

## Repeating part of, Suspending, or Withdrawing from your Course

### Student Money and Accommodation Advice

#### Introduction

This information is for full-time undergraduate students who receive student funding from Student Finance England (SFE). It covers the financial implications of **taking a break** from your course, **withdrawing** from the course, and **repeating all or** part of the previous year's studies.

Students are advised in the first instance to see their Course Leader to talk through the options, and to speak to a Student Money and Accommodation Adviser about the financial implications. Things to consider might include:

- what your future entitlement to student support might be
- whether you will have to repay any student loan or grant
- whether you will owe any fees to the University, which you may have to pay yourself
- what procedures to follow, and who you must contact to inform them of your decision
- your future liability for Council Tax and, if relevant, alternative financial support

#### This information does not apply to:

- **EU students receiving fees-only support**, who should speak to a Student Money and Accommodation Adviser or the Student Finance Services Non-UK Team to check their continued eligibility for fee assistance if they change, leave or repeat their course.
- **Students from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales**, who should speak to a Student Money and Accommodation Adviser or contact their respective funding authorities to check their position.

#### Student support

The student support regulations governing changing, leaving, or repeating study are complex and students should give serious consideration to any decision they make.

#### The following general principles apply:

- A student can expect to receive full funding for the length of their course, plus one additional year if needed (often called a 'Gift Year') which can be used at any time, minus any years of previous higher education study in any public institution anywhere in the world.
- If a student leaves partway through the year, this still counts as a whole year's entitlement for the purposes of previous study.
- Where a student because of a change to their study programme has lost eligibility for full funding they won't be entitled to receive:
  1. the Tuition Fee Loan, and,
  2. if originally in receipt of one, the Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant

However, they may still receive the Maintenance Loan and additional grant allowances (eg Disabled Students' Allowance, Childcare Grant, Parents Learning Allowance).

- **University bursary**. As this depends on attendance, progression and receiving full Student

Support, entitlement may be affected.

Note: If a previous academic year was affected by severe and continued difficulties you may be able to obtain an extra year's funding (if you need it) at the discretion of SFE because of **compelling personal reasons (CPR)**. You will need to provide details and documentary evidence of the difficulties to SFE.

### **Tuition fees**

Any change to the amount of tuition fees charged will depend upon the point in the year you are formally withdrawn or allowed to intermit from your studies.

Students whose tuition fees are paid by SFE will be charged in line with the SFE schedule of payments to the University and the attendance confirmation points that they apply.

**The University's Student Zone** has information and appropriate forms you need to complete on interruption, intermission, and withdrawal which we would recommend you have a look at:

<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/student-administration/student-forms/>

### **Taking a break from your course**

Taking a break is also known as suspension of studies, intermission, or intercalation. It means you are suspending your course for a specific period of time, usually one semester or one year, with the intention of returning **to the same course** at a later date usually at the same point you left it. Typical reasons for taking a break might be for health, family or financial difficulties.

The University makes a distinction between two kinds of breaks:

**Interruption of Studies** – where a student who wishes to interrupt their studies can do so after the completion of an academic year and **before** formally re-enrolling for the following academic year, and,

**Intermission of Studies** – where an enrolled student is permitted **exceptionally** by the University to suspend their studies midway through an academic year, but usually before the beginning of the third term.

There are different application forms for each category.

<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/student-administration/taking-a-break-from-your-studies/>

Students will need to make a case for intermission and provide evidence, and must (unless it is impossible to do so) continue with their studies whilst awaiting the decision.

### **Procedures to follow**

- Speak to your Course Leader/Tutor to discuss your intention to take a break; find out whether the course is likely to change in future and, if viable, agree a date for your return.
- Consult the Student Money and Accommodation Advice team to talk through the financial implications based on your discussions with your Course Tutor.
- Should you decide to go ahead you will need to download the appropriate form and, once fully completed, take a copy for yourself before returning it to your Student Hub.
- **If your request is approved then the approval letter will tell you the situation regarding your tuition fees.**
- Tell SFE as soon as possible that you are intermitting/interrupting your studies and wish to return to the same course. The University will also be notifying SFE of the suspension but

you too have a duty to inform them of any changes. Bear in mind that at busy times of the year it can take time for the notification to be processed by SFE.

- Keep in touch with SFE, and your academic department so you can plan your return to study with them, and make sure both are made aware of any subsequent change of plan or circumstances.

### **Student support**

Once SFE is informed of your decision it suspends your award and stops further payments until notified by the University that you have returned to your studies. Any overpayment of Maintenance Loan and grant allowances will be calculated. If you are taking a break because of illness you are allowed student support for the first 60 days of absence from the course. After that time SFE has discretion as to whether or not to continue support depending upon your situation.

SFE also has discretion to continue paying student support if you take a break for other reasons, eg pregnancy, caring responsibilities, financial problems, bereavement, if stopping payment would otherwise cause financial hardship. In all instances the onus is on you to make a case in writing to SFE together with documentary evidence.

Before you return to your studies make sure you reapply for your student support in good time.

### **Social Security Benefits and Council Tax**

Unless you come into one of the exempted categories of full-time students, (ie lone parents, some disabled students), you generally cannot claim benefits as you are still regarded as being a student even though you are not attending classes. For those eligible to claim there may also be an overlap with student support. Students are advised to contact a Student Money and Accommodation Adviser for further information on benefits and Council Tax liability.

### **Withdrawing from the course**

There may be instances where a student decides they wish to leave the course and not return, or they are required to leave by the University.

### **Procedures to follow**

- First of all speak to your Course Leader/Tutor if you are considering withdrawing from the course.
- Consult the Student Money and Accommodation Advice team to talk through the financial implications, future plans, personal issues etc.
- Should you decide to go ahead you need to complete the University's withdrawal form, available from the Student Zone website and return it to your Student Hub. Keep a copy for yourself.  
<https://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/student-administration/withdrawal-process-module-or-university/>
- **Once your withdrawal has been processed you will receive written confirmation of this, including clarification as to your fees.**
- Tell SFE as soon as possible that you are withdrawing. The University will also be notifying SFE of the withdrawal but you too have a duty to inform them of any changes.

### **Student support**

Your current award of student support will be ended and future payments stopped. If you withdraw part way through the term SFE will recalculate your student funding and you may be asked to repay any overpaid monies straightaway. However, SFE has discretion to allow payment up until the end of the term in which the withdrawal takes place. Financially therefore it is probably better to leave the course at the end of term.

## Student support in future

As a general rule, should you decide to study another degree course in future, you will be seen as a new student and your funding will come under the system in place then. Any period of previous study may also affect your funding. If you have had to withdraw because of particular difficulties it's important to inform SFE now so you don't potentially lose funding in the future.

## Contact with the Student Loan Company (SLC)

You must keep in contact with the SLC so they know where to send repayment or deferment papers, especially if you move or go abroad. **It's vitally important not to fall into default with your student loan repayments, particularly if you wish to return to higher education at some future point. Otherwise, you may receive no student funding without clearing the arrears first, whatever your circumstances.**

## Social Security Benefits, and Council Tax

Once you have withdrawn from a course you are no longer a student and are now eligible to claim benefits if your student status had previously prevented you. There may be some overlap with student support if this continues to be paid to the end of term.

You may also become liable for Council Tax once you have left the course as your Council Tax Exemption Certificate is no longer valid. You need to notify the Council Tax office of your change in status, but you may now become eligible for Council Tax Reduction if you are on a low income.

## Funding for repeat study

Undergraduate students may be afforded a further opportunity by the course regulations to retake failed modules in the following academic year, but they need to be aware of the financial consequences, especially if they have previously repeated modules.

Students on their first undergraduate course repeating for the first time may expect to receive Tuition Fee Loan and Maintenance Loan help from SFE as before. The University increasingly requires students to successfully complete all their modules for one level before they can be progressed. However if students are studying a mixed level of modules from different years they should note this will increase the tuition fee charge which they may have to pay themselves if they have lost entitlement to fees funding. **In addition students may not be allowed to re-enrol until they've got the funding confirmed for the fees for the repeat period.**

## Procedures to follow

- If you haven't already, you need to find out:
  1. how many modules you will be required to repeat, and,
  2. the year of study the University will assign to you, this is linked to the previous study rules, and,
  3. whether you will be repeating on a full-time or part-time basis, and,
  4. whether you will be repeating one semester or the whole year, and,
  5. if you are going to be placed on Academic Probation.
- Unless it is specified on your Evision account, check with the University's Fees and Funding Team – [feequery@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:feequery@londonmet.ac.uk) – the fees charge for the repeat period, especially where mitigating circumstances have been accepted.
- If you are not sure what you may be entitled to, consult the Student Money and Accommodation Advice team about the financial implications.
- Inform SFE that you will be repeating part of your course. They will ask for notification of the repeat study from the University, for which you will need to contact the **Fees and Funding Team** – [feequery@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:feequery@londonmet.ac.uk)/. SFE can then work out your entitlement to tuition fees

- and maintenance for the correct level of study. Note this may take time at busy periods.
- Check that SFE will also extend your student support to your new completion date.
- If you are making an application under '**Compelling Personal Reasons**' for additional funding submit your letter together with documentary evidence to SFE. Keep a copy of your submission.

This includes students who are retaking modules on a **part-time basis** where they are registered on a **full-time course** and attending college. However, students may find that their **Council Tax exemption** is affected. This information does not include students who have formally changed to a part-time course and therefore changed their full-time student support to part-time funding.

NB Students repeating only part of the year and who will not be attending for the rest of the year need to check whether SFE will continue with discretionary payments for the periods of non-attendance.

This is a brief guide and as such cannot cover all eventualities. For this reason we recommend that you contact an adviser in the Student Money and Accommodation Advice team if you have any specific queries.

### **How to contact us**

Telephone your Student Hub and ask to book an appointment with a Student Money and Accommodation Adviser:

Aldgate Hub – 020 7133 7002; Holloway Hub – 020 7133 7001

Email: [SMAA@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:SMAA@londonmet.ac.uk)

Website: [www.londonmet.ac.uk/advice](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/advice)

Note: Attendance at classes and completion of all assessments is a vital part of being a student. The University does monitor student attendance and, where there are no good reasons for a student not being in classes or submitting work, then students will not be able to continue on their course. This is likely to have an effect on current and future course funding.

The Regulations referred to throughout this information sheet are the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (2011/1986) as Amended by, the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (2012/1653), the Education (Student Support and European University Institute) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (2013/1728) and subsequent amendments. The Income Support (General) Regulations 1987, The Housing Benefits Regulations 2006, The Universal Credit Regulations 2013. Regulations 12, 19, 21, 30, 109, 116 and 119 of the above apply to this information sheet.

The content of this information sheet has been compiled using information from external sources, as well as University data. The content has been carefully checked and is given in good faith. However, the University cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any inaccuracy.

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