

Interruption, Withdrawal & Study Break Policy

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1 Introduction

This policy and procedure set out in this document underpin the regulations which all staff and students are expected to follow. They provide greater details of the principles behind the regulations and the rules and processes that Oxford Business College (OBC, the College) puts in place to positively impact on the student and staff experience and to ensure compliance with external regulatory frameworks.

This document sets out the procedure for an interruption, suspension or withdrawal from your studies at OBC.

This procedure applies to students studying at OBC.

Students are able to interrupt or withdraw from your studies at any time. These students should seek advice from Student Support Officer if they need to interrupt their studies.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with Student Code of Conduct.

2 Purpose and Scope

This document sets out the principles and procedures governing interruptions to study and withdrawals from study.

This procedure applies to every student enrolled and/or registered with the College, and students on programmes delivered in partnership with other providers, unless otherwise stated in the course specification. A student is considered to be anyone who has completed the OBC enrolment process.

3 Interruption

You may apply to interrupt from your course at any time. Interruption of studies usually means that you stop attending your course and resume your attendance in the next academic year at the beginning of the equivalent semester in which your interruption began.

The maximum period of interruption is two years. In exceptional circumstances, we may agree to further interruptions. Interruptions of studies must be within any period of enrolment, which we will not automatically extend when we agree to an interruption.

In exceptional circumstances, we may decide it is appropriate for us to interrupt your studies. In these cases, the appropriate Head of Academic and Registrar will make the decision, and you will have the right to appeal against the decision through the Student Appeals Procedure. The maximum period of interruption to your studies in these circumstances would be until the beginning of the next academic year or the next registration point, whichever is sooner.

Whilst a student is interrupted, the College will normally:

- withhold any student loan or other cheque due;
- refuse to deal with applications for any other government funding;
- inform the Student Loans Company;
- inform the Department of Health bursary authorities (for relevant students on health programmes);
- inform the Home Office (in the case of students in the UK on a student visa);
- inform Transport for London because student oyster cards are made invalid by TFL;
- access to College resources and facilities, whilst interrupted is at the discretion of the College.

Following any period of interruption under these procedures, it may be appropriate for you to return to your studies. While each specific case will be considered on its merits, in all cases a student's return to study will be conditional upon satisfactory medical evidence of fitness to study. Medical evidence should be from a GP or relevant health professional, with sufficient knowledge of the student's circumstances to be able to make an informed statement about the student's fitness to study.

The decision to permit you to return to study after a period of interruption will be made by the registry, in consultation with relevant staff and departments. Any decision to permit a return to study might include conditions as deemed appropriate to the particular case (such as a return to study plan or a requirement for the student to attend regular review meetings).

The student studying at the University of West London can defer the course anytime. Currently UWL course is in a teach-out phase and any students who wishes to defer should first consult student support services to seek relevant support.

However, the students studying at Buckinghamshire's new University and Ravensbourne University programme should follow the procedure below:

- Students may be permitted to interrupt their studies for a maximum of two calendar years, subject to the stipulations of the programme of study. The initial period will normally be for one calendar year.
- Should an extension to this period be required, an additional request must be submitted and granted.
- Students who have interrupted their studies will not be permitted to submit any work for assessment, undertake an examination of any type or attend work/clinical placements.
- Students will be expected to return at the start of a study period in the next academic year.

4 Suspension and Exclusion

The students can be suspended or excluded from their programme of study in line with both the Student Disciplinary Policy and Academic misconduct policy.

We may exclude you for:

- presentation of false information in order to enrol, re-enrol or in any other College process;
- non-payment of tuition fees;
- medical evidence of physical or mental unfitness
- a major disciplinary offence as set out in the Student Disciplinary Policy.

If you have been suspended you will normally resume your studies in the following academic year at the beginning of the equivalent semester in which the suspension took place. There may be a requirement to provide evidence in order to resume studies.

If you are suspended from your studies or excluded from the College you temporarily cease to be a student of the College.

You must return your student ID card and any other College materials (such as library books) that might be in their possession.

If you have been suspended by the College because you are currently unfit to study, you will need to present appropriate evidence on your return to show that you are now able to study. This evidence will need to be provided before you can enrol. The evidence will usually take the form of medical certification, but where the College requires another form of evidence, you will be informed while you are suspended.

Following any period of suspension under these procedures, it may be appropriate for you to return to your studies. While each specific case will be considered on its merits, in all cases a student's return to study will be conditional upon satisfactory medical evidence of fitness to study. Medical evidence should be from a GP or relevant health professional, with sufficient knowledge of the student's circumstances to be able to make an informed statement about the student's fitness to study.

The decision to permit you to return to study after a period of suspension will be made by the Registrar or equivalent nominee, in consultation with relevant staff. Any decision to permit a return to study might include conditions as deemed appropriate to the particular case (such as a return to study plan or a requirement for the student to attend regular review meetings).

5 Withdrawal

Withdrawal means permanently leaving your course before successful completion. Once you have withdrawn or been withdrawn from a course you cannot re-enrol onto that course again. The student can appeal against the decision and if approved can be reinstated back on the course.

While you may not re-enrol onto the same course from which you have withdrawn you may re-apply to the College. If you have a 'Fail- Terminated' judgement from an examination board you may not return to your course. You can apply to a different course at the College but you cannot be admitted to another course leading to an award at the same level in a related subject area of the course from which you have been withdrawn. The College retains the right not to make you an offer even if you would otherwise meet the criteria for an offer to be made. Students who wish to withdraw from their course must follow the relevant procedure as outlined in section 8 below.

We may decide that you have withdrawn from your course if you have stopped engaging with it. We will make this determination by reviewing your attendance records (including placements), use of College systems and submission of assessed work over a period of two weeks (ten working days). If we consider that your engagement is not consistent with the conditions above, we will write to you setting out our concerns and asking you to comment. You can when you comment provide any supplementary evidence you may wish to submit.

Students who have withdrawn, had their enrolment terminated or been excluded permanently, will cease to be students of the College.

Students withdrawn due to attendance - Attendance And Engagement Policy can be re-instated back on the course if the appeal submitted by the student is accepted by the relevant awarding body.

6 Course Deferment

If a student requests a deferral pre-registration for the first term, it will be free.

A maximum 3 deferrals of terms will be permitted to a student. The student will have to make a fresh application for the course after 3 deferrals.

The College reserves the right to defer or refuse a student, if a place is not available for his/her module during the term of student's choice.

The Student will not be charged if decision for deferral is made by the College.

The student is not allowed defer a semester without formal written confirmation by the College. In case of course deferment, the College may have to notify other relevant stakeholders of such decision, including immigration authorities.

7 Programme Changes

The College reserves the right to change course start dates in an agreement with the partner University, course curriculum and programmes at any time due to errors, omissions and circumstances beyond the College's control.

Any Student who is enrolled on a course and wishes to transfer to a different course should put this request in writing to the Registrar. The Registrar or his/her nominated person will make the decision.. If the student wishes to transfer to a new course in the middle of an existing course, the College reserves the right to demand all outstanding fees in respect of the existing course.

The College reserves the right to discontinue a programme or not to run a programme or a unit/module within a programme. The College will attempt to notify the student individually, or as part of a group collectively, of such action. The student may be offered an alternative course or deferment to another term.

8 Interruption of studies

The students can interrupt their studies at any time they wish.

- Students may be permitted to interrupt their studies for a maximum of two calendar years, subject to the stipulations of the programme of study. The initial period will normally be for one calendar year.
- Should an extension to this period be required, an additional request must be submitted and granted.
- Students who have interrupted their studies will not be permitted to submit any work for assessment, undertake an examination of any type or attend work/clinical placements.
- Students will be expected to return at the start of a study period in the next academic year.
- On resumption of study, student re-enrolment will be subject to course/programme availability, curriculum and the rules and regulations in place at the point of their return.
- An interruption of studies will be actioned from the date that the form is signed and submitted to OBC Student Support and/or Registry departments. An interruption of studies cannot be backdated, and any form received with a deferral date earlier than the date the form is received by the Student Support and/or Registry department will be rejected.
- The minimum period of interruption is one semester.

Circumstances that could be grounds for deferral shall be the same as those for mitigation and shall include the following:

- Physical or mental ill-health
- Severe financial hardship
- Emotional/personal difficulties, e.g. bereavement
- Disability e.g. where a student's disability comes to light for the first time at the assessment
- Unavoidable absence from the College, e.g. Work commitments/requirements of employer
- Unavoidable absence from domicile, e.g. eviction
- Other serious circumstances which could not be foreseen by the student

Note: The above examples are for illustration only and not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

Students will not be able to defer modules only. Where a student is unable to attend their module and/or submit for assessment although, will be able to submit at the next assessment point, they should refer to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy.

Students may apply to defer their studies by filling in and submitting a relevant awarding body Interruption of Studies Form to Student Support. The form can be downloaded from the OBC website. Alternatively, students may visit their campus students support office for assistance during operational hours.

The College, and/or Awarding Body deferral process records the student's deferral status and calculates the student or Student Loan Company (SLC) element of the tuition fee for refund purposes or to carry forward. In circumstances where students have a split fee liability between the Student Loans Company and the student, any refund due of any balance of fees paid by the student in excess of the reduced fee will be carried forward and credited to the next registration period. If the student or SLC element of the fee is greater than the fee paid at the point of suspension, the student will be liable for immediate payment of the outstanding amount. Failure to pay will prevent the student rejoining the programme.

9 Study Break

A study break is a decision to stop your studies temporarily. This decision can be made by you.

A study break is when you take a break from your studies having already studied for more than two weeks. A study break normally has to be either for: (i) one semester (minimum); or (ii) one academic

year (maximum). A study break is normally taken because of a long-term illness or other personal circumstances.

Before taking a study break, we would recommend that you first discuss the matter with a Head of Academic or Student Welfare Officer or a nominated person to be sure that you are making as informed a decision as possible. It may be that there is an option other than a study break, or that there are consequences of which you are not aware. Remember we are here to support you as much as we can. You can either make an appointment to see a Head of Academic or Student Welfare Officer at Reception or by email headofacademic@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

If circumstances such as illness or personal circumstances are causing severe disruption to a student's studies, s/he should consider taking a study break.

Study break periods count towards the maximum registration period a student has to complete his/her course. All credit and failures achieved to the date of the break are carried forwards.

Study break is normally for a maximum period of one year. If students are not able to return at the end of this time they will normally be required to withdraw. Normally only one study break per programme of study can be taken.

10 Procedure for a Study Break

If you do decide to take a break from your studies, you will need to complete the Study Break and Deferral Application Form and submit this to us via the Student Portal (SP). The Study Break and Deferral Application Form can be downloaded from Student Portal (SP).

11 Consequences of a Study Break

Home/EU student funded by the SLC: the SLC will be notified of your study break and your expected date of return. As a consequence, the SLC may suspend any future maintenance loan and tuition fee payments. These payments will be re-started by the SLC when you return to study, but there may be

some interruption to your payments.

Home/EU privately funded: you will be charged for the portion of the course that you have completed up to the date of your study break. Tuition fee charges will re-start on your return date. If you do not return you will be liable for the balance of the tuition fees.

12 Returning After a Study Break

The date for your return will be agreed between you and our Registry Team before you start your study break. Registry will contact you before your proposed return date to organise re-enrolment. Alternatively, you can contact Registry to confirm your re-enrolment by email at: obc.registry@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

In the case of a student returning after a study break for maternity reasons, our Student Welfare Officer will contact the student prior to his/her scheduled return to discuss any concerns the student might have about returning to study. Upon her return, our Student Welfare Officer will ensure that s/he is fully supported in his/her reintegration.

13 Review

If you are interrupted or withdrawn by the College in accordance with the Fitness to Study procedure, you have a right to request a Review of that decision in accordance with that procedure.

The Head of Academic or their nominee (normally the Head of Programme or Registrar where there is no conflict of interest) will review all information collated for the original decision, together with any new evidence presented, on the papers (but may contact you and/or anyone else involved in the matter if they consider it necessary).

The Head of the Academic or their nominee will notify you of their decision within 20 working days of receiving your request for a Review. If the student still remains dissatisfied, he/she can directly approach the partner University.

14 Independent External Review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this process, you may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education provided you have been issued with a COP. That letter will explain how you can submit a complaint and the deadline for doing so is 12 months from the date of the letter. (<http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>)

15 Use of Data

The College will collect data on student interruptions and withdrawals, and use the data: internally for reporting, evaluation, learning and training; and externally for discussion with regulators in the higher education sector.

The data used by the College for the purposes set out in paragraphs 11.1 a) and b) will be anonymised. Your personal data and sensitive personal data ('Personal Data') as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018 (the "DPA") may be disclosed to the College's members of staff and regulators for the purpose of dealing with your admission and/or enrolment, a complaint arising out of it and/or implementing any recommendations. Personal Data will not be shared with any other third parties unless the College has your express consent, has a statutory obligation to do so, or is otherwise permitted to do so under the DPA.

