

Withdrawals, Intermissions and Resumption of Study Policy (HE Programmes)

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Policy Overview and Scope

The University College operates a leave of absence policy, often referred to as periods of suspension, interruption or intermission, that allows students a temporary and official period of time away from their studies. An intermission from a programme of study may be requested by a student for a variety of reasons including medical, financial and personal.

It is recommended that all students considering making a request for an intermission seek advice and guidance from both their Course Scheme Manager and Student Support. In certain circumstances academic staff, for example a Course Tutor or Personal Tutor may raise the possibility of intermission with a student.

1. Withdrawals

- 1.1. The procedures described below outline the arrangements to be used when a student Withdraws. Withdrawal is the cessation of study with immediate effect from the date shown on the Withdraw Form. A student who has formally withdrawn from his/her course, or has been withdrawn by the University College in accordance with the procedures outlined is not eligible to attend teaching sessions.

Students contemplating withdrawal

- 1.2. If a student is contemplating withdrawing, the course scheme manager will make every effort to offer appropriate advice and guidance and to make enquiries about whether any additional assistance could be provided that would enable the student to continue on the course. This may include signposting students to Student Support for advice about any further assistance that might be available and about the financial implications of withdrawal of studies. If, after consulting Student Support, the student decides to proceed with the withdrawal they should inform the Course Scheme Manager and submit a completed Notification form to Registry.

“Presumed Withdrawn” Students

- 1.3. Where a student, who is not attending the University College, fails to respond to requests to confirm his/her status, the University College will deem the student to have withdrawn and will determine the date of withdrawal. The University College also has the right to begin the withdrawal process for students who fail to undertake assessments with no extenuating circumstances and/or who demonstrate poor attendance.
- 1.4. Where a full-time student has not been in attendance for 28 days and has not provided any documentary evidence of the reasons for absence the “presumed withdrawn” procedure will apply.
- 1.5. The University College withdrawal process removes the student’s registration from the course and calculates the student element of the tuition fee for refund purposes. A refund will be made only if the fee paid to date is in excess of reduced fee. Full details are available from the Financial Regulations.
- 1.6. If the student or SLC element is greater than has been paid, at the point of withdrawal, the student will be liable to pay the outstanding amount.

2. Intermission

- 2.1. It is the student’s responsibility to advise the University College that s/he has decided to intermit study. The procedures described in this policy do not apply to the arrangements put in place to deal with students who have failed to complete the enrolment process.

- 2.2. Periods of intermission are usually only permitted for up to one year. Both the student and the academic team should agree the period of intermission and a suitable date to resume studies once the decision to approve an intermission has been made. Period of intermission are permitted to commence at appropriate stages in the academic calendar. The date a period of intermission will begin can vary and depends upon a student's individual needs and course of study. However, the University College will look at a student's overall engagement with the University College when determining the start date of an intermission and not just the last date of attendance in a teaching session.
- 2.3. Whilst on intermission, a student may not participate in any course-related activities including assessments. They may access support services offered by Student Support and IS&T. Intermitted students are contacted in the July prior to re-entry in September. Those that cross into the second semester are contacted during December. For some courses and for some students, additional requirements (refer to Fitness to Study policy) will need to be met prior to a student's return. Students will be advised of any additional requirements at the point when the intermission is granted.
- 2.4. International students studying on a Tier 4 visa should note that an intermission will be reported to the UKVI. International students may have to apply for a new visa prior to returning to the University to resume their studies, depending on their individual circumstances.
- 2.5. The following general principles will be used when determining a decision regarding intermission and the status of assessments due prior to the commencement of the intermission:
 - 2.5.1. Intermission will not be permitted after the last teaching week of the academic year. The start date of the intermission will only be back dated when a student has not been in a position to make a request at the time their studies were interrupted (for example, extenuating circumstances).
 - 2.5.2. Intermission should not be used as a mechanism for preventing academic failure: poor marks or failures to engage are not valid reasons.
 - 2.5.3. All marks obtained prior to the intermission will be retained/carried forward, unless there was subsequently a deferral in accordance with the usual Extenuating Circumstances application process.
 - 2.5.4. In certain circumstances (e.g. where there are linked assessments of group assignments) it may not be appropriate to carry marks forward.
 - 2.5.5. The status of all completed and missed assessments will be agreed in writing at the time when the intermission is granted.
 - 2.5.6. This will be appended to the student's record on WAM along with any evidence supporting the deferral of assessments. The University College cannot guarantee that a student will be able to continue on the same modules after returning from intermission.
 - 2.5.7. The University College cannot guarantee that a student will be able to continue on the same modules after returning from intermission. If there are significant changes to the course or an individual module then it may not be possible to carry marks forward in the manner agreed at the time the intermission was granted.
 - 2.5.8. Only in exceptional circumstances would an intermission be permitted to be extended for a further academic session.

- 2.5.9. In certain circumstances, students may be permitted to return to study on a reduced academic workload.
- 2.5.10. Any student not returning from intermission as agreed will be deemed to have withdrawn from their programme.

3. Resumption of Study

- 3.1. A date of resumption of study is agreed between the student and the University College at the time of the application for intermission of study, which is normally for a period of one year. On resumption of study, where the student is liable for the fee, the student will be invoiced the full tuition fee for the academic session, plus any repeat fee applicable, with a discount applied equal to the tuition fee charged for the period of study prior to the intermission. Where the student is SLC funded a new Financial Assessment letter will be required for the fee due at the point of resumption. In line with the Fitness to Study policy, following a period of absence from the University College for recuperation or treatment, it may be appropriate for the student to resume studies. If this is the case, it will be necessary to ensure that the student is assisted by their programme area, with advice from the Safeguarding & Wellbeing team.
- 3.2. WUC will require the student to produce appropriate confirmation of their health and ability to resume studying from an appropriate recognised medical or health professional who has sufficient knowledge of the health and wellbeing of the student during the period of intermission and the potential impact that returning to study might have. If a student intermitted their studies due to psychiatric ill health, they will need a formal assessment by a psychiatrist before returning to study. In some cases (particularly in circumstances related to deteriorating physical health and medical conditions), WUC may also consider it necessary to have an independent occupational health assessment (which will be arranged and coordinated by the Safeguarding & Wellbeing team).
- 3.3. The academic and residential (when appropriate) teams, working in partnership with support services teams, will conduct a review of the documentary evidence of the student's mental and/or physical wellbeing and contextualise it within the demands of the course/programme of study and/or requirement of being able to live independently in halls. A joint decision should be made as to whether, and/or on what basis an individual can return to study and/or live in WUC's Hall of Residence.
- 3.4. WUC support teams (e.g. the Safeguarding & Wellbeing team, the Learning Support team, Senior/Deputy Senior Warden) can help with drawing up a 'Return to Study Plan' in consultation with the student. The plan should address and include:
- Details of any specific study related support and any support reasonably required in the short term;
 - Any longer-term support or reasonable adjustments required and any conditions that might or will apply to that provision;
 - Details of any formal reviews that may need to be built in as a condition of return to confirm that the student is fit enough to study/reside at WUC;
 - A risk management plan that takes account of the experiences that led to the initial suspension of studies.
- 3.5. Any return to study will be subject to the student's co-operation with this process and full adherence to any agreed conditions.

4. Withdrawal after Intermission

- 4.1. Students who wish to withdraw following the period of intermission should contact the Course Scheme Manager who will complete the Withdrawal Form and notify Registry.
- 4.2. The University College is obliged to notify Student Finance England of any change of student status where applicable.

5. Reduced Academic Workload

Context

- 5.1. Every year a proportion of the student body takes intermission or withdraws from the University College on the basis of extenuating circumstances. In some instances, students could be retained on courses through a more flexible approach to study, in line with the **Student Support regulations**. This would enable students to reduce their academic workload and maintain their funding. Please note that this provision would not be used to mitigate against failure.

Extract from The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

Students who attend a full-time course on a part time basis (para. 167)

When a student is deemed to be eligible for support on a designated course he is generally eligible for the duration of the course, subject to the rule on tuition fee and living costs support and regulations 3 and 5. The fact that the student attends part of the course on a part time basis does not render the course itself part time. As long as the course is full time the student should remain eligible for full time support. A possible scenario might be a student who is unable to continue to attend full time because of some unforeseen circumstances such as ill health. The student must request to undertake a particular year of the course on a part time basis over two years and their entitlement to fee support will be determined in accordance with Regulation 13(5).

Guiding Principles

- 5.2. This provision should only apply to small numbers of students each year. To ensure equity of experience and expectation guiding principles are listed below:
 - 5.2.1. Students may request a reduced academic workload but the nature and requirements of the course will determine whether the request is granted. This will include consideration by those courses requiring professional accreditation.
 - 5.2.2. A reduced academic workload cannot be backdated. Students may only apply during the first two weeks of the academic year for permission to reduce their workload for that academic year. It is anticipated that normally students will request this provision to be applied in a subsequent level/academic year.
 - 5.2.3. There must be academic consultation and agreement for the reduced academic workload to be put into place. This will be agreed by the Course Scheme Manager and the Academic Registrar.
 - 5.2.4. The reduced academic workload will be applicable for a finite period of time, normally two academic years.
 - 5.2.5. There must be a verifiable reason for applying for this provision. The Academic Registrar will formally record the outcomes of the reduced academic workload requests.

- 5.2.6. A reduced academic workload will apply to only ONE particular level of a course. Students will revert back to full time at the end of the specified time. If the particular circumstances persist, students should be counselled about changing mode of study.
- 5.2.7. This provision should be considered alongside the other support mechanisms contained within the Academic Framework.
- 5.2.8. This provision will only apply to undergraduate, home students. Tier 4 students cannot be considered for this arrangement.

Administration of the scheme

- 5.3. Given the anticipated small numbers applying for this provision, the administration may become complicated and difficult to manage. To mitigate against any potential confusion in tuition fee and registration matters, arrangements will be confirmed in writing to the student and one point of contact identified within Registry. Quality Office will deal with any academic decisions. Written confirmation should also be maintained with the Course Scheme Manager.
- 5.4. It is also important that the correct use of language is observed – these students will be full time students attending a full-time course but for less than the prescribed number of hours.

This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing University College documents. Writtle University College may amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, or by email.

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