to submit any outstanding assessments, we will do our best to help you do so.

Your tuition fees are calculated in line with tuition fee regulations, which correlate to dates of attendance. If you have a scheduled bursary or scholarship payment, this should stop during the period of interruption.

How do I apply to interrupt my studies?

If you are considering interrupting your studies, you must discuss your position with a member of staff in the first instance. Any of the following can offer you advice and guidance about your options from a personal, academic and financial perspective

- personal tutor
- programme leader
- head of department
- the Students' Union
- Academic Registry
- Student Services

If you receive Disability Support Allowance, you should contact the Student Services Inclusion team for detailed advice on funding and support arrangements.

You must complete an application form in conjunction with your personal tutor or named departmental officer. Forms are available from Academic Registry. Please contact them on AR-Academic-Records@edgehill.ac.uk or call

- 01695 657068 (Faculty of Arts and Sciences)
- 01695 654389 (Faculty of Education)
- 01695 654390 (Faculty of Health and Social Care)

Please note, your application must be supported by your department, otherwise it cannot proceed. We do not accept applications with no departmental support.

If there is departmental support, but you do not meet the criteria for interruption as outlined here and in the full policy, Academic Registry may not approve your application. The full interruption policy can be found in the Academic Regulations, [Appendix 9 – Interruption Policy](http://ehu.ac.uk/appendix-9-interruption). (<http://ehu.ac.uk/appendix-9-interruption>).

You will be notified in writing of Academic Registry's decision within five days of the decision being made.

My application has been successful – what happens next?

You will meet with your personal tutor, departmental officer or other named contact.

At this meeting you will confirm the details of your interruption agreement. These details include:

- the nature and frequency of support contact from us during interruption. Please note that the minimum frequency of contact is every three months
- our expectations regarding your engagement with us during interruption
- any conditions for your return to study

An account of the meeting is recorded on the interruption and support agreement form and both parties sign it.

You will receive a letter from Academic Registry summarising the frequency and method of support and any conditions applied. We will send a copy of this letter to your faculty office.

Where applicable, we will notify the Student Loans Company (SLC) and/or the NHS Business Services Authority or equivalent bodies, that you are interrupting your studies.

My application has been turned down – what happens next?

Your personal tutor or Academic Registry should have discussed your options with you before you apply for interruption. However, if your application is turned down, options they may discuss with you include:

- providing more evidence and resubmitting your application
- an exceptional mitigating circumstances application
- reassessment (this requires approval from the relevant assessment board)
- repeating a year
- appealing the decision, if there has been a fault in the process

What happens during interruption?

Your interruption and support agreement details the level of engagement between you and your personal tutor or named contact.

You are not expected to engage with study or the University except as detailed in the agreement. Similarly, your personal tutor or named contact will maintain support contact with you only as detailed in your agreement.

During interruption you will still have access to the majority of our facilities, including

- network access
- electronic resources
- subject resources
- library service
- learning resources centres
- equipment and facilities
- help and support
- off-campus support

What happens when I return from interruption?

We will write to you to confirm your return date and refer you for any appropriate clearance.

You will usually return to study at the start of teaching for the term/semester. If your programme incorporates practise, it may be more appropriate for you to resume your

studies at the equivalent point of your departure. In these cases, you must agree a date with your department and obtain approval from Academic Registry.

You must meet the normal conditions of entry to your programme which may include:

- providing medical evidence confirming you are fit enough to return
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance

Academic Registry will ensure that you have met all your conditions to return from interruption before allowing you to re-enrol on your programme.

Once you have re-enrolled, we will notify the relevant bodies (eg Student Loans Company or NHS Business Services Authority) of your return to study.

To ensure you are well supported in your return to study, you will attend a meeting with the relevant people in your faculty and central support services. At this meeting you will agree how we can best support your return to study. We want to give you the best possible opportunity for success and will continue regular progress reviews until considered necessary by your personal tutor.

Appeals

All applications for interruption require academic judgement. There is no right of appeal against this local academic judgement.

If you believe there has been a procedural error in the decision process which rejected your application to interrupt your studies, you can appeal.

Full details of the appeals process are found in the Academic Regulations [Appendix 22 – Academic Appeals Procedures](http://ehu.ac.uk/academicappeals), (<http://ehu.ac.uk/academicappeals>).

In summary

If you are eligible for interruption:

- discuss your situation with your personal tutor or named departmental officer
- get an application form from Academic Registry
- complete it with your personal tutor or named departmental officer and make sure they sign the form
- submit the form to Academic Registry. Remember they will only accept applications which have departmental support
- Academic Registry will write to you with their decision

If your application is successful:

- meet with your personal tutor or named departmental officer
- agree the nature and frequency of support during your period of interruption
- agree any conditions you must meet on return
- you should both sign the interruption and support agreement form

During interruption:

- there is no contact between you and the University except as outlined in the interruption and support agreement form
- facilities such as network access; electronic, subject and learning resources; the library; equipment and facilities; help and support are still available to you

Returning to study:

- we will confirm your return date and refer you for any necessary clearance
- you will need to satisfy any conditions of return. These include providing medical evidence that you are fit enough to return or obtaining DBS clearance

If your application is turned down:

- discuss your options with your personal tutor or named departmental officer

You are not eligible for interruption if:

- you are a new student in the first two weeks of your start date. In this case you should contact Academic Registry and discuss restart as an option; or
- it is after the fourth week of your term or semester, you should talk to your personal tutor about the options available to you

You should refer to information on exceptional mitigating circumstances if any of the following apply to you:

- you are at the end of your programme of study and have outstanding assessments
- you are an education trainee on placement
- it is your programme's main assessment period