SUSPENSION OF STUDY (UNDERGRADUATE AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS)

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* The University has adopted the principles of Designing for Diverse Learners, and all policy documents should be written with reference to these principles. Further information is available at the [Designing for diverse learners website](https://designingfordiverselearners.info/).
* An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) must be considered for all new and amended policies. Further information is available from the [EIA section of SharePoint](https://hullacuk.sharepoint.com/Services/EDI/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments-(EIAs).aspx).
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SUSPENSION OF STUDY (UNDERGRADUATE AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS)

# Definition and process

* 1. Suspension of study is taking a break from continuing study. Students may request a period of suspension at any time during their studies, for any reason. Suspension of study may be planned, in the case of time off to travel or work, be in response to illness or personal problems which are affecting the student’s ability to study effectively or be in response to a need to complete outstanding assessments before continuing to the next stage of their programme.
  2. Students **should** discuss their wish to suspend studies with their Personal Supervisor or Programme Director (or equivalent) in advance of making a formal request. Students on combined programmes **must** discuss the proposed suspension of study with the Programme Director (or equivalent) to ensure that both academic areas are aware of all issues. If the student does not wish to speak to their Personal Supervisor or Programme Director, they are encouraged to discuss their suspension with the Student Life Team to ensure they understand the process and the implications. Please note the suspension of study process differs for Apprenticeship provision.
  3. Section 2 of this Code of Practice applies to students who request a period of suspension that is planned or in response to personal problems that are affecting their ability to study effectively.
  4. Section 3 of this Code of Practice applies to students who are required to undertake a period of suspension to complete outstanding assessments.
  5. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this Code of Practice apply to all students who undertake a period of suspension.

# Suspension of Study Planned / Illness / Personal Problems

* 1. Students **must** complete a Suspension Form available through [myJourney](https://myjourney.hull.ac.uk/learner/course/viewcourse/cid,161) via Student Administration. Students are not required to provide evidence of the reasons for their request, however students suspending due to health reasons are encouraged to do so as they may be eligible for additional finance (see section 8.0). Once approved, by the academic unit, the student’s record can be updated accordingly. If a request is refused by the academic unit this will be reviewed by the Student Cases Committee (SCC) for final decision. If a request is refused by SCC, then the reasons for that decision **must** be made clear to the student. The student would have the right to appeal the decision as per the academic appeals code of practice.
  2. Students will be asked to provide their last date of engagement within the suspension form. It is the responsibility of the agreed team to review and confirm that this date matches the records held by the University. If the date provided by the student differs to the date recorded by the University, the team responsible will amend the suspension request to reflect the correct date. If the student disagrees with the last date of engagement recorded by the University, and this affects their fees, the student would be required to submit evidence of their last date of engagement to Academic Services for a decision.
  3. The last date of engagement will be obtained from Humid and is defined as follows:
     1. UG and PGT

The last date that the student meaningfully engaged on their programme by way of submission, Microsoft Teams, Canvas Login, attended event, eResource, Panopto, library, study zone, campus, SEAtS login, and Mentimeter. Engagement with MyJourney, wifi login and StarRez are not considered to be meaningful engagement.

* + 1. Hull Online

The last date that the student engaged with Canvas.

The last date that the student meaningfully engaged with active learning on their apprenticeship by way of submission, Microsoft Teams, attended event, Panopto or SEAtS login. In the case of apprentices that undertake placements as part of their off the job training, placement hours will also be considered. If an apprentice is suspending or withdrawing and has been absent from work, the last date of engagement will be their last date in employment OR their last date of engagement with their programme, whichever is the earliest.

* 1. Academic Services are responsible for confirming the last date of engagement and date of return for all students, with the exception of the following programmes:

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| --- | --- |
| **Scenario/Programme** | **Team** |
| International Partners | Relevant Faculty |
| Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) Programmes | Relevant Faculty |
| Hull Online | Hull Online |
| Apprenticeships | Apprenticeships Office |

* 1. Suspension of study which is for an initial period of up to 12 months is treated as ‘straightforward’ and only requires the approval of the Head of Academic Unit (academic units for students on combined programmes).
  2. There are specific issues in relation to international students and suspension of study, which may cause visa and immigration problems for the student. For this reason, all international students **must** see the University Immigration Adviser before submitting their suspension of study form to the academic unit. The Immigration Adviser will sign the form to indicate that the student has been given the appropriate advice.
  3. Extensions of periods of suspension (of study), requests for suspension of study of more than 12 months, retrospective suspension of study and any requests which are otherwise ‘unusual’ **must** have the approval of the University Student Cases Committee. Students requesting extensions of suspension of study will be expected to provide evidence of the ongoing problems affecting their return to study.
  4. The reason for the suspension of study is required, as this is reported back to Student Finance England (SFE) and used on other statistical returns and tuition fees.
  5. All students suspending their studies are contacted by Student Administration prior to their return to study, to clarify their intentions and fitness to return.
  6. If, during a period of suspension, there is a modification to a programme, the nearest alternative(s) will be offered to the student. Any significant change to a programme, during a period of suspension, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

## Retrospective suspension of study

* 1. Students studying on a student visa are not permitted to apply for or be granted a retrospective suspension of study. Students and academic units are advised to seek advice from the University Visa Compliance Team as soon as this issue arises.
  2. Suspension of study is expected to be applied for in advance, or at the start of any problems affecting studies.
  3. However, if the suspension of study is for reasons of illness or personal problems, it may be the case that students do not immediately take the decision to suspend their studies, and do not inform their academic unit for the reason for their absence.
  4. Applying for retrospective suspension of study does present extra problems related to the funding that the student and the University has received, and for the student record and statistical returns. Students may have to repay part of any support funding already received. In addition, students who have received Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) support may experience funding difficulties if retrospective suspension of study is approved - the student **must** contact Student Support and Experience in advance to discuss this.
  5. Retrospective suspension of study **must** therefore be seen as exceptional, and when applied for, **must** come with the full support of the academic unit, and with clear evidence of the rationale behind the request. All requests for retrospective suspension of study **must** be approved by Student Cases Committee (SCC).
  6. There **must** also be a clear rationale shown as to why the request is for a retrospective suspension of study (confirming that the student was effectively not in attendance) and not a request for a repeat period (where the student was in attendance but had their ability to study affected by their circumstances).

## Suspension of study on grounds of risk

* 1. A candidate on any University of Hull programme, wheresoever located, who is judged, on substantial evidence, to be unfit to study by reason of posing a risk to themselves or others may be required to suspend those studies even in the absence of the candidate’s consent.
  2. The process for instigating such a compulsory suspension of study is different to that described in this Code of Practice and can be found in the relevant programme regulations. Such students are subject to different entitlements and responsibilities, in particular they ‘shall not be entitled to use University facilities and services or be present on the University campuses. See the programme regulations for full details.
  3. In exceptional circumstances where the student is an overseas national and subject to immigration controls, if it is deemed that the student’s continued participation in their studies represents a risk to the University’s Highly Trusted Sponsor licence, the Academic Registrar may compel a student to take a period of suspension of study. This action will only be taken when the Academic Registrar receives a recommendation from the Visa Compliance Manager to do so. The Academic Registrar will, together with an independent third party (a Student Administration nominee), review the case and decide whether or not the evidence is sufficient to action the recommendation. If it is deemed appropriate to action the recommendation, the student will be written to outlining the reasons why and given the opportunity to appeal the decision. The appeal paperwork **must** be submitted within five working days with a final decision communicated to the student within two working days.

## International students

* 1. International students who wish to suspend their studies **must** be made aware that this may have implications for their immigration status in the UK, as they will normally be required to leave the UK. The University is required, under the terms of its licence, to report any student (studying on a student visa) who suspends their studies. It is a requirement that international students consult with the Immigration Adviser before submitting the suspension of study form to their academic unit. The Immigration Adviser will sign the form (or otherwise confirm, e.g. by email) to indicate that the student has received appropriate advice.

## Academic issues regarding suspension of study

* 1. Students who are suspending their studies are defined as taking a break from study. As such, they are not registered students and are not entitled to receive any tuition or supervision.
  2. If the student has outstanding assessments or examinations, they may request to take those assessments whilst they have suspended their study. No students **should** be compelled to undertake assessments during a period of suspension (of study), and this issue **must** be discussed at the time of the suspension of study request. The final decision as to whether the student is permitted to take outstanding assessments rests with the Head of Academic Unit (or nominee). Academic Units **must** be particularly aware of students suspending their studies due to health problems and take into account that such students may not be fit to take assessments during this period of suspension (of study). However, if the student is an international student then advice **must** be sought from the Visa Compliance Team prior to the assessments being taken.
  3. Students who normally have alternative arrangements for their assessments may have those arrangements affected by their suspension of study, particularly if those arrangements rely on the availability of DSA funding. Students in this position **must** discuss this with the Student Support and Experience team and their academic unit before suspending study.

## Access to services

* 1. Access to Hull University and Students’ Union (HUSU) services may be affected by the student’s period of suspension of study. Once the student’s status has been amended on the Student Information System, this information is transferred to other systems, e.g. to Students’ Union and Library / room access systems. The main affects are as follows:

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| **Accommodation** | Students who suspend studies and who live in University-owned accommodation will be required to leave the accommodation and re-apply before their return to study. |
| **Library** | Students who suspend studies will retain full access to the library, however this can be amended for exceptional cases if required. |
| **24-hour PC lab** | Access to the 24-hour PC labs is dependent on the student’s Library access. |
| **IT services** | Whilst suspending studies, students retain their ICT user account and their access to the Student Portal. Students will retain access to the virtual learning environment (Canvas), and their student cards will continue to work on door access controls. These are the default positions and can be amended for exceptional cases if required. |
| **Students’ Union** | Students who suspend their studies retain access to the Students’ Union advice centre, but are no longer members of the Union and, as such, lose all the rights of membership. As a result, they are not permitted to use the Union's licensed areas (bars), societies or sports teams. Students who suspend their studies can apply to the Union for associate membership if they wish, which will give them full access to some Union facilities. They can also apply to the Sports and Fitness Centre for a public membership of the facilities. |
| **Student Support and Experience** | Access to support from Student Support and Experience may be restricted for students who suspend their studies. Students who suspend their studies on grounds of a disability or ongoing health condition **should** contact Student Support and Experience in advance of their return to study. Any student who may require support during their period of suspension (of study) **must** contact Student Support and Experience prior to applying for suspension of study. |
| **Skills Team, Student Futures, Counselling Service** | Students retain access to the Skills Team, Student Futures and the Counselling Service whilst they suspend their studies. Some services are based in the Library for which physical access may be restricted (see above). |

# Suspension of Studies – Assessment only

* 1. Students who are unable to progress to the next stage of their programme are informed by the Programme Board of Examiners that they **must** suspend their studies to complete their outstanding assessments for an initial period of up to 12 months.
  2. There are specific issues in relation to international students and suspension of study, which may cause visa and immigration problems for the student. For this reason, all international students **must** see the University Immigration Adviser before submitting their suspension of study form to the academic unit. The Immigration Adviser will sign the form to indicate that the student has been given the appropriate advice.
  3. If, during a period of suspension, there is a modification to a programme, the nearest alternative(s) will be offered to the student. Any significant change to a programme, during a period of suspension, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
  4. Students who are suspending their studies to complete outstanding assessments are entitled to receive supervision to complete their outstanding assessments.
  5. Students who normally have alternative arrangements for their assessments may have those arrangements affected by their suspension of study, particularly if those arrangements rely on the availability of DSA funding. Students in this position **must** discuss this with the Student Support and Experience team and their academic unit before suspending study.

# Financial consequences of suspension of study

* 1. There are many financial consequences for students who suspend their studies. Students with queries regarding their entitlements and liabilities whilst suspending study **should** contact either Student Support Services or the Student Union Advice Centre, preferably before applying to suspend their studies. Students studying on a T4 visa may also have additional costs relating to their visa status and **should** seek advice in advance.
  2. The following table outlines the main financial consequences to the student of suspension of study and **should** be used when advising students.

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| **Student Finance England (SFE)** | Normally Student Finance England (SFE) will suspend tuition fee support. Although the University (Student Administration) will contact SFE to inform them of the official dates of suspension of study, students **should** also do so.  If the student is suspending studies for health reasons, they **should** let SFE have a copy of their medical report at the time of suspension of study, as they may be able to continue funding whilst they are ill and unable to work. |
| **Student Loans Company (SLC)** | If a student suspends their studies, the University (Student Administration) has a duty to inform the Student Loans Company (SLC), who will normally request that the student return any loan that they received that was intended to cover periods when they were not actually in attendance at University.  During the period of suspension of study, the student will not be expected to begin loan repayments, even if they earn above the repayment threshold. |
| **Council Tax** | Council Tax exemption will be expected to continue for the period of suspension of study. Council Tax exemption certificates will be available from Student Administration as normal, although whether the student is, or is not exempt is a matter for discussion between the student and the relevant Local Authority. |
| **Access to Learning Fund (ALF)** | Students will still be eligible to apply for the Access to Learning Fund. |
| **Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)** | Students receiving Disabled Students Allowance will have this funding suspended. Students receiving support funded through the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), such as note-taking, mentoring or specialist study skills tuition **should** be aware that this support will be suspended during the period of suspension of study. Students who have assessments to undertake during the period of suspension of study, and who would normally have a support worker for these assessments, **should** discuss this with Student Support and Experience well in advance. |
| **Students receiving an NHS Bursary** | The guidelines are particularly complicated in this area and students **must** check with the NHS Student Grants Unit via email [nhsbsa.sbaccounts@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.sbaccounts@nhs.net) |
| **Students receiving money from the TDA** | Contact the Teaching Development Agency for further information at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) |
| **Welfare Benefits** | Students will not generally be entitled to welfare benefits (unless they already have entitlement), as the government considers them to be a full-time student until they complete their course. Because of this lack of available public financial support, they may have no option but to work, unless they have another source of income. Students may be able to claim some benefits if unable to work (e.g. due to illness, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, etc.) |

# Financial consequences of suspension of study on health grounds

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| **The first 60 days** | Under SFE/SLC support students **should** automatically continue to receive their grants and loans for the first 60 days of non-attendance at University. |
| **Illness after 60 days** | SFE has the discretion to continue payment of Student Awards for up to 28 weeks. The student will need to apply for this and provide sufficient medical evidence directly to SFE. |
| **Illness of more than 28 weeks** | If there is a chance of the student’s illness continuing for a period of more than 28 weeks and they will be unable to work for this period, it is very important to submit a claim for Housing/Incapacity Benefit/Income Support as soon as they can. In order to qualify, they will need to supply sick notes from their doctor for a continuous period of over 28 weeks. If they become well again during the period of suspension of study and are able to actively seek work, it may be possible to apply for Job Seekers Allowance. |

# Authority

* 1. The University Education Student Experience Committee (ESEC) is the final arbiter of the application and interpretation of this Code of Practice.
  2. Partner institutions may use this Code of Practice for their own practices regarding suspension of study.

# Version control

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
|  |  | August 2024 | Transfer to new template |
| 1 11 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Quality Support Service | May 2023, Education Committee and August 2023, Housekeeping  *(for September 2023 implementation)* | May 2023:   * Section 2 applies to students who request a period of suspension that is planned or in response to personal problems that are affecting their ability to study effectively. * Section 3 applies to students who require a period of suspension to complete outstanding assessments only. * Sections 4, 5 and 6 apply to all students who request a period of suspension.   August 2023:   * Replaces University Student Experience, Employability and Engagement Committee (USEEEC) with Student Voice and Success Committee (SVSC). * Replaces Registry Service with Academic Services. * Replaces Student Services Directorate with Student Administration. * Incorporates full version control. |
| 1 10 | Rachel Hobday, Business Process & Design Officer, Academic Registry | March 2023, Housekeeping | * Notes the suspension of study process differs for apprenticeship provision (1.2). * Para added for apprenticeship programmes (1.5). |
| 1 09 | Rachel Hobday, Business Process & Design Officer, Academic Registry | July 2022, USEEEC | * Revisions to section 1 ‘Definition and Process’. * Clarifies that students who suspend studies will retain full access to the library, however this can be amended for exceptional cases if required (6.1). |
| 1 08 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Learning and Teaching Enhancement | Feb 2018, Housekeeping | * Replaces eBridge with Canvas. * Replaces Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice with Learning and Teaching Enhancement |
| 1 07 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice | Apr 2017, ULTAC | Reg 9 clarifies the process when a programme of study is no longer available following a period of suspension of study. |
| 1 06 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice | Aug 2016, Housekeeping | * Replaces Intercalation with Suspension of Study. * Replaces Student Administrative Services with Registry Services. * Replaces department with school. * Other minor amendments. |
| 1 05 | Jane Iddon, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice | May 2016, Housekeeping | Replaces Study Advice Service with Skills Team. |
| 1 04 | Jane Iddon, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice | Dec 2014, Housekeeping | Update, reflecting changes relating to T4 visa requirements (paras 17, 18, 20, 23). |
| 1 03 | Quality Officer | June 2013, Housekeeping | Update, reflecting changes to services and entitlement, and to update Tier 4 visa requirements. |
| 1 02 | Quality Officer | Oct 2010 |  |
| 1 01 and 1 00 | Quality Officer | June 2009 and May 2009. | Regulation 3 reflects a change to the availability of form SAS-I, which becomes available to students on the student portal from September 2009. Version 1 01 makes this more explicit in the cover note. |