



## **AUTHORISED INTERRUPTION OF STUDY**

### **GUIDANCE NOTES**

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## 1. Introduction

If you are considering an Authorised Interruption of Study, you should discuss the matter with your Personal Tutor in the first instance. Please read the guidelines below carefully and contact your School or Student Services if you have any queries regarding your proposed interruption.

## 2. UWS Regulations 1.62 – 1.63

*'A student may be allowed a period of Authorised Interruption of Study, approved by the relevant Head of School or nominee for good reason and may be re-admitted thereafter to complete the requirements for a degree.*

*A period of Authorised Interruption of Study will not normally exceed one academic session, and the total period of Authorised Interruption of Study, which may be granted throughout the programme of study, will not normally exceed two academic sessions'.*

## 3. Application for Interruption of Study

Authorised Interruption of Study is where a student is given permission to suspend their studies for an academic session or part of a session, with the expectation that they will return to resume their studies after that period.

**An interruption is not appropriate where the student is able to study but has failed to perform or to prepare adequately for examinations or to take extended annual/holiday leave or to effectively extend the period available to complete their programme.**

Authorised Interruption of Study should only be considered where the circumstances surrounding the request are exceptional.

An application for interruption of study should be made in advance where possible or as soon as practicable after the problem has emerged or been discussed. A retrospective interruption of study can be applied for where there is good reason for the late disclosure or application.

Your request will be rejected if:

- it results in you being absent for more than two consecutive academic years;
- if you will not be able to complete the course within the maximum period of registration, as outlined in the programme specification.

(Please note that the maximum period of registration for any course includes any agreed interruptions of studies – see Regulation 3.42).

Once you have interrupted your studies, you may have limited access to University facilities and premises. **University assessments will not be undertaken during the authorised period of interruption.**

This differs from withdrawal, where it is expected that you will not resume your studies. If you do wish to come back to the University after a withdrawal, you would normally have to re-apply through UCAS or other appropriate admissions process.. Therefore, if you are considering withdrawal and you have any doubt about your intentions, it is advisable to request an Authorised Interruption of Study until your intentions are clearer.

#### **4. Classifications of Request**

There are two classifications of requests:

##### **4.1 Authorised interruption for special circumstances**

At UWS, the authority to permit Authorised Interruption of Study due to special circumstances, for one academic session, or part of a session, is the responsibility of the Dean of School or nominee. It is the School's responsibility to inform Student Administration of any period of interruption granted to enable them to update your record accordingly.

There must be 'good reason' for the interruption. An interruption of study concession should only be applicable if you are unable to study due to circumstances that are largely beyond your own control.

These circumstances can include:

- medical and health problems (with Bursary)\*
- medical and health problems (without Bursary)
- personal and family circumstances
- bereavement

\*If you are in receipt of a bursary, a medical certificate may be requested.

If you wish to request an interruption of studies for special circumstances, you must provide supporting evidence. It is your responsibility to decide on the nature of the supporting documentation and to produce the evidence to support your request, e.g. letter from you informing the Head of School or nominee of the special circumstances that have resulted in the application for authorised interruption; letter from doctor providing supporting evidence regarding medical and health problems.

If you are an international student or only resident in Scotland for the purposes of education, you are responsible for ensuring that you obtain medical or notary evidence (translated to English by an official translator) for any circumstance that may occur in your home country, such as death or illness of a parent or close family member.

#### 4.2. Authorised interruption for other reasons

Where you are requesting an interruption of study for any reasons that do not fall into the category of special circumstances, these requests will be referred to the Dean of School or nominee.

These cases could include requests involving:

- paid employment
- internships
- volunteering
- other activities such as an independent year abroad that are not part of the formal degree structure and not counting for credits

These cases will be considered by the Dean of School or nominee.

Exceptionally there may be occasions where the University advises a student to take a period of authorised interruption.

### 5. Period of interruption

Interruption of study is normally for a whole academic session, or for a large part of an academic session with the intention to return and complete the year. If you request consecutive years, this will be considered by the Head of School.

You will not be formally classed as an 'enrolled student' while on an Interruption of Studies and this may have implications for such matters as benefit and tax liability etc. Where applicable, it is your responsibility to advise your Council Tax Office of the period of interruption as it is the Local Council that will determine your eligibility for any discounts.

#### 5.1 Backdating of Authorised Interruption of Studies

In order to comply with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) requirements, and for reasons of consistency and good administrative practice, the University has implemented the following strict limitations on the backdating of Authorised Interruption. The following applies to all UWS students:

- 5.1.1 Where interruption of studies is unplanned, you should inform your School as soon as you realise that you are going to be absent. When Interruption of Studies requests are granted, the start date for the period of interruption, i.e. the date recorded on your student record, will normally be no earlier than the date at which the application was submitted for approval.

- 5.1.2 Exceptionally, the start date could be backdated for up to 20 working days before the application date if and only if you were unable to establish that you have been unable to apply earlier due to illness or other special circumstances. Please note that if you have been engaging with your studies, backdating would not be appropriate.

## 6. Tuition fees

The University charges tuition fees on the basis of your attendance as recorded in your student record. The tuition fees will therefore normally be calculated on the basis of the agreed period of interruption. Where you have had an interruption for longer than the agreed period, if you can establish that you had been unable to apply for interruption earlier due to illness or other special circumstances, the extenuating circumstances should be validated and detailed.

SAAS consider a student on Interruption as having withdrawn from the institution and the financial implications need to be managed carefully:

- If a student goes onto Interruption during T1 with an expected return in September of the following academic year, they will have their fees stopped and will need to apply again for next academic year. There is no detriment to them because of this.
- If a student goes onto Interruption in T2, their full year's fees will be retained by the University and can be utilised in T2 of the following academic year without having to apply for SAAS funding again (as long as they return to UWS).
- Students who interrupt study for Medical or Care reasons can continue to receive bursary and Student Loan for the period they are not in attendance but proof of this must be received and retained within the School as the University and/or the student may be required to produce evidence. Supporting evidence does not require to be forwarded to Student Administration. Students may wish to get advice and guidance from the Funding and Advice Team in Student Services as this may impact on future funding entitlements.

## 7. International Students

**The granting of an interruption of studies for an international student may have serious implications for that student's Visa and right to remain in the country.**

You must seek advice from the University's International Advisers before any formal process is completed to enable you to make an informed decision.

Please note that it is your individual responsibility to ensure that you abide by the conditions of your Visa.

If approved, you are advised to retain the original letter granting you an interruption and the documentation you provided for the interruption as you may be required to present this to immigration officials when you return to the UK.

If you are studying at the University on the basis of holding a student Visa, the University is legally required to report the interruption of studies to the UK Visa and Immigration who will then cancel your Visa. You will have to apply for a new Visa before you could return to the UK.

## **8. Application and submission**

You are required to submit an Interruption of Study form (please refer to Appendix A). This is available to enable you to indicate the requested period and reason, and on which the academic member of staff, following Dean of School comments, can summarise his or her decisions for the student's file.

Where possible, you should provide supporting documentation. The responsibility for sourcing and determining the nature of the supporting documentation rests entirely with you.

**A copy of the form, accompanying, documentary evidence and the letter to you will be placed on your student file held by Student Administration. Copies will also be circulated to other relevant Departments as required. This may include the relevant funding body such as SAAS which will be advised of start/end dates and reason for interruption and may make further decisions on whether bursary support continues or not.**

## **9. Approval of application for Interruption of Study**

Interruptions of study will only be approved by the relevant Dean of School or nominee and only granted for stated reasons for specified (not open-ended) periods.

The University will consider requests to interrupt studies and, if approved, you will be emailed accordingly.

## **10. Returning to Programme of Study when period of Interruption completed**

You should contact your School office the period before you intend to return so that your academic programme can be confirmed. The attached form should be completed (Appendix B).





Please complete and return your application for Authorised Interruption of Study to the School Office to which your programme belongs.

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

**Approved:**..... **Date:** .....  
**Dean of School**

Remove from modules: - yes  no

Specify:

Bursary to continue: - yes  no

Specific bursary instructions (if any)

.....

Review Date: - (confirmed at initial meeting)

Update from review

.....

.....

**NOT Approved:** .....  
**Dean of School**

**Reason:**

.....

.....

.....

**Date:** .....

**APPENDIX B**

**RETURN TO PROGRAMME OF STUDY FOLLOWING AUTHORISED  
INTERRUPTION OF STUDY**

**APPLICATION FORM**

Name of Student: .....

Banner No: .....

Programme: .....

School owning Programme.....

Year of Study (returning) .....

Period of Interruption: From: ..... To:.....

Proposed recommencement date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Programme Requirements

- |                                |                              |                             |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Occupational Health            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disclosure                     | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bursary                        | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Placement available            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Programme Lead (or equivalent) |                              |                             |
| Commencement Agreed            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Specific Arrangements

State required modules and notify coordinators for processing

.....

.....

Commencement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_