

INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES POLICY

1. Principles

- (i) 'Interruption of Studies' is defined as an approved period during which a student's studies are suspended and the student is not normally required to engage with their programme.
- (ii) Under ordinary conditions the University expects students to complete their programme in a single continuous period. Any period of interruption is therefore only granted when the University believes there are extraordinary circumstances impacting on a student's ability to study. Reasons for interruption accepted by the University are normally in relation to matters of a serious personal, medical or financial kind. The University may also permit a period of interruption where a student requests to undertake an extended period of work experience that does not form part of a placement integrated to an Edge Hill programme.
- (iii) Inability and/or failure to engage or to progress with studies of itself is not a valid reason for interruption.
- (iv) Interruption is not an opportunity to repeat periods of study or improve assessment already undertaken as this could provide an academic advantage over peers.
- (v) Interruption is an application-based process and students do not have an automatic right to interrupt their studies. The University reserves the right to request that evidence is provided in support of any application to interrupt.
- (vi) There may be circumstances when it is not feasible for the University to allow a student to interrupt their studies. For example, there may be known changes that will impact on the University's ability to offer that named award upon the student's return. In these circumstances students will be offered advice on the options available so they can make an informed decision before applying to interrupt their studies.
- (vii) All applications to interrupt study must be supported by the student's department and approved by Academic Registry.

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2. Scope of the Scheme

- (i) Requests to interrupt are only considered at the whole programme level and are not applied explicitly to individual modules *unless* the student is undertaking a module as part of stand-alone study.
- (ii) Students who have reached the end of their scheduled programme of study and have assessments, modules or placements outstanding are not eligible to interrupt their studies. These students should refer to the exceptional mitigating circumstances (EMC) process which can be found in [Appendix 7 to the Academic Regulations](#).
- (iii) Education trainees are not normally permitted to interrupt whilst on placement. If valid reasons exist and an Education trainee is unable to continue with a placement, an EMC form should be submitted.
- (iv) Interruption periods are approved for no less than one semester, or equivalent, and for no more than one calendar year unless permission is granted directly by the Academic Registrar. Interruptions extending beyond one calendar year are approved by the Academic Registrar in exceptional circumstances only. Students seeking to extend their interruption period beyond one calendar year may be advised to withdraw and apply to return to study at a later date.
- (v) Applications to interrupt are not considered for new students within the first two weeks of their start date. Any new student unable to continue at this stage should instead apply to 'Re-start' their studies. Further information on the Re-start process is available from the Academic Registry.
- (vi) Students are not permitted to interrupt after the fourth week of the term/semester. In exceptional circumstances, the Academic Registrar may agree interruption providing it does not give the student an academic advantage on their return.
- (vii) Students normally return from interruption to commence their studies at the start of teaching for the semester/term. For those programmes that incorporate practise, it may be appropriate for a student to resume studies at the equivalent point to their departure. Return dates are subject to agreement with the department and require authorisation from Academic Registry.
- (viii) Outstanding assessment will be recorded as part of the interruption agreement so that each student is clear about their overall position as they enter the period of interruption. While the completion of outstanding assessment is not mandatory during interruption, should an interrupted

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student wish to submit outstanding assessment, the University will facilitate this where practicable.

- (ix) Periods of interruption count towards the maximum time limits for registration. An interruption request may not be approved where it would lead to a student exceeding the maximum registration period. This also applies where interruption may breach any professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements around completion timeframes.
- (x) Tuition fees are calculated in accordance with the University's tuition fee regulations which correlate to dates of attendance. Any scheduled bursary or scholarship payment will normally cease during the period of interruption.

3. Interruption procedure

3.1 Application process:

- (i) The University expects students considering a period of interruption to discuss their position in full with a member of staff. Advice and guidance on whether interruption is the most appropriate option from a personal, academic and financial perspective, can be obtained from a range of staff. This includes personal tutors, programme leaders and head of departments, the Students' Union, Student Services and Academic Registry.

Students in receipt of Disability Support Allowance should contact the Student Services Inclusion team for detailed advice on funding and support arrangements.

- (ii) Formal applications to interrupt must be submitted via the approved Interruption and Support Agreement application form, available from Academic Registry. Applications must be completed by the student in conjunction with their personal tutor or named departmental officer. The department must support the application for it to proceed.
- (iii) The student is responsible for submitting their completed application form to Academic Registry for final approval. Applications will not be processed if they have not been endorsed by the departmental officer.

If the student does not meet the criteria to interrupt as expressed in this policy, Academic Registry may reject their application, even where there is departmental support.

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- (iv) Academic Registry will write to students to notify them of the outcome of their application. Normally this will be done within five days of the decision being made.

3.2 Interruption agreement

- (i) Once interruption has been approved by the department, the personal tutor or named contact will meet with the student. At this meeting they will discuss the details of the interruption, such as the nature and frequency of support contact during the period of interruption. Other matters pertinent to both parties will also be considered, including expectations regarding the student's engagement during interruption and any conditions to be set for their return.
- (ii) The nature and frequency of the University's contact with students will be subject to individual agreements, but there is a minimum requirement for contact to be made every three months.
- (iii) An account of the meeting will be recorded on the Interruption and Support Agreement form which both parties sign.
- (iv) Academic Registry will write to the student summarising the frequency and method of support and any conditions applied. A copy of this summary will be issued to the relevant faculty office.
- (v) Where applicable, Academic Registry will notify the Student Loans Company (SLC) and/or the NHS Business Services Authority (or equivalent bodies) that the student is interrupting.

3.3 During interruption

- (i) The student is not expected to engage with study or the University except as detailed in the Interruption and Support Agreement.
- (ii) The student's personal tutor or named contact will maintain support contact with the student as detailed in the Interruption and Support Agreement.
- (iii) The personal tutor or named contact will notify Academic Registry of any significant changes to the student's circumstances or progress. Where appropriate, relevant action will be taken in line with the academic regulations.

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- (iv) To ensure that students are not disadvantaged during an interruption period, students will continue to have access to the majority of facilities including:
- a. network access
 - b. electronic resources
 - c. subject resources
 - d. Library services
 - e. Learning Resources Centres
 - f. equipment and facilities
 - g. help and support
 - h. off-campus support

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3.4 Returning to study

Academic Registry will write to each student to confirm their return date and refer them for appropriate clearances where applicable.

- (i) Students returning from interruption are required to meet the normal conditions of entry to their programme which may include:
 - a. Providing medical evidence confirming they are fit enough to return
 - b. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance
- (ii) Academic Registry will ensure that all other stipulated conditions to return from the interruption have been met before a student is able to re-enrol onto their programme.
- (iii) The personal tutor or agreed contact will meet with the student before the start of the term to plan their return to study.
- (iv) The student is required to re-enrol onto their programme as per the arrangements published by Academic Registry.
- (v) Once re-enrolled, Academic Registry will notify the relevant bodies (such as Student Loans Company and/or NHS Business Services Authority) of the student's return to study.
- (vi) Once the student has re-enrolled a support meeting will be held between the student and relevant parties in the faculty and central support services. This will be arranged by the departmental Tracking and Support Officer or equivalent member of staff. The aim of this meeting is to ensure that the student is well supported as they adjust to returning to study. To give returning students the best possible opportunity for success, regular progress reviews will be maintained until deemed necessary by the personal tutor.

4. Appeals

Requests for interruption require academic judgement to ensure an appropriate decision for each individual at the specific stage of their particular programme. There is no right of appeal against this local academic judgement.

Where a student believes there has been procedural error in the decision to reject their application to interrupt, the normal appeals process may be followed. Further details are provided under [Appendix 22 – Academic Appeals Procedures](#).