

Break in Study Policy and Procedure



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1. Introduction

This Policy and Procedure sets out UCEN Manchester's approach to taking a formal break in study from an undergraduate taught programme; procedure for requesting a Break in Study; and consideration of it.

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidance and understanding of Break in Study;
- Outline the student's responsibilities and how to apply;
- Inform and guide UCEN Manchester's response to students unable to continue with their studies and wishing to take a Break in Study;
- Ensure fair and consistent consideration of all requests.

This Policy and Procedure applies to all Higher Education (HE) students studying a Higher National Pearson course at UCEN Manchester.

If the course is delivered by UCEN Manchester but is in partnership with a University, then the appropriate institution Policy and Procedure will apply:

For **Manchester Metropolitan University**, please refer to the Student Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Policy:

<https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/sites/default/files/policies/withdrawal-suspension-policy.pdf>

For **Sheffield Hallam University**, please refer to the Break in Study Policy and Procedure:

<https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/sheffield>

For **University of Huddersfield**, please refer to section 5 of Regulations for taught students:

<https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/huddersfield>

For **Skills Education Group**, please refer to the Break in Study Policy and Procedure:

<https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/seg>

2. Definition

Break in Study is a formal interruption from study for a specified agreed time with the intention of returning to the same programme at a later date to complete. In most cases, this would usually be at the same point the following academic year.

2.1 Purpose of a Break in Study

It is UCEN Manchester expectation that students complete their programme in one continuous period of uninterrupted study.

UCEN Manchester acknowledges that students may face difficulties and challenges whilst studying a higher education programme. Whilst most challenges will be part of everyday life, sometimes they may have a serious impact on a student's ability to continue attendance and participation on programme. In such circumstances, it may be appropriate to take a break

from study to deal with the issues faced and to return to study when able to fully participate and engage with the programme.

The following are examples of situations that may be deemed acceptable for Break in Study:

- Significant wellbeing issues of the student
- Death/ serious illness of a close family member or friend
- Maternity/paternity or adoption leave
- Extreme financial difficulties resulting in significant impact on the student

The following circumstances would not normally be considered as grounds for applying for a Break in Study:

Work commitments that do not contribute to the programme of study or future employability

Holidays

Break in study would not normally be approved where the programme is being withdrawn or there is no planned cohort for the programme the following academic year. However, every endeavour will be made to transfer any credit awarded to an alternative programme to be resumed after a break in study

3. Points for Consideration

Taking a Break in Study can impact on a number of factors. Students are advised to seek guidance and clarification from the Programme Team, Future U: Student Support Services and Student Finance if in receipt of tuition fee or maintenance funding.

3.1 Tuition Fees

During the period of Break in Study tuition fees are not payable, however fees are payable in line with section 5.2.1 Fee Liabilities and section 5.7 Break in Study of the [HE Tuition Fee Policy](#).

3.2 Maintenance Loan

Student Finance funding is not available during the Break in Study period. If a student is in receipt of funding beyond the date that Break in Study applies from, Student Finance will recalculate the entitlement and the student may be asked to repay excess payments received. Students are advised to seek guidance from Student Finance regarding potential monies that may have to be repaid.

Please note this does not apply to the Skills Education Group courses.

3.3 Accommodation

Students living in Halls of Residence or rented accommodation are advised to speak to their letting agency or landlord regarding any monies / additional cost that may be payable as a result of early termination of the letting contract.

3.4 Programme of Study

Students considering taking a Break in Study should be aware that on return there may be changes to the teaching staff team, programme delivery model and timetable.

4. Academic Record

Where a Break in Study is taken during the academic year, marks for unit(s) / module(s) where all associated assessment(s) fall prior to the Break in Study commencing, will be presented at the next available Assessment Board and the marks ratified.

Unit(s) / modules(s) consisting of more than 1 assessment, where one element has been completed, the status of these assessment(s) will be carried forward on the student's academic record.

Accepted deferrals for assessment submission(s) and (re)assessment status on units previously undertaken will remain on the student's academic record.

5. Timeframe for Break in Study Applications

Students are advised wherever possible, to apply for a Break in Study prior to the date it is to commence.

Break in Study ideally would commence at the beginning of an academic year. This would apply for known circumstances such as planned medical procedures where recovery time is expected to have a detrimental impact on attendance and engagement.

UCEN Manchester acknowledges that not all situations can be planned for; in this case, the student may request a Break in Study at the point the change in circumstances have an impact on the student's ability to engage with the programme.

Where a Break in Study is taken during the academic year, the expectation is that they return at the same point the following academic year.

Where a Break in Study is taken in Semester 1, the earliest the student can return is at the start of the next academic year, but additional tuition fees may apply.

Where a Break in Study is taken in Semester 2, the earliest the student can return is at the start of Semester 2 in the following academic year, but additional tuition fees may apply.

If there is a change in the delivery of the programme, the student may need to return at an earlier date so not to affect the teaching and learning. If this is the case, no additional tuition fees will apply.

Break in Study is not permitted once the last four weeks of teaching have commenced.

Applications for a Break in Study will not be approved where an approval would go beyond the permissible registration period.

6. Retrospective Applications

Retrospective applications for a Break in Study will not be considered unless there are compelling reasons as to why the circumstances were unknown and it was not possible to apply prior to the proposed period.

A full explanation must be included on the application form if a Break in Study is to be considered retrospectively.

7. Extending the Break in Study period

It is the expectation that the student return to the programme at the agreed return date. In exceptional circumstances, this may not be possible, and students can request to be considered for an extension to the Break in Study.

Extending Break in Study beyond the agreed return date must be in agreement with the Head of Department and should be agreed at least 1 month in advance of the date the student is expected to return.

8. Procedure for submitting a Break in Study Application

Students considering taking a Break in Study are advised to speak to their Personal Tutor in the first instance. If a Break in Study is deemed the most appropriate action, applications must be made via the designated form available online on the UCEN Manchester website.

All sections of the application must be completed with the Personal Tutor and any supporting evidence attached with the submission.

The student is responsible for the submission of the form and any supporting documentation to their Director of Faculty or Head of School via their UCEN Manchester email account.

Request for Break in Study will not be accepted in any other form of communication.

9. Consideration of Break in Study Application and Notification

The responsibility to consider Break in Study applications is devolved to individual Schools.

The Director, and / or Head of School and Programme Leader will be responsible for the consideration of the request.

The Director, and / or Head of School should ensure that all applications are handled consistently, and students treated equitably.

The Director, and / or Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the relevant UCEN Manchester internal data processes are completed to record the break in study on the student record. For Pearson Higher National students, the student should de-activated on Edexcel online and their registration re-activated when they return.

Formal confirmation of the outcome of the request will be sent within 15 working days of having submitted the form. This will be communicated to the students UCEN Manchester email address.

If your request is declined, the reasons why will be explained and the curriculum team can discuss with you other options for support, and/or the implications of withdrawing from your course and reapplying in the future.

9.1. Informing Student Finance

Whilst UCEN Manchester will report the status of all approved Break in Study applications to Student Finance, it is the individual students' responsibility to contact Student Finance and ensure that the status on their account is accurate and up to date.

Please note this does not apply to the Skills Education Group courses.

10. Break in Study Start Date

Break in Study applications will be dated from the last date of a positive register mark. Applications, however, cannot be backdated beyond a tuition fee liability point unless there are compelling reasons as to why the application could not have been completed earlier.

11. During the Break in Study

Students on a Break in Study are no longer termed as an "active" registered student, and they will therefore not have the same entitlements as fully registered students. Students therefore are not permitted to access campus, loan any books or equipment.

Access to the Careers and Welfare team will remain available. If site attendance is required, students should follow the guidance for visitors and report to reception.

12. Returning to Study

The School will contact the student no later than 30 calendar days prior to the expected return date. The student will be invited to attend a return to study meeting or to have a discussion via phone to discuss the potential return to study. Students must seek appropriate advice and guidance in relation to funding from Careers and Welfare prior to returning to study.

If the School does not manage to contact you, or you do not engage with the process and 30 days have passed following your expected date of return and your School has not heard from you, they will cancel your registration and you will be withdrawn from the programme.

If an interim award is due, this will be issued.