

# INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES POLICY

A guide to the process and procedure for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and executive masters students

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The School is committed to supporting you if you require temporary time away from your studies, where this will assist you in gaining the best possible outcome in your studies or support your career aspirations.
- 1.2. An Interruption of Study (hereafter referred to as an Interruption) allows you to take an authorised formal break in your studies for one year. Following the interruption period, you will return to your studies at the beginning of the respective term or teaching block. For example, an interruption at any point in the Lent term will require you to return at the beginning of the Lent term the following year. If you are an executive masters student, you should discuss an appropriate point of return with your Academic Mentor or relevant member of department staff.
- 1.3. Authorised Interruptions need to be formally approved by the School.

## 2. Reasons for Interruption

- 2.1. There are two main types of interruption request:
  - 2.1.1. If you find that, due to ill health or circumstances out of your control, you need to temporarily interrupt your studies;
  - 2.1.2. If you wish to interrupt your studies due to a temporary opportunity you wish to pursue before returning to your studies.

Common reasons for an Interruption include, but are not limited to:

    - Health reasons (mental or physical health problems);
    - Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Family Leave;
    - Extra-curricular pursuits e.g. elite sport/art/music related opportunities;
    - Employment opportunities/internships/volunteering;
    - Work related issues (for executive masters students);
    - Unforeseen changes in financial circumstances;
    - Military Service;
    - Other specific personal reasons.
- 2.2. If you are experiencing health or personal problems that are causing you to miss classes, then requesting an Interruption at the earliest opportunity is sometimes the best option. This enables you to take a break and return the following year to properly benefit from teaching. If you delay a formal Interruption request, this may also have financial consequences (see Section 3).
- 2.3. If you are considering an Interruption in the middle of a term, you must discuss with your Academic Mentor or relevant members of departmental staff whether it would be beneficial to continue to the end of that term or to interrupt immediately. If you are an executive masters student, you should discuss an appropriate time to interrupt with your Academic Mentor or relevant member of department staff. For further guidance on who to speak to in your department, please contact the departmental administration team.
- 2.4. Interruptions will not be applied retrospectively. If you request an Interruption during a term, and it is approved, it will be applied from the start of the term in which you applied. Appropriate arrangements will be made for executive masters students on modular programmes. Any Interruption will not exceed 12 months, unless authorised by the School due to exceptional circumstances.

## 3. Matters to consider

- 3.1. The academic implications of an Interruption are the primary consideration before a request is approved by the School.

- 3.2. If you require a visa to study in the UK, you should be aware that taking an Interruption may have implications on your current immigration permission. The International Student Visa Advice Team (ISVAT) provides advice and guidance to students in relation to any visa implications which may arise as a consequence of taking an Interruption. Further information is available [here](#).
- 3.3. You should also be aware that taking an Interruption may have financial implications. For example, during a period of interruption you will not normally receive any maintenance grant or loans. For further information and advice about this, please see [here](#).
- 3.4. While you are not liable for paying tuition fees during your Interruption, you will be charged tuition fees up to the end of the term/teaching block preceding your Interruption. For example, if you are granted a Lent Term Interruption, tuition fees will be charged up until the end of Michaelmas Term.
- 3.5. If you receive a bursary or scholarship, please contact the provider to discuss the implications of your Interruption.
- 3.6. If you live in a Halls of Residence, you should also discuss your intention to interrupt with the [Residential Services Office](#), as an Interruption will have implications upon your right to continue living in the Hall.

#### 4. Requesting an Interruption

- 4.1. Before formally requesting an Interruption, you should where practicable meet with your Academic Mentor (or relevant member of Departmental staff), discuss your proposed Interruption, and where possible<sup>1</sup> agree a return to study plan. The return to study plan will detail your courses when you resume your Programme and may also identify the support services that you should consult with for advice and support upon your return to study.
- 4.2. Once you have discussed and agreed the Interruption arrangements in principle, you should formally apply using the online Interruption of Study [form](#).

#### 5. Evidence

- 5.1. You may be required to submit evidence to support your application for an Interruption. When you meet with your Academic Mentor (or relevant members of Departmental staff) they will advise you further about the evidence you need to submit. In certain circumstances, independent medical evidence from appropriately qualified professionals may be required in support of your formal application.

#### 6. Confidentiality

- 6.1. All requests will be treated as confidential and information will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate reason for being informed.

#### 7. Consideration and Approval

- 7.1. Where possible, the School will take a permissive approach when considering applications for an Interruption. The School will normally approve your application if you have provided a good reason for the interruption and if:
  - Your approach to your studies has been satisfactory and of a standard that would support a temporary break;
  - An Interruption will be compatible with you subsequently completing your studies;
  - It would not entail you exceeding the maximum period of registration for your programme, as per the General Academic Regulations for all Students.
- 7.2. A second period of interruption within the same programme of study will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Where it is not possible to agree a return to study plan prior to agreeing an interruption, this should be done at least one month before you return to your studies in conjunction with your departmental point of contact – see 8.3



- 7.3. Once you have submitted the form, your Academic Mentor and other relevant Departmental staff will confirm to the Student Services Centre (SSC) whether or not an interruption has been approved. The SSC will inform you of the decision, normally within five working days of the form's submission.

## 8. Student Status/Rights and Responsibilities

- 8.1. During an Interruption, you are still a student of the School. You have the right to access relevant campus facilities, e-mail and student support services including the Students' Union, limited Library Services, Student Wellbeing Services and the Faith Centre. However, you will be an unregistered student, and will not be eligible for teaching or financial support. As such, you must not undertake studies at the School and you should not attend lectures, seminars, tutorials etc.
- 8.2. You will not be expected to sit/submit any assessments during an Interruption.
- 8.3. Your Department will ensure that during your Interruption, a point of contact is available to advise you about your return to study and any other student related concerns that you may have. This will usually be your Academic Mentor, Programme Director or Programme Manager.
- 8.4. You remain subject to all the School's Regulations, Procedures and Policies during your Interruption.

## 9. Return to Study

- 9.1. If you wish to return to your studies earlier than originally planned, you should discuss this first with your departmental point of contact and if you decide to proceed, submit a request to the Student Services Centre for consideration. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.2. The School will contact you by email before your scheduled return to study in order to confirm your course selection (if applicable) and to facilitate any support which may be required upon your return. It is essential that you check your LSE email regularly, even during Interruption, as you will continue to receive important information from the School. If you require a visa in order to study in the UK, you should contact ISVAT at least 3 months prior to your agreed return to study date.
- 9.3. The School has a responsibility to ensure that you are able to engage safely with your studies following a period of interruption. If you have interrupted your studies for medical reasons, the School may require satisfactory evidence confirming your fitness to return to study. The School will advise on whether evidence will be required in a particular case.
- 9.4. If you are unable to return to study after an Interruption, you may in exceptional circumstances request an additional Interruption, provided that this will not entail you exceeding the maximum period of registration for your Programme. Requests will be considered in line with normal approval processes. If you do not intend to return and/or a further Interruption is not approved, you should speak to the Student Services Centre about formally withdrawing from your programme
- 9.5. When you return to your studies, you will be charged fees in line with Section 9 of the School's [Tuition Fee Policy](#).

## 10. Changes to Programmes and/or Courses

- 10.1. If you are on an Interruption, you should be aware that programmes and courses may be subject to change during your period of interruption. When you return, there may be changes to the structure or availability of programmes. By Interrupting, you consent to any programme or course changes which may occur while you are on interruption
- 10.2. You should be aware that in exceptional circumstances; for example, if your Programme is to be discontinued, it may not be possible to grant an Interruption of Study.