

Authorised Interruption of Study

Version – v2 – January 2025

Procedure Author – Head of Registry

Procedure Owner – Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Success)

Parent Policy Statement – Learning, Teaching & Student Success

Public Access or Staff Only Access – Public

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Changes and Reason for Changes – Additional clarity on implications for international students with a student route visa, updates in relation to SAAS funding, removal of distinction between 'exceptional circumstances' and 'other reasons', and the simplification of the language throughout, supporting evidence only required for continuation of funding for care or medical reasons.



1. Introduction

If students are considering an Authorised Interruption of Study, this should be discussed with their Personal Tutor/ Programme Leader in the first instance. The School Office or the Student Success Hub can also help with queries regarding proposed interruption.

2. UWS Regulations 1.56-1.57

Students registered for awards are allowed to apply for a period of Authorised Interruption of Study, approved by the relevant Dean of School, and be re-admitted thereafter to complete the requirements for an award. See also procedure for Students with Parental Responsibilities.

The maximum period of authorised interruption is normally one academic session. Throughout the programme of study the total period of Authorised Interruption of Study, is normally a maximum of two academic sessions.

3. Application for Interruption of Study

Authorised Interruption of Study is where students are given permission to suspend their studies, and assessments, for an academic year or part of a year, with the expectation that they resume their studies after that period.

An interruption is not appropriate where:

- students are able to study but have failed to perform or to prepare adequately for assessments; or
- to take extended annual/holiday leave; or
- to extend the period available to complete their programme.

An application for interruption of study can be made in advance, or as soon as possible after the circumstances have emerged. A retrospective interruption of study may be applied where there is good reason for the late disclosure or application (See section 5).

The request is rejected if:

- it results in the student being absent for more than two consecutive academic years;
- students are not able to complete the module or programme within the maximum period of registration, as outlined in the programme specification or the Regulatory Framework (Regulation 3.40).

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

4. Request for Authorised Interruption

There are many reasons to request an interruption, which may include:

- medical and health reasons (including mental wellbeing);
- personal and family circumstances;
- bereavement;
- paid employment;
- internships;
- volunteering; or
- other activities such as an independent year abroad that is not part of the formal degree structure and the credits do not count towards the UWS award.

In addition to the above, there may be occasions where the University advises a student to take a period of authorised interruption.

If students wish to request an interruption of studies **for medical or care reasons and continue to receive funding, they must provide supporting evidence**. It is the student's responsibility to decide on the supporting documentation and evidence to support the request, e.g. letter informing the Dean 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.

International students or those only resident in Scotland for the purposes of education, are responsible for obtaining medical or notary evidence (translated to English by an official translator) for any circumstance that may occur in the students' home country, such as death or illness of a parent or close family member.

5. Period of interruption

Interruption of study is normally for either the remainder of an academic term or a whole academic year, with the intention to return and complete studies. If consecutive academic years are requested, this is to be considered by the Dean of School.

5.1 *Status of student while on interruption*

While on an Interruption of Studies, students move from 'enrolled' status to 'interrupted', and this may have implications for such matters as benefit entitlements and entitlement to student funding. It is the student's responsibility to advise any appropriate authority of their change in student status.

5.2 *Backdating of Authorised Interruption of Studies*

The following applies to all UWS students:

- Where interruption of studies is unplanned, students must inform their School as soon as they realise that they are going to be absent. When Interruption of Studies requests are approved, the start date for the period of interruption, i.e. the date recorded on the student record, is normally no

- earlier than the date at which the application was submitted for approval.
- The start date may be backdated for up to 20 working days before the application date, if students were unable to apply earlier due to illness or other special circumstances. If students have been engaging with their studies, backdating is not allowed.

6. Tuition fees and funding

The University charges tuition fees based on enrolment status as recorded in the student record. Tuition fees are adjusted based on the agreed period of interruption. Where the start date of the interruption has been backdated, if satisfactory evidence that the student had been unable to apply for interruption earlier due to illness or other special circumstances, this will be taken into account.

The financial implications of interruption to studies need to be managed carefully for any student, particularly those funded through Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). Students should consider both the impact on their entitlement to funding during the interruption, and future funding entitlements, for both tuition fee and living cost support, when ready to return.

- If students go on Interruption prior to 1st December in Term 1 with an expected return in September of the following academic year, SAAS tuition fee payments are stopped and may be available to students in the next academic year.
- If students go on Interruption in Term 2, their full year's SAAS tuition fees are retained by the University. When students return in Term 2 of the following academic year, the balance of SAAS tuition fees are available and they do not have to apply for SAAS tuition fee funding again (as long as they return to UWS) for that academic year.
- There are some circumstances where SAAS living cost funding can continue during a period of interruption. Students should contact the Funding and Advice Team to get advice on the circumstances in which this is possible.
- Students who interrupt study for medical or care reasons can continue to receive student funding for living costs for the remainder of the academic year that they are not in attendance, i.e. an existing SAAS award continues. They are not eligible to apply to SAAS for funding for the next academic year until they are ready to recommence their programme.
- Students in receipt of the SAAS Paramedic, Nursing, or Midwifery Bursary Scheme may be able to continue to claim student funding into a new academic year while on a period of interruption. The rules are complex for this group, and students are advised to seek advice and guidance from the Funding and Advice Team and/or the School.

7. International Students with a Student Route Visa

The granting of an interruption of studies for international students may have serious implications for their visa and permission to stay in the UK.

International Students must seek advice from the University's International Advisers before submitting a request for interruption to ensure they know the impact on their visa.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they meet the conditions of their visa.

If approved, students are advised to retain the original letter granting an interruption and the documentation provided for the interruption as it may be required to present this to border control on return to the UK.

If students are studying at the University on the basis of holding a student visa, the University is legally required to report any interruption of studies to the UK Visa and Immigration who may then cancel the student visa. It is likely that a new visa will be required for return to the UK.

8. Application and submission

Students are required to submit a **Request for Authorised Interruption of Study** form (Appendix A) indicating the requested period and reason.

Where supporting documentation and evidence is required (see section 4), students are responsible for providing this.

- A copy of the request application form, accompanying documentary evidence and the letter to the student confirming the approval of the request is placed in the student's file held by the School.
- Copies are also sent to other relevant Departments as required.
- This may include the relevant funding body, such as SAAS, which is advised of start/end dates and reason for interruption.
- A Student Record Amendment Form (SRAF) is sent to Registry to ensure the student record is updated.

9. Approval of application for Interruption of Study

The authority to permit Authorised Interruption of Study is the responsibility of the Dean of School or nominee (usually Programme Leader).

It is the School's responsibility to inform Registry of any period of interruption granted to enable them to update student records accordingly.

Interruptions of study are only granted for stated reasons for specified (not open-ended) periods. The School Office emails the outcome of the application decision to students.

10. Returning to Programme of Study following period of Interruption

Students are required to contact their Programme Leader before intending to return so that the student's academic programme is confirmed. The School will need some time to deal with the administration of a proposed return so students should be encouraged to give as much notice as possible. **Return to programme of study following period of interruption** form (Appendix B) should be completed.

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

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Approved:..... **Date:**
Dean of School (or nominee)

Remove from modules: - yes no

Specify:

Student Funding to continue: -yes no

Specific Student Funding instructions (if any)

.....

Review Date: - (confirmed at initial meeting)

Update from review

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NOT Approved:
Dean of School (or nominee)

Reason:

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.....

.....

Date:

APPENDIX B

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

APPLICATION FORM

Name of Student:

Banner ID:

Programme:

School owning Programme.....

Year of Study (returning)

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

Proposed recommencement date: _____
(Student visa holders to be aware of visa processing times)

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Programme Requirements

Occupational Health Yes No

Disclosure Yes No

Student funding Yes No

Placement available Yes No

Programme Lead (or equivalent)

Commencement Agreed Yes No

Specific Arrangements

State required modules and notify coordinators for processing

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Commencement Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____