

The Academic Regulations Appendix 26: Withdrawal Procedures

2020 – 2021



Edge Hill
University

The Academic Regulations

Appendix 26: Withdrawal Procedures

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Summary

Withdrawal procedure provides students with clear guidance on how to complete the withdrawal process and how to seek a review of the decision to withdraw them from their studies. The University endeavours to make the withdrawal process as smooth and transparent as possible.

Glossary of terms

Term	Meaning
Appeal	is a procedure which allows a student, in certain circumstances, to ask for review of a decision
Assessment board	the University board that considers assessment marks. They decide on whether a student can progress or to make a final award
Attendance	this refers to physical attendance at scheduled academic taught sessions
Bias	where there is unfairness or a perception of unfairness in the way a decision has been reached
Disengagement	when a student has stopped participating in academic sessions and the learning environment
Engagement	this refers to active participation with academic sessions, learning environment, study and related opportunities including submission of coursework assessments
International Office	provides support to international students and manages Tier 4 Visa and immigration issues. This includes monitoring student attendance
Irrecoverable	when a student is in a position where it is impossible for them to successfully complete their studies
Mitigating circumstances	where circumstances beyond a student's control prevented them from engaging with their studies
Procedural irregularity	where the University has not followed its own procedures properly, and error or mistake has affected the outcome
Student Census	the University's official survey conducted to clarify the status of all registered students
Studies	the work a student does while at university
Tuition Fee	money that a student pays to the University for their teaching. Eligible students may borrow from the Student Loans Company to pay their tuition fees

Withdrawal	the permanent cessation of study and termination of a student's registration with the University. This may be initiated by the University or the student
Withdrawal form	the form students are required to complete to notify the University that they have withdrawn
Working days	the official days the University is open, normally Monday to Friday and excludes statutory holidays and any concessionary days e.g. when the University is closed between Christmas and new year

Purpose

These procedures provide a set of overarching principles for managing student withdrawal. For departments and faculties, it provides information to explain the withdrawal procedure and guidance on advising students. It provides guidance to students on how to complete the withdrawal process and explains how to seek a right of appeal.

Regulations

1. Introduction

This withdrawal procedure provides:

- students with clear guidance on how to complete the withdrawal process and how to seek a review of the decision to withdraw them from their studies
- staff with information to explain the withdrawal procedures and guidance on advising students how to seek a right of appeal

The University is committed to ensuring that all students gain the maximum benefit from their course. We work in partnership with students to support their learning and wider university experience and achieve success.

Sometimes, students experience personal or course-related difficulties that impact on their ability to continue their studies. In these cases, students are strongly advised to seek support from the University at the earliest opportunity. The Annex details those University areas that can provide dedicated support to students during difficult times.

However, there are occasions when students decide that they can no longer continue with their studies and seek a full withdrawal from the University. This is the permanent end of their registration from both their course and modules. The University endeavours to make the withdrawal process as smooth and transparent as possible.

There may also be times when a student's lack of attendance or disengagement with the University means it is reasonable to assume they have withdrawn. In such cases, the University may decide to enforce a withdrawal. If there is any doubt as to what constitutes an appropriate level of engagement at the University, please consult the Academic Programme Engagement Framework (APEF).

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all Edge Hill students from the time they complete their initial course enrolment until the end of their University registration.

- 2.2 The procedure does not cover instances where a student has been failed and withdrawn by an assessment board or University panel, or where they have been excluded under other University policies, procedures and regulations. It applies solely to cases where a student initiates the withdrawal process or where the University instigates the withdrawal process specifically due to a student's lack of engagement.
- 2.3 In all cases the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) authority regulations presides over the University's normal processes. The requirements for Tier 4 and visa controlled students are therefore subject to the UKVI's jurisdiction. This is explained further throughout this document.

3. Student-Led Withdrawal

- 3.1 Students who decide to withdraw must complete a withdrawal form and submit it to Academic Registry (or their faculty) stating their reason for leaving and last date of engagement. Notification of Withdrawal forms are available from Academic Registry, Student Services and faculties.
- 3.2 Students must ensure that their last date of engagement is accurately recorded as it is used to calculate their tuition fee liability and loan, bursary and/or grant entitlement. More information on how the last date of engagement should be recorded is included in section 5.
- 3.3 The form must be signed by the student's head of department or nominee (normally a programme leader, year leader or personal tutor) who will confirm the last date of engagement.
- 3.4 In exceptional circumstances, and where approved by Academic Registry, students who are unable to complete a withdrawal form may send an email from their University account stating their intention to withdraw. The email must also state their last date of engagement (as defined in section 5) and their reason for leaving.
- 3.5 Students must submit their withdrawal form/notification to Academic Registry (or their faculty) within 10 working days of their last date of engagement. This submission deadline must be met to ensure students are not in receipt of funding they are not entitled to and to ensure the correct tuition fee is calculated and applied. Full details of how tuition fee liability is calculated when a student withdraws are available at [Tuition Fee Liability Procedures](#).

- 3.6 Academic Registry will process the withdrawal, update the student record and notify relevant bodies, as explained in section 6.
- 3.7 Once Academic Registry has processed the withdrawal, a confirmation letter will be sent to the student's home address and the withdrawal process is then complete.

4. University Led-Withdrawal

- 4.1 The APEF sets out the University's position on monitoring student attendance and engagement. It details the University's approach to supporting students where their attendance and/or engagement suggests they may be at risk of either
- leaving the university; or
 - being in an irrecoverable position in terms of their ability to complete the course.
- 4.2 Staff must consult the APEF before instigating a University-Led Withdrawal.
- 4.3 A University-Led Withdrawal may be instigated where
- interventions in the APEF have been exhausted and a student has failed to re-engage with their studies; and/or
 - a student's lack of engagement means they will not be able to successfully complete the programme
- Heads of departments are responsible for identifying staff who will initiate this process.
- 4.4 UKVI Visa controlled students are expected to maintain their immigration status throughout their period of registration. Where a student is unable to provide evidence, or the University has reasonable grounds to believe their immigration status is not being maintained, the International Office will withdraw the student. The decision will be reviewed if the student provides the International Office with appropriate evidence to confirm their status within 10 working days from the date of the withdrawal notification.
- 4.4 For international students, faculties/departments must contact the International Office for advice before commencing the withdrawal process. This will ensure the University fulfils its responsibilities under its UKVI Sponsor Licence.

- 4.5 University-Led withdrawals can be actioned via the student records system (SID Admin Online) or through completion of a paper form, available from Academic Registry. Should staff require any technical advice on how to initiate a student withdrawal they should contact [Academic Registry](#).
- 4.6 Faculties/departments must complete the withdrawal process promptly when a student withdraws, normally within 10 working days from the last date of engagement. This is necessary to prevent the inappropriate release of funds to the student and/or University which may need to be repaid.
- 4.7 Academic Registry processes all University-Led Withdrawals and notifies students of the outcome and their right of appeal against the decision and/or the last date of engagement recorded.
- 4.8 The University undertakes census checks at designated points in the academic calendar to ensure that central records remain accurate. The University census complements the ongoing work of departments to monitor attendance and engagement, it does not replace local systems for tracking student engagement.

5. Last Date of Engagement

- 5.1 Faculties/departments are responsible for confirming a student's last date of engagement.
- 5.2 Accurately recording the last date of engagement is essential as this influences the student financial support made available. It is the basis upon which the University works out a student's liability for tuition fees.
- 5.3 The last date of engagement is defined as the date that the University can confirm the student last engaged with their academic studies. This includes:
- classroom based study, lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical or studio based sessions, workshops, group work, presentations, or occasional sessions where visiting speakers are invited to present *supervision/mentoring*
 - *submission* of coursework and/or attendance at an examination
 - academic engagement with the virtual learning environment, including accessing Lecture Capture
 - meeting or communicating with a member of staff on a course related matter

- for research students, normally any course related contact with the Director of Studies
 - attendance at clinical, sandwich, professional practice or work placements
 - studying overseas as part of an Erasmus exchange or study abroad programme
 - representing the Students' Union at a course board or similar meeting
 - submission of their International Office Attendance Monitoring Form
- 5.4 To comply with Home Office UKVI Sponsor Licence requirements, the last date of attendance/engagement for international students is recorded as the date the student submits their withdrawal form.
- 5.5 For students who suspend their studies (interruption of studies) and withdraw within the same academic year, the last date of engagement is recorded as the start date of the period of interruption.
- 5.6 Where a student fails to re-enrol, the last date of engagement is recorded as the first day of the new academic year.

6. Administration

- 6.1 Withdrawals are processed by Academic Registry, who will:
- i) update the University's central student records system
 - ii) notify the Student Loans Company and/or other funding bodies as appropriate, confirming the last date of attendance/engagement
 - iii) confirm details of the withdrawal in writing to the student, along with information on the appeals process.
 - iv) notify Teaching Regulation Agency
 - v) retain a record of the withdrawal
- 6.2 The University's International Office will report to the Home Office (UKVI) when Tier 4 student withdraws, this report must be made within 10 days after the withdrawal date.

7. Withdrawal Appeal Procedure

- 7.1 An appeal is a request from a student to review a withdrawal case. This may be to review a University decision to withdraw a student or to dispute the last date of engagement recorded.
- 7.2 An appeal can only be submitted on one or more of the following grounds:
- i) the University has not followed its own procedures properly, including through administrative error, and this has clearly affected the outcome. This is called a 'procedural irregularity'
 - ii) circumstances beyond a student's control prevented them from engaging with their studies. Good reasons of significant relevance also prevented them from informing their faculty/department before the withdrawal decision was made. These are known as 'mitigating circumstances'
 - iii) unfairness or a perception of unfairness in the way the faculty/department has reached the decision to withdraw the student. This is also known as 'bias'
 - iv) where issues do not fall neatly into the above categories, students are encouraged to raise them for consideration by the relevant head of department or nominee
- 7.3 To appeal, a student must submit a withdrawal appeal form within 10 working days from the date of the withdrawal notification. To comply with UKVI Sponsor Licence requirements, Tier 4 international students must submit their form within five working days of receiving the withdrawal notification.
- 7.4 Appeals submitted outside the specified deadlines are not normally accepted. If a student experiences difficulties gathering evidence for their appeal, they must contact the Academic Registrar, provide a detailed reason for the delay and state the date their appeal will be submitted. In exceptional circumstances, the Academic Registrar may allow an extension to the deadline and specify a new submission date.
- 7.5 Withdrawal appeal forms are obtained from Academic Registry. Completed forms must be submitted to Academic Registry, who will acknowledge receipt of the form and log its submission.
- 7.6 The University only accepts withdrawal appeals directly from a student and not from someone else on their behalf. Exceptions are made for students with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

- 7.7 Students are responsible for ensuring they raise all relevant issues and provide supporting documentation and evidence with their appeal. Appeals are made in two stages:

First Stage Appeal

- i) the appeal is considered by the head of department, or nominee who determines whether a case has been established
- ii) the student may be asked to meet with their head of department as part of this process. In making the decision, a number of factors are taken into account. Academic judgement will also be used to decide whether the student has a reasonable chance of success in completing the year
- iii) if the decision is that the student has established a case, they will either be reinstated or have their last date of engagement amended. The head of department may specify reinstatement conditions, recommend a return date or other University procedures
- iv) if the decision is that the student has not established a case, they will receive written notification from Academic Registry and a summary explaining the decision
- v) the student is informed of the outcome of their first stage appeal investigation by letter or email within 10 working days
- vi) students who are not satisfied with the first stage appeal decision can request for it to be reviewed at second stage. The request must be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days from the date of the letter or email notifying them of the outcome of the first stage appeal. Students may submit additional information, not considered at their first stage appeal with this request

Second Stage Review

- i) the review is considered by a faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean, or nominee, not previously involved the case. They will determine whether the decision of the first stage appeal is reasonable, noting the grounds for appeal listed in 7.2. In addition, and where appropriate, they will consider any additional information provided by the student. For students registered on a Graduate School course the decision is made in conjunction with the Director of the Research Office, or nominee
- ii) the outcome will be to either dismiss or uphold the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the student will either return to their studies or their last date of engagement will be amended
- iii) the decision of the second stage review is final

- iv) the student is notified of the outcome of the second stage review in writing within 10 working days. A completion of procedures notification is issued with the decision letter advising that the University's procedures are complete. This letter also informs the student of their right to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for review if they remain dissatisfied

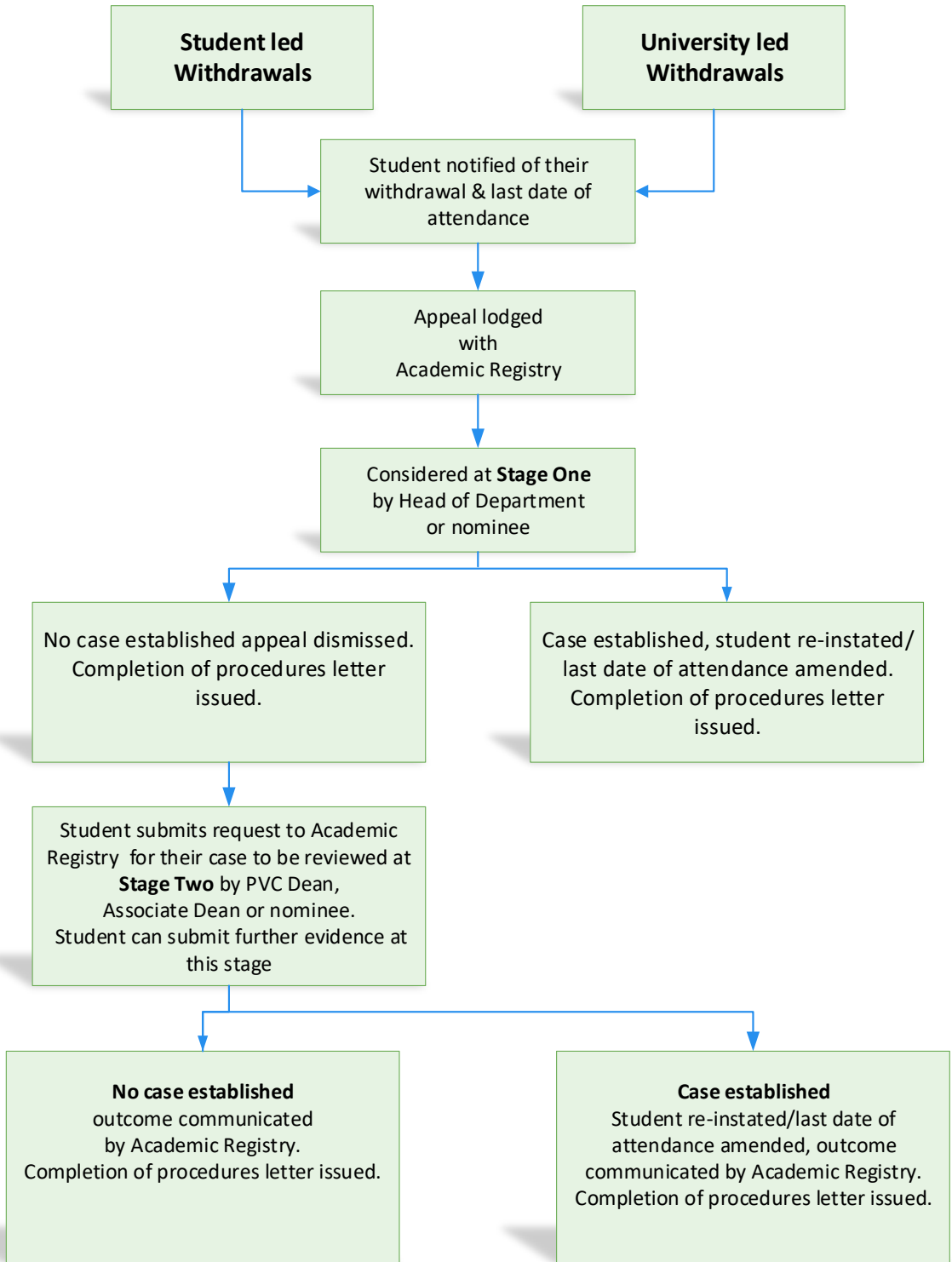
8. Post-Withdrawal

- 8.1 Students who are withdrawn must return any University property including books and equipment, uniforms, name badges and their Unicond.
- 8.2 Once a student has been formally withdrawn, they are no longer able to access the opportunities and facilities made available to registered students. This means that these former students are not:
 - i. permitted to attend teaching sessions or submit assessments
 - ii. able to access the library and network resources
 - iii. eligible for university accommodation
 - iv. entitled to Student Finance loan payments and/or bursary support (for the course concerned) and will be required to repay any overpayments
 - v. permitted an active 'Unicond'
 - vi. able to claim student benefits for the programme concerned
- 8.3 For any assessment completed before withdrawal and already considered by an assessment board, the University will issue an academic transcript comprising final results and a certificated exit award, where appropriate.

9. Readmission

- 9.1 Where a student has withdrawn from the University and wishes to return at a later date, they must reapply via the standard application procedures. There is no guarantee of readmission.
- 9.2 Where a student has followed the Student or University-Led withdrawal process and then applies to return to study, their return may be subject to an interview. This will establish whether they are able to resume their studies and complete their course.

**The Academic Regulations 2020/21
Appendices
Appendix 26 – Student Withdrawal Procedures Chart**



Key to Relevant Documents

This policy refers to the following document, which you may find useful.

Academic Programme Engagement Framework

Annexes

Academic Registry <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/registry/difficulties/>

Student Services <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/student-services/>

Students' Union Student Advice and
Representation Centre <https://www.edgehillsu.org.uk/advice>

End matter

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