



## Interruption, Withdrawal Policy

<b>Policy no:</b>	2.14
<b>Version no:</b>	24.11
<b>Next review due:</b>	September 2025
<b>Last review date:</b>	November 2024
<b>Responsible Board:</b>	Academic Board
<b>Implementation date:</b>	BoG August 2020
<b>Linked policies and documents:</b>	Fitness to Study Policy Student Support and Welfare Policy Attendance & Engagement Policy Student Concerns and Complaints Policy Academic Appeals Policy Academic Misconduct Policy Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy Data Privacy Notice and Consent Policy Fees Refunds and Compensation Policy
<b>Audience:</b>	Student Handbook, OIA

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Purpose and Scope .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.1 Buckinghamshire New University .....	3
	2.2 University of West London .....	3
	2.3 Ravensbourne University London .....	3
	2.4 New College Durham .....	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Definitions.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Withdrawal from the College (including external transfer) .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Interruption.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Return to Studies.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Pregnancy and Maternity Support .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Review .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Independent External Review .....</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1 Introduction

This policy outlines Oxford Business College's (OBC) expectations concerning the interruption of studies (voluntary academic suspension), withdrawal (external transfer), or internal transfer of studies. It should be used alongside the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, Academic Assessment Regulations, Fees Refunds and Compensation Policy and may be superseded by these policies or procedures if necessary.

In addition to this procedure, in exceptional circumstances, the College may have grounds to suspend or withdraw a student from their studies. Please refer to the appropriate policies and regulations, including but not limited to: Fitness to Study, Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, and Academic Misconduct.

## 2 Purpose and Scope

This document outlines the fundamental principles and protocols concerning interruptions and withdrawals from studies. These guidelines are applicable to all enrolled and/or registered students at the College, including those participating in programs offered in collaboration with external partners. A student is defined as anyone who has successfully completed the enrolment process at OBC.

Presently, the College collaborates with four Higher education partners, each of which maintains its own policy regarding the interruption of studies, withdrawal, or internal transfer of studies. The links provided below direct individuals to the respective guidance documents from these partners.

### 2.1 Buckinghamshire New University

[https://www.bucks.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/interruption\\_withdrawal\\_external\\_transfer\\_or\\_internal\\_transfer\\_of\\_studies.pdf](https://www.bucks.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/interruption_withdrawal_external_transfer_or_internal_transfer_of_studies.pdf)

### 2.2 University of West London

<https://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/uwl/files/2023-09/StudentHandbook2324.pdf>

### 2.3 Ravensbourne University London

<https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/asset-bucket/prod/2022-08/General%20Academic%20Regulations%202022-2023.pdf>

### 2.4 New College Durham

Withdrawal: <https://www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk/higher-education/396-he-withdrawals-policy-v1-2>

Suspension of studies: <https://www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk/higher-education/398-he-suspension-of-studies-policy-v2>

### 3 Definitions

The following definitions are used by OBC:

- 3.1.1 **Withdrawal:** Formal departure from the course without intending to return to Oxford Business College within the permitted registration period. Students must formally withdraw before enrolling at another institution.
- 3.1.2 **Interruption of Studies:** Temporary leave from the course with the intention of rejoining with a subsequent year group.
- 3.1.3 **Internal Transfer:** Moving to another programme within the College or partner organisations, usually at the beginning of a year.

### 4 Withdrawal from the College (including external transfer)

Students possess the right to withdraw from their studies at any juncture. However, it is imperative to recognise that withdrawal represents a permanent decision that cannot be reversed. To ensure informed decision-making, it is considered best practice to conduct an interview with each student before finalising the withdrawal process. This facilitates an assessment of whether withdrawal is the most appropriate course of action, considering numerous factors including academic progress and personal circumstances. It is especially crucial to communicate the financial implications of withdrawal to students.

Formal withdrawal is initiated by completing the Withdrawal Form, which signifies the official cessation of studies at the College. Upon withdrawal, a student will be awarded any credits accrued, leading to the attainment of any exit awards earned, subject to the decision of an Assessment Board.

If eligible for an exit award, it will be conferred either at the point of withdrawal by Chair's Action, provided all marks have been confirmed through the next suitable Assessment Board if summative assessment is pending ratification.

Students withdrawing are liable for any outstanding fees for the study period, typically the term in which they withdraw. Additionally, upon withdrawal, students forfeit entitlement to bursaries or loans granted upon enrolment.

Following withdrawal, the student's access to college property and services is terminated, except in cases where limited access is granted as a member of the public.

Should a withdrawn student decide to resume their studies, they must adhere to the standard admissions procedures. In certain instances, exemptions from completing the full course may be granted based on previously obtained credits. This possibility should be discussed with the admissions team during the application process and may be subject to ratification through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

## 5 Interruption

Students are entitled to request an interruption of studies, a process which warrants thorough consideration and consultation. Any student seeking an interruption should initiate contact with their personal tutor and/or programme coordinator to discuss their circumstances and explore available options, which may include Interruption, Withdrawal (external transfer), or Internal Transfer of Studies.

These discussions should encompass various aspects such as outstanding assessments, anticipated return dates, and potential financial implications. It is essential to involve Registry Services in these discussions.

While the College endeavours to support students in their academic pursuits, certain programmes may impose limitations on the extent of assistance available. Factors such as the duration of the interruption, timing of the interruption, and flexibility upon return to studies may vary depending on the partner. Therefore, it is crucial for students to discuss any decision to interrupt with their Personal Tutor, or Programme Coordinator.

Upon returning to studies, students will be subject to the curriculum and regulations in effect at the time of re-enrolment. This may entail changes in course offerings or curriculum structure. Refer to the return-to-studies section for further guidance.

The College reserves the right to evaluate interruption of studies requests on a case-by-case basis, considering individual circumstances and program requirements. Until confirmation of an approved interruption is received, students are advised to continue their program as usual. Decisions regarding interruption are typically made promptly, usually within one week.

Formal initiation of a student's interruption of studies is facilitated by completing the Interruption of Studies Form, to be submitted to the Registry.

During an interruption, students remain liable for any tuition fees applicable for the fee period, typically corresponding to a term.

Students may be permitted to interrupt their studies for a maximum of two calendar years, with the initial period typically lasting one calendar year. Extensions beyond this period necessitate submission and approval of an additional request.

If an interruption exceeds the two-year limit (or program-specific duration), the student will be withdrawn from the program. Reapplication through standard channels is required for resuming studies, with credit recognition contingent upon numerous factors, subject to RPL process ratification.

Interruptions of studies cannot be retroactively applied, except in exceptional circumstances. The interruption is effective from the date of request submission. Students who believe their studies and prior assessments have been impacted by mitigating circumstances preceding the request submission should follow the process for submitting a claim to the mitigating

circumstances panel.

During an interruption, students are prohibited from submitting work for assessment.

The College offers a support package for students during interruptions, including access to the virtual learning environment, limited library access, and general access to college facilities. However, access to specific areas such as labs, workshops, and classrooms may be restricted.

Results for all assessments scheduled prior to the interruption will stand upon the student's return to study, including non-submissions.

## **6 Return to Studies**

While Oxford Business College anticipates students to express their intention to resume studies, it does not automatically assume their return. It is incumbent upon the student to initiate contact with the College to communicate their desire to recommence studies.

The Registry will endeavour to reach out to all students on interruption status at least two months before the stipulated return date specified at the time of interruption. Nonetheless, students are required to inform Registry Services at least one month prior to the agreed resumption date initially set at the time of interruption. Timely notification facilitates a smoother transition back into studies. Depending on partner university requirements, the minimum notice period may be extended, a detail that will be communicated upon interruption.

If the initial interruption stemmed from health issues and/or disability, students must provide confirmation of their fitness to return to studies before re-enrolling. This may entail obtaining clearance from occupational health or consulting with the Disability Service.

Students are expected to resume studies at the onset of a study period, be it an academic year, semester, or term, and this timeline may coincide with other program components such as work placements. The return date will be mutually agreed upon by the student, program coordinator, Registry, and other pertinent staff like those from the Student Centre and the College Finance team.

The availability of a spot in the cohort to which the student is returning will determine the date of return to studies, with factors like placement availability potentially imposing limitations.

Tuition fees are payable for the term in which the student resumes studies, as per the Payment and Debt Procedures outlined for students paying Home and EU fees. This may entail an increase compared to previous fees, and all outstanding tuition fees must be settled in full before re-enrolment.

As previously noted, marks awarded in assessments conducted before the interruption will stand upon return. Exceptions may occur if the program of study has been altered during the interruption period, necessitating a customised study plan, or potentially requiring the student to repeat a study period. Alternatively, successful claims for mitigating circumstances may permit either a year restart or reassessment, subject to university partners Academic

Assessment Regulations.

Upon return, students will adhere to the current curriculum, regulations, policies, and procedures in effect. Should a program no longer be available or significantly modified, students may need to transfer to another program, contingent upon the compatibility of previous studies and new program content.

Failure to contact the College within the agreed-upon period or respond to communications from the Registry may result in withdrawal from studies.

## 7 Pregnancy and Maternity Support

The College recognises that pregnancy and maternity are significant life events that may impact a student's ability to fully engage in their studies. The importance of providing appropriate support and reasonable adjustments to ensure that pregnant students and those on maternity leave can continue their studies effectively.

Students who are pregnant or on maternity leave may find it necessary to interrupt their studies temporarily to manage the demands of pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare. Section 5 of this policy details the process for interrupting studies. This provision enables students to take the time they need to navigate this phase of their lives without compromising their academic progress.

During this period, OBC is committed to providing comprehensive support to pregnant students and those on maternity leave. This support may include:

- 7.1.1 **Flexible Study Arrangements:** OBC will work with pregnant students and those on maternity leave to establish flexible study arrangements that accommodate their needs. This may involve adjusting deadlines, providing access to recorded lectures, or offering alternative assessment methods.
- 7.1.2 **Access to Resources:** Pregnant students and those on maternity leave will continue to have access to learning resources, including course materials and online platforms, to support their studies during this time.
- 7.1.3 **Wellbeing Services:** Pregnant students and those on maternity leave will have access to OBC's wellbeing services, including counselling and mental health support, to ensure their overall wellbeing during this period.
- 7.1.4 **Reasonable Adjustments:** OBC will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of pregnant students, ensuring that they can fully participate in their studies without experiencing any disadvantage.
- 7.1.5 **Return to Studies:** Upon their return from maternity leave, OBC will facilitate a smooth transition back into academic life, providing guidance on resuming studies and any necessary adjustments to support their reintegration.

## 8 Review

If a student is interrupted or withdrawn by the College in accordance with the Fitness to Study, Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy, or Academic Misconduct Policy, the student has a right to request a Review of that decision in accordance with that procedure. The student may submit a formal complaint through the College's complaint process to seek a review of the decision.

This process allows the student to present any relevant evidence or mitigating circumstances that may have affected the decision to interrupt or withdraw them from their studies. During the complaint process, the student will have the opportunity to provide a detailed explanation of their situation and any reasons why they believe the decision should be reconsidered.

The College will conduct a thorough review of the student's case, considering all relevant information and ensuring fairness and transparency throughout the process. It is important for the student to follow the College's complaint process and adhere to any deadlines or requirements outlined in the procedure. This will help ensure that the complaint is handled efficiently and effectively, and that the student has the best possible chance of achieving a satisfactory outcome.

## 9 Independent External Review

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this process, they may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education provided they have been issued with a completion of procedures letter. The completion of procedures letter will explain how the student can submit a complaint, and the deadline for doing so is 12 months from the date of the letter. Further information about making a complaint to the OIA can be found on their website at <http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>.