

# UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

## Learning and Teaching Committee

### University Policy on Suspension of Study – Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students (Full and Part-time)

**Aim: to ensure the effective and timely suspension of students and to facilitate the transfer of information to HEFCE, HESA, Student Loan Company, Student Finance England or private sponsors.**

Students may need to suspend their studies for a period of time because of ill health, personal circumstances or other reasons which prevent them from giving the necessary attention to and engagement with their academic work.

The Policy and Procedures should be read in conjunction with the University's Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures and the University Policy and Procedures on Student Attendance and Engagement.

1. A suspension should not total more than one year (3 terms or 2 semesters) in any **one** programme of study.
2. The start of the suspension must be within the current term/semester – it should not be retrospective. Suspensions cannot be backdated.
3. Faculties should report any proposed suspensions to Student Registry Services immediately and not wait until the relevant paperwork has been completed by the student.
4. Suspended students must be aware that the on-going availability of their programme is not guaranteed and that programmes or modules may change during their period of suspension. This might necessitate the student undertaking a revised programme or modules.
5. The student suspension process should not be used by a student to avoid a University disciplinary process, scheduled assessments, academic failure and requirement to withdraw.

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#### University Procedures for Suspension of Study

**The following procedures should be followed when a student wishes to suspend their studies. A Flowchart is attached as Appendix I.**

1. Students should apply, in writing, to their Personal Academic Tutor, Year Tutor or Programme Tutor who has responsibility for the programme on which they are registered to suspend their studies, giving reasons for the request. This should be made to the Faculty using the standard form attached as Appendix 2.
2. International students who were issued with a Certificate of Acceptance (CAS) should contact the PBS staff for more information as this may impact on their Tier 4 Visa status.
3. If the reasons for the request are judged to be valid, approval of the suspension for a period of up to 12 months in the first instance may be given. Discretion can be applied in permitting approval for longer periods of suspension for students with extreme personal circumstances. There should be a formal agreement of the length of suspension and a date for their return to study. This should take into account the implication of the timing and duration of the suspension for the student's engagement with the programme and with assessment and re-assessment opportunities. This agreement will also include which completed assessments (if any) will be carried over to their return to study and which will be completed during their absence, if appropriate, and which after their return. A letter outlining this should be sent to the student as a formal record of the outcome of the request. A Standard letter for this purpose is attached as Appendix 3.
4. The decision as to which marks will stand on the resumption of studies or which might be re-sat as a first attempt will reflect the circumstances leading to the suspension. For example, if Extenuating Circumstances have been affecting performance, leading to suspension, then the Faculty is expected to determine the impact these might have had on study/assessments to date and to reflect this in the decision made. It might be that the student would be advised to re-commence the course at the start of the next academic session. It is possible that the student may request a suspension for no other reason than a desire to have time away from their studies. In such cases, all completed assessment would be carried forward to the resumption of studies.
5. If the request to suspend is not approved the student will be expected to continue on the programme. Students should be notified using the standard letter attached as Appendix 4.

A meeting should be arranged between the student and their Personal Academic Tutor, Year Tutor or Programme Tutor to discuss appropriate support mechanisms which might need to be put in place to enable the student to continue.

If a student does not return to study, then they may be withdrawn

6. As the agreed period of suspension comes to an end, Faculties should contact the student to ask them to confirm that they will be resuming their studies, as planned. A standard letter for this purpose is attached as Appendix 5.
7. If the student is unable to return, it might be possible for students with extreme personal circumstances to request a further period of suspension. Faculties can apply discretion in such cases. Students should apply, in writing, to their Personal Academic Tutor, Year Tutor or Programme Tutor who has responsibility for the programme on which they are registered to suspend their studies, giving reasons for the request. Students should use the standard form attached as Appendix 2.
8. The Personal Academic Tutor, Year Tutor or Programme Tutor should consult the Programme Leader in the consideration of the request to ensure that all implications are taken into account. If the reasons for the request are judged to be valid, approval of a further period of suspension may be approved. Again, there should be a formal agreement of the length of suspension and a date for their return to study. All such requests will need to be considered carefully taking into account a range of factors, including potential changes to programmes, the likelihood of the student returning to and successfully completing their course, especially in relation to International Students studying on a Tier 4 Visa. A letter outlining this should be sent to the student as a formal record of the outcome of the request. A Standard letter for this purpose is attached as Appendix 4.

If a student request for a second period of suspension is not approved, the student will be expected to continue on the programme. Students should be notified using the standard letter attached as Appendix 4.

A meeting should be arranged between the student and their Personal Academic Tutor, Year Tutor or Programme Tutor to discuss appropriate support mechanisms which might need to be put in place to enable the student to continue.

If a student does not return to study, then they may be withdrawn.

9. If there is no response from a student to the request for confirmation of a return to study at the end of the agreed suspension then, providing it can be shown that reasonable efforts have been made to contact the student, a Board of Examiners may make the decision to withdraw the student and award any exit qualification to which the student is entitled.

10. If a student has been suspended for more than one year (or following a further additional period due to extreme personal circumstances) and is unable to resume their studies, then they should be withdrawn from the programme. This would not preclude them applying for re-admittance under the regulations at some later date.
11. The student will have the right of appeal under the University's standard Appeal Regulations.

### **Monitoring of Suspended Students**

1. Once approval has been given for a student to suspend their studies, it is the responsibility of the Faculty to maintain regular contact with the student in question, as appropriate and as set out above.
2. The suspension should be formally monitored at the Board of Examiners for the original cohort, where progression/award would be considered. This ensures that no student slips under the radar and any follow up action, if required, in terms of possible re-sits or the calculation of any exit award for which the student might be eligible, can be agreed.

